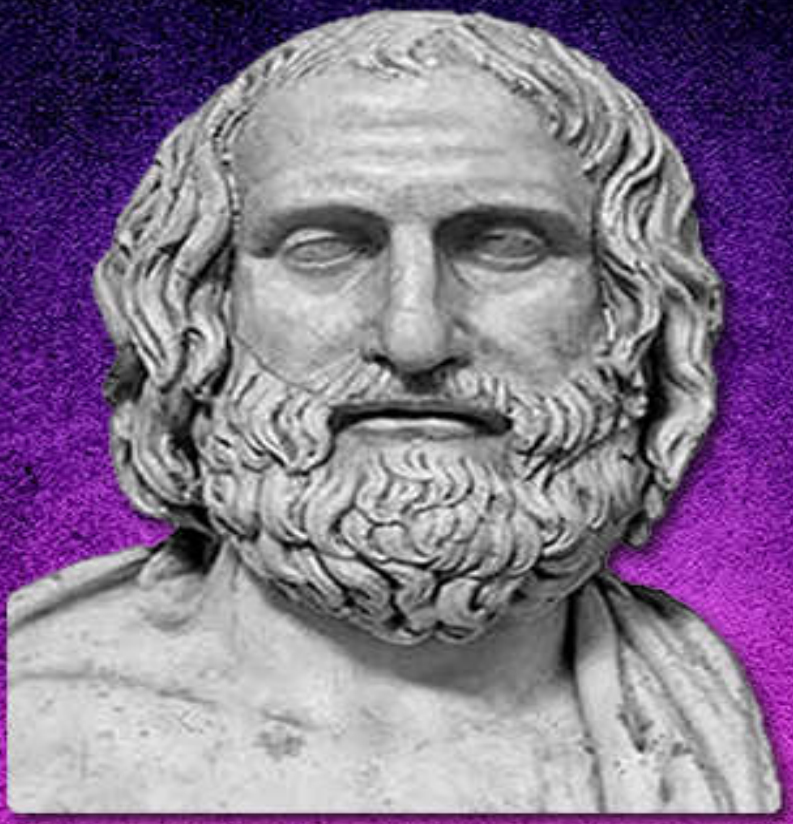

Euripides

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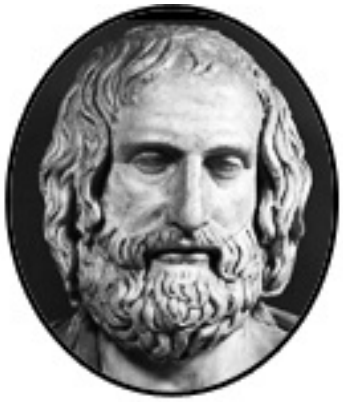
EURIPIDES

(c. 480–406 BC)



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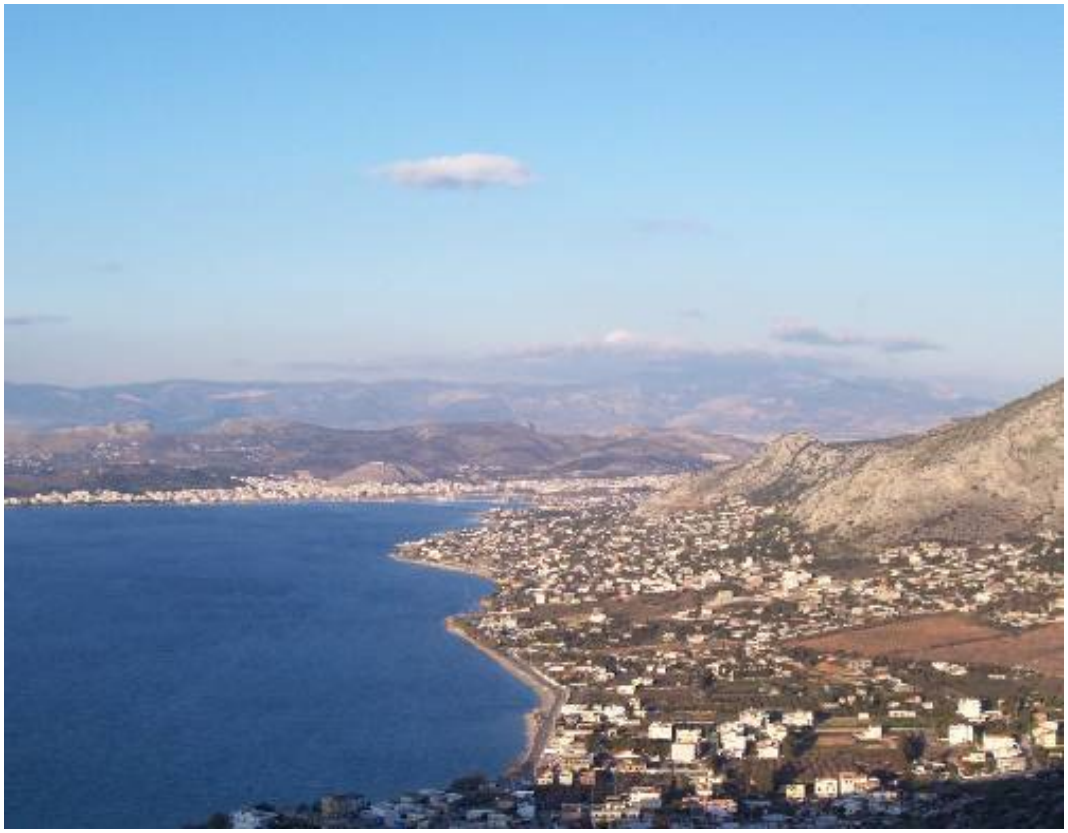
The Translations



Euripides was born on Salamis Island in c. 484 BC and he was the son of a retailer that lived in a village near Athens. Upon the receipt of an oracle saying that his son was fated to win "crowns of victory", Mnesarchus insisted that the boy should train for a career in athletics, though he was destined to win theatrical victories instead.

ALCESTIS

Translated by Theodore Alois Buckley

Alcestis was first produced at the City Dionysia festival in 438 BC as the final part of a tetralogy of unconnected plays in the competition of tragedies, for which Euripides won second prize. It is most likely the oldest surviving work by Euripides, although at the time of its first performance he had been producing plays for seventeen years.

The drama concerns the unusual bargain arranged for King Admetus in return for a longer life. Admetus was granted by the Fates the privilege of living past the allotted time of his death. Apollo wished to repay Admetus' hospitality and so offered him this gift. However, it came with the condition that Admetus must find someone to take his place when Death came to claim him. At the time of his death, he had still not found a willing substitute. Even his father, Pheres, was unwilling to volunteer, believing it was ludicrous that he should be asked to give up the life he enjoyed so much to humour the strange arrangement. Finally, Admetus' devoted wife Alcestis agreed to be taken in his place, as she wished not to leave her children fatherless or be bereft of her husband. The drama focuses on Alcestis' sacrifice and the effect it has on her family and the other characters, with a subtle exploration of male and female differences in Euripides' contemporary society.

Alcestis and Admetus, as depicted in an ancient Roman fresco, 45–79 CE

'Hercules Wrestling with Death for the Body of Alcestis' by Frederic Leighton, 1870

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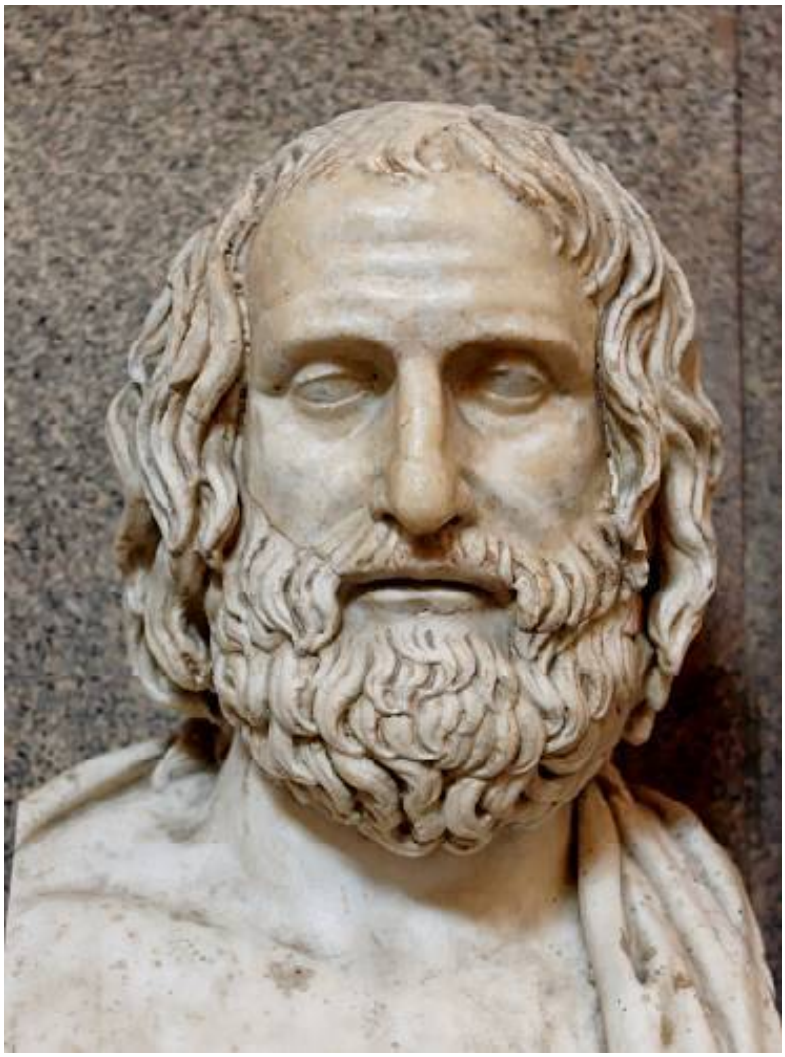
ALCESTIS



Bust of Euripides — Roman copy after a Greek original, c. 330 BC

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

APOLLO.
DEATH.
CHORUS OF PHERŒANS.
ATTENDANTS.
ALCESTIS.
ADMETUS.
EUMELUS.
HERCULES.
PHERES.

THE ARGUMENT.

Apollo desired of the Fates that Admetus, who was about to die, might give a substitute to die for him, that so he might live for a term equal to his former life; and Alcestis, his wife, gave herself up, while neither of his parents were willing to die instead of their son. But not long after the time when this calamity happened, Hercules having arrived, and having learned from a servant what had befallen Alcestis, went to her tomb, and having made Death retire, covers the lady with a robe; and requested Admetus to receive her and keep her for him; and said he had borne her off as a prize in wrestling; but when he would not, he unveiled her, and discovered her whom he was lamenting.

ALCESTIS

APOLLO.
O mansions of Admetus, wherein I endured to acquiesce in the slave's table, though a God; for Jove was the cause, by slaying my son Æsculapius, hurling the lightning against his breast: whereat enraged, I slay the Cyclops, forgers of Jove's fire; and me my father compelled to serve for hire with a mortal, as a punishment for these things. But having come to this land, I tended the herds of him who received me, and have preserved this house until this day: for being pious I met with a pious man, the son of Pheres, whom I delivered from dying by deluding the Fates: but those Goddesses granted me that Admetus should escape the impending death, could he furnish in his place another dead for the powers below. But having tried and gone through all his friends, his father and his aged mother who bore him, he found not, save his wife, one who was willing to die for him, and view no more the light: who now within the house is borne in their hands, breathing her last; for on this day is it destined for her to die, and to depart from life. But I, lest the pollution come upon me in the house, leave this palace's most dear abode. But already I behold Death near, priest of the dead, who is about to bear her down to the mansions of Pluto; but he comes at the right time, observing this day, in the which it was destined for her to die.

DEATH, APOLLO.

DEA. Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! What dost thou at the palace? why tamest here, Phœbus? Art thou again at thy deeds of injustice, taking away and putting an end to the honors of the powers beneath? Did it not suffice thee to stay the death of Admetus, when thou didst delude the Fates by fraudful artifice? But now too dost thou keep guard for her, having armed thine hand with thy bow, who then promised, in order to redeem her husband, herself, the daughter of Pelias, to die for him?

AP. Fear not, I cleave to justice and honest arguments.

DEA. What business then has your bow, if you cleave to justice?

AP. It is my habit ever to bear it.

DEA. Yes, and without regard to justice to aid this house.

AP. *Ay*, for I am afflicted at the misfortunes of a man that is dear to me.

DEA. And wilt thou deprive me of this second dead?

AP. But neither took I him from thee by force.

DEA. How then is he upon earth, and not beneath the ground?

AP. Because he gave in his stead his wife, after whom thou art now come.

DEA. Yes, and will bear her off to the land beneath.

AP. Take her away, for I know not whether I can persuade thee.

DEA. What? to slay him, whom I ought? for this was I commanded.

AP. No: but to cast death upon those about to die.

DEA. Yes, I perceive thy speech, and what thou aim’st at.

AP. Is it possible then for Alcestis to arrive at old age?

DEA. It is not: consider that I too am delighted with my due honors.

AP. Thou canst not, however, take more than one life.

DEA. When the young die I earn the greater glory.

AP. And if she die old, she will be sumptuously entombed.

DEA. Thou layest down the law, Phœbus, in favor of the rich.

AP. How sayest thou? what? hast thou been clever without my perceiving it?

DEA. Those who have means would purchase to die old.

AP. Doth it not then seem good to thee to grant me this favor?

DEA. No in truth; and thou knowest my ways.

AP. Yes, hostile to mortals, and detested by the Gods.

DEA. Thou canst not have all things, which thou oughtest not.

AP. Nevertheless, thou wilt stop, though thou art over-fierce; such a man will come to the house of Pheres, whom Eurystheus hath sent after the chariot and its horses, *to bring them* from the wintry regions of Thrace, who in sooth, being welcomed in the mansions of Admetus, shall take away by force this woman from thee; and there will be no obligation to thee at my hands, but still thou wilt do this, and wilt be hated by me.

DEA. Much though thou talkest, thou wilt gain nothing. This woman then shall descend to the house of Pluto; and I am advancing upon her, that I may begin the rites on her with my sword; for sacred is he to the Gods beneath the earth, the hair of whose head this sword hath consecrated.

CHORUS.

SEMICH. Wherefore in heaven's name is this stillness before the palace? why is the house of Admetus hushed in silence?

SEMICH. But there is not even one of our friends near, who can tell us whether we have to deplore the departed queen, or whether Alcestis, daughter of Pelias, yet living views this light, who has appeared to me and to all to have been the best wife toward her husband.

CHOR. Hears any one either a wailing, or the beating of hands within the house, or a lamentation, as though the thing had taken place? There is not however any one of the servants standing before the gates. Oh would that thou wouldst appear, O Apollo, amidst the waves of this calamity!

SEMICH. They would not however be silent, were she dead.

SEMICH. For the corse is certainly not gone from the house.

SEMICH. Whence this conjecture? I do not presume this. What is it gives you confidence?

SEMICH. How could Admetus have made a private funeral of his so excellent wife?

CHOR. But before the gates I see not the bath of water from the fountain, as is the custom at the gates of the dead: and in the vestibule is no shorn hair, which is wont to fall in grief for the dead; the youthful hand of women for the youthful *wife* sound not.

SEMICH. And yet this is the appointed day, —

SEMICH. What is this thou sayest?

SEMICH. In the which she must go beneath the earth.

SEMICH. Thou hast touched my soul, hast touched my heart.

SEMICH. When the good are afflicted, he must mourn, who from the beginning has been accounted good.

CHOR. But there is not whither in the earth any one having sent naval equipment, or to Lycia, or to the thirsty site of Hammon's temple, can redeem the unhappy woman's life, for abrupt fate approaches, and I know not to whom of those that sacrifice at the hearths of the Gods I can go. But only if the son of Phœbus were viewing with his eyes this light, could she come, having left the darksome habitations and the gates of Pluto: for he raised up the dead, before that the stroke of the lightning's fire hurled by Jove destroyed him. But now what hope of life can I any longer entertain? For all things have already been done by the king, and at the altars of all the Gods abound the victims dropping with blood, and no cure is there of these evils.

CHORUS, FEMALE ATTENDANT.

CHOR. But here comes one of the female attendants from the house, in tears; what shall I hear has happened? To mourn indeed, if any thing

happens to our lords, is pardonable: but whether the lady be still alive, or whether she be dead, we would wish to know.

ATT. You may call her both alive and dead.

CHOR. And how can the same woman be both alive and dead?

ATT. Already she is on the verge of death, and breathing her life away.

CHOR. Oh wretched man, being what thyself of what a wife art thou bereft!

ATT. My master knows not this yet, until he suffer.

CHOR. Is there no longer hope that she may save her life?

ATT. No, for the destined day makes its attack upon her.

CHOR. Are not then suitable preparations made for these events?

ATT. Yes, the adornments are ready, wherewith her husband will bury her.

CHOR. Let her know then that she will die glorious, and by far the best of women under the sun.

ATT. And how not the best? who will contest it? What must the woman be, who has surpassed her? and how can any give greater proof of esteeming her husband, than by being willing to die for him? And these things indeed the whole city knoweth. But what she did in the house you will marvel when you hear. For, when she perceived that the destined day was come, she washed her fair skin with water from the river; and having taken from her closets of cedar vesture and ornaments, she attired herself becomingly; and standing before the altar she prayed: “O mistress, since I go beneath the earth, adoring thee for the last time, I will beseech thee to protect my orphan children, and to the one join a loving wife, and to the other a noble husband: nor, as their mother perishes, let my children untimely die, but happy in their paternal country let them complete a joyous life.” — But all the altars, which are in the house of Admetus, she went to, and crowned, and prayed, tearing the leaves from off the myrtle boughs, tearless, without a groan, nor did the approaching evil change the natural beauty of her skin.

And then rushing to her chamber, and her bed, there indeed she wept and spoke thus: “O bridal bed, whereon I loosed my virgin zone with this man, for whom I die, farewell! for I hate thee not; but me alone hast thou lost; for dreading to betray thee, and my husband, I die; but thee some other woman will possess, more chaste there can not, but perchance more fortunate.” — And falling on it she kissed it; but all the bed was bathed with the flood that issued from her eyes. But when she had satiety of much weeping, she goes hastily forward, rushing from the bed. And ofttimes having left her chamber, she oft returned, and threw herself upon the bed again. And her children, hanging to the garments of their mother, wept; but she, taking them in her arms, embraced them, first one and then the other, as about to die. But all the domestics wept throughout the house, bewailing their mistress, but she stretched out her right hand to each, and there was none so mean, whom she addressed not, and was answered in return. Such are the woes in the house of Admetus. And had he died indeed, he would have perished; but now that he has escaped death, he has grief to that degree which he will never forget.

CHOR. Surely Admetus groans at these evils, if he must be deprived of so excellent a wife.

ATT. Yes, he weeps, holding his dear wife in his hands, and prays her not to leave him, asking impossibilities; for she wastes away, and is consumed by sickness, but fainting a wretched burden in his arms, yet still though but feebly breathing, she fain would glance toward the rays of the sun; as though never again, but now for the last time she is to view the sun’s beam and his orb. But I will go and announce your presence, for it is by no means all that are well-wishers to their lords, so as to come kindly to them in their misfortunes; but you of old are friendly to my master.

SEMICH. O Jove, what means of escape can there in any way be, and what method to rid us of the fortune which attends my master?

SEMICH. Will any appear? or must I cut my locks, and clothe me even now in black array of garments?

SEMICH. ’Tis plain, my friends, too plain; but still let us pray to the Gods, for the power of the Gods is mightiest.

SEMICH. O Apollo, king of healing, find out some remedy for the evils of Admetus, procure it, O! procure it. For before this also thou didst find *remedy*, and now become our deliverer from death, and stop the murderous Pluto.

SEMICH. Alas! alas! woe! woe! O son of Pheres, how didst thou fare when thou wert deprived of thy wife?

SEMICH. Alas! alas! these things would even justify self-slaughter, and there is more, than whereat one might thrust one's neck in the suspending noose.

SEMICH. For not a dear, but a most dear wife, wilt thou see dead this day.

SEMICH. Behold, behold; lo! she doth come from the house, and her husband with her. Cry out, O groan, O land of Pheres, for the most excellent woman, wasting with sickness, *departing* beneath the earth to the infernal Pluto. Never will I aver that marriage brings more joy than grief, forming my conjectures both from former things, and beholding this fortune of the king; who, when he has lost this most excellent wife, will thenceforward pass a life not worthy to be called life.

ALCESTIS, ADMETUS, EUMELUS, CHORUS.

ALC. Thou Sun, and thou light of day, and ye heavenly eddies of the fleeting clouds —

ADM. He beholds thee and me, two unhappy creatures, having done nothing to the Gods, for which thou shouldst die.

ALC. O earth, and ye roofs of the palace, and thou bridal bed of my native Iolcos.

ADM. Lift up thyself, unhappy one, desert me not; but entreat the powerful Gods to pity.

ALC. I see — I see the two-oared boat — and the ferryman of the dead, holding his hand on the pole — Charon even now calls me— "Why dost

thou delay? haste, thou stoppest us here" — with such words vehement he hastens me.

ADM. Ah me! a bitter voyage this thou speakest of! Oh! unhappy one, how do we suffer!

ALC. He pulls me, some one pulls me — do you not see? — to the hall of the dead, the winged Pluto, staring from beneath his black eyebrows — What wilt thou do? — let me go — what a journey am I most wretched going!

ADM. Mournful to thy friends, and of these especially to me and to thy children, who have this grief in common.

ALC. Leave off supporting me, leave off now, lay me down, I have no strength in my feet. Death is near, and darkling night creeps upon mine eyes — my children, my children, no more your mother is — no more. — Farewell, my children, long may you view this light!

ADM. Ah me! I hear this sad word, and more than any death to me. Do not by the Gods have the heart to leave me: do not by those children, whom thou wilt make orphans: but rise, be of good courage: for, thee dead, I should no longer be: for on thee we depend both to live, and not to live: for thy love we adore.

ALC. Admetus, thou seest both thy affairs and mine, in what state they are, I wish to tell thee, ere I die, what I would have done. I, honoring thee, and causing thee at the price of my life to view this light, die, it being in my power not to die, for thee: but though I might have married a husband from among the Thessalians whom I would, and have lived in a palace blessed with regal sway, was not willing to live, bereft of thee, with my children orphans; nor did I spare myself, though possessing the gifts of bloomy youth, wherein I delighted. And yet thy father and thy mother forsook thee, though they had well arrived at a point of life, in which they might have died, and nobly delivered their son, and died with glory: for thou wert their only one, and there was no hope, when thou wert dead, that they could have other children. And I should have lived, and thou, the rest of our time. And thou wouldst not be groaning deprived of thy wife, and wouldst not have to

bring up thy children orphans. But these things indeed, some one of the Gods hath brought to pass, that they should be thus. Be it so — but do thou remember to give me a return for this; for never shall I ask thee for an equal one, *(for nothing is more precious than life,)* but just, as thou wilt say: for thou lovest not these children less than I do, if thou art right-minded; them bring up lords over my house, and bring not in second marriage a step-mother over these children, who, being a worse woman than me, through envy will stretch out her hand against thine and my children. Do not this then, I beseech thee; for a step-mother that is in second marriage is enemy to the children of the former marriage, no milder than a viper. And my boy indeed has his father, a great tower of defense; but thou, O my child, how wilt thou be, brought up during thy virgin years? Having what consort of thy father's? *I fear*, lest casting some evil obloquy on thee, she destroys thy marriage in the bloom of youth. For neither will thy mother ever preside over thy nuptials, nor strengthen thee being present, my daughter, at thy travails, where nothing is more kind than a mother. For I needs must die, and this evil comes upon me not to-morrow, nor on the third day of the month, but immediately shall I be numbered among those that are no more. Farewell, and may you be happy; and thou indeed, my husband, mayst boast, that thou hadst a most excellent wife, and you, my children, that you were born of a most excellent mother.

CHOR. Be of good cheer; for I fear not to answer for him: he will do this, if he be not bereft of his senses.

ADM. These things shall be so, they shall be, fear not: since I, when alive also, possessed thee *alone*, and when thou art dead, thou shalt be my only wife, and no Thessalian bride shall address me in the place of thee: there is not woman who shall, either of so noble a sire, nor otherwise most exquisite in beauty. But my children are enough; of these I pray the Gods that I may have the enjoyment; for thee we do not enjoy. But I shall not have this grief for thee for a year, but as long as my life endures, O lady, abhorring her indeed that brought me forth, and hating my father; for they were in word, not in deed, my friends. But thou, giving what was dearest to thee for my life, hast rescued me. Have I not then reason to groan deprived of such a wife? But I will put an end to the feasts, and the meetings of those that drink together, and garland and song, which wont to dwell in my house. For

neither can I any more touch the lyre, nor lift up my heart to sing to the Libyan flute; for thou hast taken away my joy of life. But by the cunning hand of artists imaged thy figure shall be lain on my bridal bed, on which I will fall, and clasping my hands around, calling on thy name, shall fancy that I hold my dear wife in mine arms, though holding her not: a cold delight, I ween; but still I may draw off the weight that sits upon my soul: and in my dreams visiting me, thou mayst delight me, for a friend is sweet even to behold at night, for whatever time he may come. But if the tongue of Orpheus and his strain were mine, so that invoking with hymns the daughter of Ceres or her husband, I could receive thee from the shades below, I would descend, and neither the dog of Pluto, nor Charon at his oar, the ferryman of departed spirits, should stay me before I brought thy life to the light. But there expect me when I die and prepare a mansion for me, as about to dwell with me. For I will enjoin these to place me in the same cedar with thee, and to lay my side near thy side: for not even when dead may I be separated from thee, the only faithful one to me!

CHOR. And I indeed with thee, as a friend with a friend, will bear this painful grief for her, for she is worthy.

ALC. My children, ye indeed hear your father saying that he will never marry another wife to be over you, nor dishonor me.

ADM. And now too, I say this, and will perform it

ALC. For this receive these children from my hand.

ADM. Yes, I receive a dear gift from a dear hand.

ALC. Be thou then a mother to these children in my stead.

ADM. There is much need that I should, when they are deprived of thee.

ALC. O my children, at a time when I ought to live I depart beneath.

ADM. Ah me; what shall I do of thee bereaved!

ALC. Time will soften thy grief: he that is dead is nothing.

ADM. Take me with thee, by the Gods take me beneath.

ALC. Enough are we *to go*, who die for thee.

ADM. O fate, of what a wife thou deprivest me!

ALC. And lo! my darkening eye is weighed down.

ADM. I am undone then, if thou wilt leave me, my wife.

ALC. As being no more, you may speak of me as nothing.

ADM. Lift up thy face; do not leave thy children.

ALC. Not willingly in sooth, but — farewell, my children.

ADM. Look on them, O! look.

ALC. I am no more.

ADM. What dost thou? dost thou leave us?

ALC. Farewell!

ADM. I am an undone wretch!

CHOR. She is gone, Admetus' wife is no more.

EUM. Alas me, for my state! my mother is gone indeed below; she is no longer, my father, under the sun; but unhappy leaving me has made my life an orphan's. For look, look at her eyelid, and her nerveless arms. Hear, hear, O mother. I beseech thee; I, I now call thee, mother, thy young one falling on thy mouth —

ADM. Who hears not, neither sees: so that I and you are struck with a heavy calamity.

EUM. Young and deserted, my father, am I left by my dear mother: O! I that have suffered indeed dreadful deeds! — and thou hast suffered with

me, my sister. O father, in vain, in vain didst thou marry, nor with her didst thou arrive at the end of old age, for she perished before, but thou being gone, mother, the house is undone.

CHOR. Admetus, you must bear this calamity; for in no wise the first, nor the last of mortals hast thou lost thy dear wife: but learn, that to die is a debt we must all of us discharge.

ADM. I know it, and this evil hath not come suddenly on me; but knowing it long ago I was afflicted. But be present, for I will have the corse borne forth, and while ye stay, chant a hymn to the God below that accepteth not libations. And all the Thessalians, over whom I reign, I enjoin to share in the grief for this lady, by shearing *their locks* with steel, and by arraying themselves in sable garb. And harness your teams of horses to your chariots, and cut from your single steeds the manes that fall upon their necks. And let there be no noise of pipes, nor of the lyre throughout the city for twelve completed moons. For none other corse more dear shall I inter, nor one more kind toward me. But she deserves to receive honor from me, seeing that she alone hath died for me.

CHORUS.

O daughter of Pelias, farewell where thou dwellest in sunless dwelling within the mansions of Pluto. And let Pluto know, the God with ebon locks, and the old man, the ferryman of the dead, who sits intent upon his oar and his rudder, that he is conducting by far the most excellent of women in his two-oared boat over the lake of Acheron. Oft shall the servants of the Muses sing of thee, celebrating thee both on the seven-stringed lute on the mountains, and in hymns unaccompanied by the lyre: in Sparta, when returns the annual circle in the season of the Carnean month, when the moon is up the whole night long; and in splendid and happy Athens. Such a song hast thou left by thy death to the minstrels of melodies. Would that it rested with me, and that I could waft thee to the light from the mansions of Pluto, and from Cocytus' streams, by the oar of that infernal river. For thou, O unexampled, O dear among women, thou didst dare to receive thy husband from the realms below in exchange for thine own life. Light may the earth from above fall upon thee, lady! and if thy husband chooses any other alliance, surely he will be much detested by me and by thy children.

When his mother was not willing for him to hide her body in the ground, nor his aged father, but these two wretches, having hoary locks, dared not to rescue him they brought forth, yet thou in the vigor of youth didst depart, having died for thy husband. May it be mine to meet with another such a dear wife; for rare in life is such a portion, for surely she would live with me forever without once causing pain.

HERCULES, CHORUS.

HER. Strangers, inhabitants of the land of Pheres, can I find Admetus within the palace?

CHOR. The son of Pheres is within the palace, O Hercules. But tell me, what purpose sends thee to the land of the Thessalians, so that thou comest to this city of Pheres?

HER. I am performing a certain labor for the Tirynthian Eurystheus.

CHOR. And whither goest thou? on what wandering expedition art bound?

HER. After the four chariot-steeds of Diomed the Thracian.

CHOR. How wilt thou be able? Art thou ignorant of this host?

HER. I am ignorant; I have not yet been to the land of the Bistonians.

CHOR. Thou canst not be lord of these steeds without battle.

HER. But neither is it possible for me to renounce the labors *set me*.

CHOR. Thou wilt come then having slain, or being slain wilt remain there.

HER. Not the first contest this that I shall run.

CHOR. But what advance will you have made, when you have overcome their master?

HER. I will drive away the horses to king Eurystheus.

CHOR. ’Tis no easy matter to put the bit in their jaws.

HER. *’Tis,* except they breathe fire from their nostrils.

CHOR. But they tear men piecemeal with their devouring jaws.

HER. The provender of mountain beasts, not horses, you are speaking of.

CHOR. Their stalls thou mayst behold with blood bestained.

HER. Son of what sire does their owner boast to be?

CHOR. Of Mars, prince of the Thracian target, rich with gold.

HER. And this labor, thou talkest of, is one my fate compels me to *(for it is ever hard and tends to steeps)*; if I must join in battle with the children whom Mars begat, first indeed with Lycaon, and again with Cycnus, and I come to this third combat, about to engage with the horses and their master. But none there is, who shall ever see the son of Alcmena fearing the hand of his enemies.

CHOR. And lo! hither comes the very man Admetus, lord of this land, from out of the palace.

ADMETUS, HERCULES, CHORUS.

ADM. Hail! O son of Jove, and of the blood of Perseus.

HER. Admetus, hail thou too, king of the Thessalians!

ADM. I would I could *receive this salutation;* but I know that thou art well disposed toward me.

HER. Wherefore art thou conspicuous with thy locks shorn for grief?

ADM. I am about to bury a certain corse this day.

HER. May the God avert calamity from thy children!

ADM. My children whom I begat, live in the house.

HER. Thy father however is of full age, if he is gone.

ADM. Both he lives, and she who bore me, Hercules.

HER. Surely your wife Alcestis is not dead?

ADM. There are two accounts which I may tell of her.

HER. Speakest thou of her as dead or as alive?

ADM. She both is, and is no more, and she grieves me.

HER. I know nothing more; for thou speakest things obscure.

ADM. Knowest thou not the fate which it was doomed for her to meet with?

HER. I know that she took upon herself to die for thee.

ADM. How then is she any more, if that she promised this?

HER. Ah! do not weep for thy wife before the time; wait till this happens.

ADM. He that is about to die is dead, and he that is dead is no more.

HER. The being and the not being is considered a different thing.

ADM. You judge in this way, Hercules, but I in that.

HER. Why then dost weep? Who is he of thy friends that is dead?

ADM. A woman, a woman we were lately mentioning.

HER. A stranger by blood, or any by birth allied to thee?

ADM. A stranger; but on other account dear to this house.

HER. How then died she in thine house?

ADM. Her father dead, she lived an orphan here.

HER. Alas! Would that I had found thee, Admetus, not mourning!

ADM. As about to do what then, dost thou make use of these words?

HER. I will go to some other hearth of those who will receive a guest.

ADM. It must not be, O king: let not so great an evil happen!

HER. Troublesome is a guest if he come to mourners.

ADM. The dead are dead — but go into the house.

HER. 'Tis base however to feast with weeping friends.

ADM. The guest-chamber, whither we will lead thee, is apart.

HER. Let me go, and I will owe you ten thousand thanks.

ADM. It must not be that thou go to the hearth of another man. Lead on thou, having thrown open the guest-chamber that is separate from the house: and tell them that have the management, that there be plenty of meats; and shut the gates in the middle of the hall: it is not meet that feasting guests should hear groans, nor should they be made sad.

CHOR. What are you doing? when so great a calamity is before you, Admetus, hast thou the heart to receive guests? wherefore art thou foolish?

ADM. But if I had driven him who came my guest from my house, and from the city, would you have praised me rather? No in sooth, since my calamity had been no whit the less, but I the more inhospitable: and in addition to my evils, there had been this other evil, that mine should be called the stranger-hating house. But I myself find this man a most excellent host, whenever I go to the thirsty land of Argos.

CHOR. How then didst thou hide thy present fate, when a friend, as thou thyself sayest, came?

ADM. He never would have been willing to enter the house if he had known aught of my sufferings. And to him indeed, I ween, acting thus, I appear not to be wise, nor will he praise me; but my house knows not to drive away, nor to dishonor guests.

CHORUS.

O greatly hospitable and ever liberal house of this man, thee even the Pythian Apollo, master of the lyre, deigned to inhabit, and endured to become a shepherd in thine abodes, through the sloping hills piping to thy flocks his pastoral nuptial hymns. And there were wont to feed with them, through delight of his lays, both the spotted lynxes, and the bloody troop of lions came having left the forest of Othrys; disported too around thy cithern, Phœbus, the dappled fawn, advancing with light pastern beyond the lofty-feathered pines, joying in the gladdening strain. Wherefore he dwelleth in a home most rich in flocks by the fair-flowing lake of Bœbe; and to the tillage of his fields, and the extent of his plains, toward that dusky *part of the heavens*, where the sun stays his horses, makes the clime of the Molossians the limit, and holds dominion as far as the portless shore of the Ægean Sea at Pelion. And now having thrown open his house he hath received his guest with moistened eyelid, weeping over the corse of his dear wife, who but now died in the palace: for a noble disposition is prone to reverence [of the guest]. But in the good there is all manner of wisdom. And confidence is seated on my soul that the man who reveres the Gods will fare prosperously.

ADMETUS, CHORUS.

ADM. Ye men of Pheræ that are kindly present, my servants indeed bear aloft the corse, having every thing fit for the tomb, and for the pyre. But do you, as is the custom, salute the dead going forth on her last journey.

CHOR. And lo! I see thy father advancing with his aged foot, and attendants bearing in their hands adornment for thy wife, due honors of those beneath.

PHERES, ADMETUS, CHORUS.

PHE. I am at present sympathizing in thy misfortunes, my son: for thou hast lost *(no one will deny)* a good and a chaste wife; but these things indeed thou must bear, though hard to be borne. But receive this adornment, and let it go with her beneath the earth: Her body 'tis right to honor, who in sooth died to save thy life, my son, and made me to be not childless, nor suffered me to waste away deprived of thee in an old age of misery. But she has made most illustrious the life of all women, having dared this noble action. O thou that hast preserved my son here, and hast raised us up who were falling, farewell, and may it be well with thee even in the mansions of Pluto! I affirm that such marriages are profitable to men, or that it is not meet to marry.

ADM. Neither hast thou come bidden of me to this funeral, nor do I count thy presence among things acceptable. But she here never shall put on thy decorations; for in no wise shall she be buried indebted to what thou hast. Then oughtest thou to have grieved with me, when I was in danger of perishing. But dost thou, who stoodest aloof, and permittedst another, a young person, thyself being old, to die, weep over this dead body? Thou wert not then really the father of me, nor did she, who says she bore me, and is called my mother, bear me; but born of slavish blood I was secretly put under the breast of thy wife. Thou showedst when thou camest to the test, who thou art; and I deem that I am not thy son. Or else surely thou exceedest all in nothingness of soul, who being of the age thou art, and having come to the goal of life, neither hadst the will nor the courage to die for thy son; but sufferedst this stranger lady, whom alone I might justly have considered both mother and father. And yet thou mightst have run this race for glory, hadst thou died for thy son. But at any rate the remainder of the time thou hadst to live was short: and I should have lived and she the rest of our days, and I should not, bereft of her, be groaning at my miseries. And in sooth thou didst receive as many things as a happy man should receive; thou passedst the vigor of thine age indeed in sovereign sway, but I was thy son to succeed thee in this palace, so that thou wert not about to die childless and leave a desolate house for others to plunder. Thou canst not however say of me, that I gave thee up to die, dishonoring thine old age, whereas I was particularly respectful toward thee; and for this behavior both thou, and she that bare me, have made me such return. Wherefore you have no more time to lose in getting children, who will succor thee in thine old

age, and deck thee when dead, and lay out thy corse; for I will not bury thee with this mine hand; for I in sooth died, as far as in thee lay; but if, having met with, another deliverer, I view the light, I say that I am both his child, and the friendly comforter of his old age. In vain then do old men pray to be dead, complaining of age, and the long time of life: but if death come near, not one is willing to die, and old age is no longer burdensome to them.

CHOR. Desist, for the present calamity is sufficient; and do not, O son, provoke thy father's mind.

PHE. O son, whom dost thou presume thou art gibing with thy reproaches, a Lydian or a Phrygian bought with thy money? Knowest thou not that I am a Thessalian, and born from a Thessalian father, truly free? Thou art too insolent, and casting the impetuous words of youth against us, shalt not having cast them thus depart. But I begat thee the lord of my house, and brought thee up, but I am not thy debtor to die for thee; for I received no paternal law like this, nor Grecian law, that fathers should die for their children; for for thyself thou wert born, whether unfortunate or fortunate, but what from us thou oughtest to have, thou hast. Thou rulest indeed over many, and I will leave thee a large demesne of lands, for these I received from my father. In what then have I injured thee? Of what do I deprive thee? Thou joyest to see the light, and dost think thy father does not joy? Surely I count the time we must spend beneath long, and life is short, but still sweet. Thou too didst shamelessly fight off from dying, and livest, having passed over thy destined fate, by slaying her; then dost thou talk of my nothingness of soul, O most vile one, when thou art surpassed by a woman who died for thee, the handsome youth? But thou hast made a clever discovery, so that thou mayst never die, if thou wilt persuade the wife that is thine from time to time to die for thee: and then reproachest thou thy friends who are not willing to do this, thyself being a coward? Hold thy peace, and consider, if thou lovest thy life, that all love theirs; but if thou shalt speak evil against us, thou shalt hear many reproaches and not false ones.

CHOR. Too many evil things have been spoken both now and before, but cease, old man, from reviling thy son.

ADM. Speak, for I have spoken; but if thou art grieved at hearing the truth, thou shouldst not err against me.

PHE. But had I died for thee, I had erred more.

ADM. What? is it the same thing for a man in his prime, and for an old man to die?

PHE. We ought to live with one life, not with two.

ADM. Mayst thou then live a longer time than Jove!

PHE. Dost curse thy parents, having met with no injustice?

ADM. *I said it*, for I perceived thou lovedst a long life.

PHE. But art not thou bearing forth this corse instead of thyself?

ADM. A proof this, O most vile one, of thy nothingness of soul.

PHE. She died not by us at least; thou wilt not say this.

ADM. Alas! Oh that you may ever come to need my aid!

PHE. Wed many wives, that more may die.

ADM. This is a reproach to thyself, for thou wert not willing to die.

PHE. Sweet is this light of the God, sweet is it.

ADM. Base is thy spirit and not that of men.

PHE. Thou dost not laugh as carrying an aged corse.

ADM. Thou wilt surely however die inglorious, when thou diest.

PHE. To bear an evil report is no matter to me when dead.

ADM. Alas! alas! how full of shamelessness is old age!

PHE. She was not shameless: her you found mad.

ADM. Begone, and suffer me to bury this dead.

PHE. I will depart; but you will bury her, yourself being her murderer. But you will render satisfaction to your wife's relatives yet: or surely Acastus no longer ranks among men, if he shall not revenge the blood of his sister.

ADM. Get thee gone, then, thou and thy wife; childless, thy child yet living, as ye deserve, grow old; for ye no more come into the same house with me: and if it were necessary for me to renounce by heralds thy paternal hearth, I would renounce it. But let us *(for the evil before us must be borne)* proceed, that we may place the corse upon the funeral pyre.

CHOR. O! O! unhappy because of thy bold deed, O noble, and by far most excellent, farewell! may both Mercury that dwells beneath, and Pluto, kindly receive thee; but if there too any distinction is shown to the good, partaking of this mayst thou sit by the bride of Pluto.

SERVANT.

I have now known many guests, and from all parts of the earth that have come to the house of Admetus, to whom I have spread the feast, but never yet did I receive into this house a worse one than this stranger. Who, in the first place, indeed, though he saw my master in affliction, came in, and prevailed upon himself to pass the gates. And then not at all in a modest manner received he the entertainment that there happened to be, when he heard of the calamity: but if we did not bring any thing, he hurried us to bring it. And having taken in his hands the cup wreathed with ivy, he quaffs the neat wine of the purple mother, until the fumes of the liquor coming upon him inflamed him; and he crowns his head with branches of myrtles howling discordantly; and there were two strains to hear; for he was singing, not caring at all for the afflictions of Admetus, but we the domestics, were bewailing our mistress, and we showed not that we were weeping to the guest, for thus Admetus commanded. And now indeed I am performing the offices of hospitality to the stranger in the house, some deceitful thief and robber. But she is gone from the house, nor did I follow, nor stretched out my hand in lamentation for my mistress, who was a

mother to me, and to all the domestics, for she saved us from ten thousand ills, softening the anger of her husband. Do I not then justly hate this stranger, who is come in our miseries?

HERCULES, SERVANT.

HER. Ho there! why dost thou look so grave and thoughtful? The servant ought not to be of woeful countenance before guests, but should receive them with an affable mind. But thou, though thou seest a companion of thy lord present, receivest him with a morose and clouded countenance, fixing thy attention on a calamity that thou hast nothing to do with. Come hither, that thou mayst become more wise. Knowest thou mortal affairs, of what nature they are? I think not; from whence should you? but hear me. Death is a debt that all mortals must pay: and there is not of them one, who knows whether he shall live the coming morrow: for what depends on fortune is uncertain how it will turn out, and is not to be learned, neither is it detected by art. Having heard these things then, and learned them from me, make thyself merry, drink, and think the life allowed from day to day thine own, but the rest Fortune's. And honor also Venus, the most sweet of deities to mortals, for she is a kind deity. But let go these other things, and obey my words, if I appear to speak rightly: I think so indeed. Wilt thou not then leave off thy excessive grief, and drink with me, crowned with garlands, having thrown open these gates? And well know I that the trickling of the cup falling down *thy throat* will change thee from thy present cloudy and pent state of mind. But we who are mortals should think as mortals. Since to all the morose, indeed, and to those of sad countenance, if they take me as judge at least, life is not truly life, but misery.

SERV. I know this; but now we are in circumstances not such as are fit for revel and mirth.

HER. The lady that is dead is a stranger; grieve not too much, for the lords of this house live.

SERV. What live! knowest thou not the misery within the house?

HER. Unless thy lord hath told me any thing falsely.

SERV. He is too, too hospitable.

HER. Is it unmeet that I should be well treated, because a stranger is dead?

SERV. Surely however she was very near.

HER. Has he forborne to tell me any calamity that there is?

SERV. Depart and farewell; we have a care for the evils of our lords.

HER. This speech is the beginning of no foreign loss.

SERV. For I should not, *had it been foreign*, have been grieved at seeing thee reveling.

HER. What! have I received so great an injury from mine host?

SERV. Thou camest not in a fit time for the house to receive thee, for there is grief to us, and thou seest that we are shorn, and our black garments.

HER. But who is it that is dead? Has either any of his children died, or his aged father?

SERV. The wife indeed of Admetus is dead, O stranger.

HER. What sayst thou? and yet did ye receive me?

SERV. *Yes*, for he had too much respect to turn thee from his house.

HER. O unhappy man, what a wife hast thou lost!

SERV. We all are lost, not she alone.

HER. But I did perceive it indeed, when I saw his eye streaming with tears, and his shorn hair, and his countenance; but he persuaded me, saying, that he was conducting the funeral of a stranger to the tomb: but spite of my inclination having passed over these gates, I drank in the house of the hospitable man, while he was in this case, and reveled, crowned as to my

head with garlands. But 'twas thine to tell me not *to do it*, when such an evil was upon the house. Where is he burying her? whither going can I find her?

SERV. By the straight road that leads to Larissa, thou wilt see the polished tomb beyond the suburbs.

HERCULES.

O my much-daring heart and my soul, now show what manner of son the Tirynthian Alcmena, daughter of Electryon, bare thee to Jove. For I must rescue the woman lately dead, Alcestis, and place her again in this house, and perform this service for Admetus. And going I will lay wait for the sable-vested king of the departed, Death, and I think that I shall find him drinking of the libations near the tomb. And if having taken him by lying in wait, rushing from my ambush, I shall seize hold of him, and make a circle around him with mine arms, there is not who shall take him away panting as to his sides, until he release me the woman. But if however I fail of this capture, and he come not to the clottered mass of blood, I will go a journey beneath to the sunless mansions of Cora and her king, and will prefer my request; and I trust that I shall bring up Alcestis, so as to place her in the hands of that host, who received me into his house, nor drove me away, although struck with a heavy calamity, but concealed it, noble as he was, having respect unto me. Who of the Thessalians is more hospitable than he? Who that dwelleth in Greece? Wherefore he shall not say, that he did a service to a worthless man, himself being noble.

ADMETUS, CHORUS.

ADM. Alas! alas! O hateful approach, and hateful prospect of this widowed house. Oh me! Alas! alas! whither can I go! where rest! what can I say! and what not! would that I could perish! Surely my mother brought me forth to heavy fortune. I count the dead happy, them I long for! those houses I desire to dwell in: for neither delight I in viewing the sunbeams, nor treading with my foot upon the earth; of such a hostage has death robbed me, and delivered up to Pluto.

CHOR. Advance, advance; go into the recesses of the house.

(ADM. Oh! Oh!)

Thou hast suffered things that demand groans.

(ADM. Alas! alas!)

Thou hast gone through grief, I well know.

(ADM. Woe! Woe!)

Thou nothing aidest her that is beneath.

(ADM. Ah me! me!)

Never to see thy dear wife's face again before thee, is severe.

ADM. Thou hast made mention of that which ulcerated my soul; for what can be greater ill to man than to lose his faithful wife? Would that I never had married and dwelt with her in the palace. But I judge happy those, who are unmarried and childless; for theirs is one only life, for this to grieve is a moderate burden: but to behold the diseases of children, and the bridal bed wasted by death, is not supportable, when it were in one's power to be without children and unmarried the whole of life.

CHOR. Fate, fate hard to be struggled with hath come.

(ADM. Oh! Oh!)

But puttest thou no bound to thy sorrows?

(ADM. Alas! alas!)

Heavy are they to bear, but still

(ADM. Woe! woe!)

endure, thou art not the first man that hast lost

(ADM. Ah me! me!)

thy wife; but calamity appearing afflicts different men in different shapes.

ADM. O lasting griefs, and sorrows for our friends beneath the earth! — Why did you hinder me from throwing myself into her hallowed grave, and from lying dead with her, by far the most excellent woman? And Pluto would have retained instead of one, two most faithful souls having together passed over the infernal lake.

CHOR. I had a certain kinsman, whose son worthy to be lamented, an only child, died in his house; but nevertheless he bore his calamity with moderation, being bereft of child, though now hastening to gray hairs, and advanced in life.

ADM. O house, how can I enter in? and how dwell in thee now my fortune has undergone this change? Ah me! for there is great difference between: then indeed with Pelian torches, and with bridal songs I entered in, bearing the hand of my dear wife, and there followed a loud-shouting revelry hailing happy both her that is dead and me, inasmuch as being noble, and born of illustrious parents both, we were united together: but now the groan instead of hymeneals, and black array instead of white robes, usher me in to my deserted couch.

CHOR. This grief came quick on happy fortune to thee unschooled in evil: but thou hast saved thy life. Thy wife is dead, she left her love behind: what new thing this? Death has ere this destroyed many wives.

ADM. My friends, I deem the fortune of my wife more happy than mine own, even although these things appear not so. For her indeed no grief shall ever touch, and she hath with glory ceased from many toils. But I, who ought not to have lived, though I have scaped destiny, shall pass a bitter life; I but now perceive. For how can I bear the entering into this house? Whom speaking to, or by whom addressed, can I have joy in entering? Whither shall I turn me? For the solitude within will drive me forth, when I see the place where my wife used to lie, empty, and the seat whereon she used to sit, and the floor throughout the house all dirty, and when my children falling about my knees weep their mother, and they lament their mistress, *thinking* what a lady they have lost from out of the house. Such things within the house; but abroad the nuptials of the Thessalians and the

assemblies full of women will torture me: for I shall not be able to look on the companions of my wife. But whoever is mine enemy will say thus of me: “See that man, who basely lives, who dared not to die, but giving in his stead her, whom he married, escaped Hades, *(and then does he seem to be a man?)* and hates his parents, himself not willing to die.” — Such report shall I have in addition to my woes; why then is it the more honorable course for me to live, my friends, having an evil character and an evil fortune?

CHOR. I too have both been borne aloft through song, and having very much handled arguments have found nothing more powerful than Necessity: nor is there any cure in the Thracian tablets which Orpheus wrote, nor among those medicines, which Phœbus gave the sons of Æsculapius, dispensing them to wretched mortals. But neither to the altars nor to the image of this Goddess alone, is it lawful to approach, she hears not victims. Do not, O revered one, come on me more severe, than hitherto in my life. For Jove, whatever he have assented to, with thee brings this to pass. Thou too perforce subduest the iron among the Chalybi; nor has thy rugged spirit any remorse.

And thee, *Admetus*, the Goddess hath seized in the inevitable grasp of her hand; but bear it, for thou wilt never by weeping bring back on earth the dead from beneath. Even the sons of the Gods by stealth begotten perish in death. Dear she was while she was with us, and dear even now when dead. But thou didst join to thy bed the noblest wife of all women. Nor let the tomb of thy wife be accounted as the mound over the dead that perish, but let it be honored equally with the Gods, a thing for travelers to adore: and some one, going out of his direct road, shall say thus: “She in olden time died for her husband, but now she is a blest divinity: Hail, O adored one, and be propitious!” Such words will be addressed to her. — And lo! here comes, as it seems, the son of Alcmena to thy house, Admetus.

HERCULES, ADMETUS, CHORUS.

HER. One should speak freely to a friend, Admetus, and, not in silence keep within our bosoms what we blame. Now I thought myself worthy as a friend to stand near thy calamities, and to search them out; but thou didst not tell me that it was thy wife’s corse that demanded thy attention; but

didst receive me in thy house, as though occupied in grief for one not thine. And I crowned my head and poured out to the Gods libations in thy house which had suffered this calamity. And I *do* blame thee, I blame thee, having met with this treatment! not that I wish to grieve thee in thy miseries. But wherefore I am come, having turned back again, I will tell thee. Receive and take care of this woman for me, until I come hither driving the Thracian mares, having slain the king of the Bistonians. But if I meet with what I pray I may not meet with, *(for may I return!)* I give thee her as an attendant of thy palace. But with much toil came she into my hands; for I find some who had proposed a public contest for wrestlers, worthy of my labors, from whence I bear off her, having received her as the prize of my victory; for those who conquered in the lighter exercises had to receive horses, but those again who conquered in the greater, the boxing and the wrestling, cattle, and a woman was added to these; but in me, who happened to be there, it had been base to neglect this glorious gain. But, as I said, the woman ought to be a care to you, for I am come not having obtained her by stealth, but with labor; but at some time or other thou too wilt perhaps commend me for it.

ADM. By no means slighting thee, nor considering thee among mine enemies, did I conceal from thee the unhappy fate of my wife; but this had been a grief added to grief, if thou hadst gone to the house of another host: but it was sufficient for me to weep my own calamity. But the woman, if it is in any way possible, I beseech thee, O king, bid some one of the Thessalians, who has not suffered what I have, to take care of *(but thou hast many friends among the Pheræans)* lest thou remind me of my misfortunes. I can not, beholding her in the house, refrain from weeping; add not a sickness to me already sick; for I am enough weighed down with misery. Where besides in the house can a youthful woman be maintained? for she is youthful, as she evinces by her garb and her attire; shall she then live in the men's apartment? And how will she be undefiled, living among young men? A man in his vigor, Hercules, it is no easy thing to restrain; but I have a care for thee. Or can I maintain her, having made her enter the chamber of her that is dead? And how can I introduce her into her bed? I fear a double accusation, both from the citizens, lest any should convict me of having betrayed my benefactress, and lying in the bed of another girl; and I ought to have much regard toward the dead *(and she deserves my respect)*. But

thou, O lady, whoever thou art, know that thou hast the same size of person with Alcestis, and art like her in figure. Ah me! take by the Gods this woman from mine eyes, lest you destroy me already destroyed. For I think, when I look upon her, that I behold my wife; and it agitates my heart, and from mine eyes the streams break forth; O unhappy I, how lately did I begin to taste this bitter grief!

CHOR. I can not indeed speak well of thy fortune; but it behooves thee, whatever thou art, to bear with firmness the dispensation of the Gods.

HER. Oh would that I had such power as to bring thy wife to the light from the infernal mansions, and to do this service for thee!

ADM. Well know I that thou hast the will: but how can this be? It is not possible for the dead to come into the light.

HER. Do not, I pray, go beyond all bound, but bear it decently,

ADM. Tis easier to exhort, than suffering to endure.

HER. But what advantage can you gain if you wish to groan forever?

ADM. I know that too myself; but a certain love impels me.

HER. For to love one that is dead draws the tear.

ADM. She hath destroyed me, and yet more than my words express.

HER. Thou hast lost an excellent wife; who will deny it?

ADM. *Ay,* so that I am no longer delighted with life.

HER. Time will soften the evil, but now it is yet in its vigor on thee.

ADM. Time thou mayst say, if to die be time.

HER. A wife will bid it cease, and the desire of a new marriage.

ADM. Hold thy peace — What saidst thou? I could not have supposed it.

HER. But why? what, wilt not marry, but pass a widowed life alone?

ADM. There is no woman that shall lie with me.

HER. Dost thou think that thou art in aught benefiting her that is dead?

ADM. Her, wherever she is, I am bound to honor.

HER. I praise you indeed, I praise you; but you incur the charge of folly.

ADM. *Praise me, or praise me not;* for you shall never call me bridegroom.

HER. I do praise thee, because thou art a faithful friend to thy wife.

ADM. May I die, when I forsake her, although she is not!

HER. Receive then this noble woman into thine house.

ADM. Do not, I beseech thee by thy father Jove.

HER. And yet you will be acting wrong, if you do not this.

ADM. Yes, and if I do it, I shall have my heart gnawed with sorrow.

HER. Be prevailed upon: perhaps this favor may be proved a duty.

ADM. Ah! would that you had never borne her off from the contest!

HER. Yet with me conquering thou’rt victorious too.

ADM. Thou hast well spoken; but let the woman depart.

HER. She shall depart, if it is needful; but first see whether it be needful.

ADM. It is needful, if thou at least dost not mean to make me angry.

HER. I too have this desire, for I know somewhat.

ADM. Conquer then. Thou dost not however do things pleasing to me.

HER. But some time or other thou wilt praise me; only be persuaded.

ADM. Lead her in, if I must receive her in my house.

HER. I will not deliver up the woman into the charge of the servants.

ADM. But do thou thyself lead her into the house if it seems fit.

HER. I then will give her into thine hands.

ADM. I will not touch her; but she is at liberty to enter the house.

HER. I trust her to thy right hand alone.

ADM. O king, thou compellest me to do this against my will.

HER. Dare to stretch out thy hand and touch the stranger.

ADM. And in truth I stretch it out, as I would to the Gorgon with her severed head.

HER. Have you her?

ADM. I have.

HER. Then keep her fast; and some time or other thou wilt say that the son of Jove is a generous guest. But look on her, whether she seems aught to resemble thy wife; and being blest leave off from thy grief.

ADM. O Gods, what shall I say? An unexpected wonder this! Do I truly see here my wife, or does the mocking joy of the Deity strike me from my senses?

HER. It is not so; but thou beholdest here thy wife.

ADM. Yet see, whether this be not a phantom from the realms beneath.

HER. Thou hast not made thine host an invoker of spirits.

ADM. But do I behold my wife, whom I buried?

HER. Be well assured *thou dost;* but I wonder not at thy disbelief of thy fortune.

ADM. May I touch her, may I speak to her as my living wife?

HER. Speak to her; for thou hast all that thou desirest.

ADM. O face and person of my dearest wife, have I thee beyond my hopes, when I thought never to see thee more?

HER. Thou hast: but *take care* there be no envy of the Gods.

ADM. O noble son of the most powerful Jove, mayst thou be blest, and may thy father, who begot thee, protect thee, for thou alone hast restored me! How didst thou bring her from beneath into this light!

HER. Having fought a battle with the prince of those beneath.

ADM. Where dost thou say thou didst have this conflict with Death!

HER. At the tomb itself, having seized him from ambush with my hands.

ADM. But why, I pray, does this woman stand here speechless?

HER. It is not yet allowed thee to hear her address thee, before she is unbound from her consecrations to the Gods beneath, and the third day come. But lead her in, and as thou oughtest, henceforward, Admetus, continue in thy piety with respect to strangers. And farewell! But I will go and perform the task that is before me for the imperial son of Sthenelus.

ADM. Stay with us, and be a companion of our hearth.

HER. This shall be some time hence, but now I must haste.

ADM. But mayst thou be prosperous, and return on thy journey back. But to the citizens, and to all the tetrarchy I issue my commands, that they institute dances in honor of these happy events, and make the altars odorous

with their sacrifices of oxen that accompany their vows. For now are we placed in a better state of life than the former one: for I will not deny that I am happy.

CHOR. Many are the shapes of the things the deities direct, and many things the Gods perform contrary to our expectations. And those things which we looked for are not accomplished; but the God hath brought to pass things not looked for. Such hath been the event of this affair.

MEDEA

Translated by Theodore Alois Buckley

This famous tragedy was first produced in 431 BC and the plot centres upon the barbarian protagonist and the revenge she takes against her husband Jason, who has abandoned her for another woman. Euripides produced *Medea* along with the lost plays *Philoctetes*, *Dictys* and the satyr play *Theristai*, earning him last place at the City Dionysia festival for that year. All of the other plays are now lost.

The action of the play is set in Corinth, where Jason has brought Medea after the adventures of the Golden Fleece and he has now left her in order to marry Glauce, the daughter of King Creon. The play opens with Medea grieving over her loss and with her elderly nurse fearing what she might do to herself or her children. Creon, also fearing what Medea might do, arrives determined to send her into exile. Medea pleads for a day's respite and Creon begrudgingly gives in. In the next scene Jason arrives to confront her and explain himself. He believes he could not pass up the opportunity to marry a royal princess, as Medea is only a barbarian woman, but hopes to eventually join the two families and keep Medea as his mistress. Medea and the chorus of Corinthian women do not believe him. She reminds him that she left her own people to follow him and that she saved him and slew the dragon. Jason promises to support her after his new marriage, but Medea spurns him and so begins planning her terrible and bloody revenge.

'Medea About to Kill her Children' by Eugêne Delacroix, 1838

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‘Jason and Medea’ by John William Waterhouse, 1907

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

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CHORUS OF CORINTHIAN WOMEN.
CREON.
JASON.
ÆGEUS
MESSENGER.
SONS OF MEDEA.

The Scene lies in the vestibule of the palace of Jason at Corinth.

THE ARGUMENT.

JASON, having come to Corinth, and bringing with him Medea, espouses Glauce, the daughter of Creon, king of Corinth. But Medea, on the point of being banished from Corinth by Creon, having asked to remain one day, and having obtained her wish, sends to Glauce, by the hands of her sons, presents, as an acknowledgment for the favor, a robe and a golden chaplet, which she puts on and perishes; Creon also having embraced his daughter is destroyed. But Medea, when she had slain her children, escapes to Athens, in a chariot drawn by winged dragons, which she received from the Sun, and there marries Ægeus son of Pandion.

MEDEA.

NURSE OF MEDEA.

Would that the hull of Argo had not winged her way to the Colchian land through the Cyanean Symplegades, and that the pine felled in the forests of Pelion had never fallen, nor had caused the hands of the chiefs to row, who went in search of the golden fleece for Pelias; for neither then would my mistress Medea have sailed to the towers of the Iolcian land, deeply smitten in her mind with the love of Jason; nor having persuaded the daughters of Pelias to slay their father would she have inhabited this country of Corinth with her husband and her children, pleasing indeed by her flight the citizens to whose land she came, and herself concurring in every respect with Jason; which is the surest support of conjugal happiness, when the wife is not estranged from the husband. But now every thing is at variance, and the dearest ties are weakened. For having betrayed his own children, and my mistress, Jason reposes in royal wedlock, having married the daughter of Creon, who is prince of this land. But Medea the unhappy, dishonored, calls on his oaths, and recalls the hands they plighted, the greatest pledge of fidelity, and invokes the gods to witness what return she meets with from Jason. And she lies without tasting food, having sunk her body in grief, dissolving all her tedious time in tears, after she had once known that she had been injured by her husband, neither raising her eye, nor lifting her countenance from the ground; but as the rock, or the wave of the sea, does she listen to her friends when advised. Save that sometimes having turned her snow-white neck she to herself bewails her dear father, and her country, and her house, having betrayed which she hath come hither with a man who has now dishonored her. And she wretched hath discovered from affliction what it is not to forsake one's paternal country. But she hates her children, nor is she delighted at beholding them: but I fear her, lest she form some new design: for violent is her mind, nor will it endure to suffer ills. I know her, and I fear her, lest she should force the sharpened sword through her heart, or even should murder the princess and him who married her, and after that receive some greater ill. For she is violent; he who engages with her in enmity will not with ease at least sing the song of victory. But these her children are coming hither having ceased from their exercises, nothing mindful of their mother's ills, for the mind of youth is not wont to grieve.

TUTOR, WITH THE SONS OF MEDEA, NURSE.

TUT. O thou ancient possession of my mistress's house, why dost thou stand at the gates preserving thus thy solitude, bewailing to thyself our misfortunes? How doth Medea wish to be left alone without thee?

NUR. O aged man, attendant on the children of Jason, to faithful servants the affairs of their masters turning out ill are a calamity, and lay hold upon their feelings. For I have arrived at such a height of grief that desire hath stolen on me to come forth hence and tell the misfortunes of Medea to the earth and heaven.

TUT. Does not she wretched yet receive any respite from her grief?

NUR. I envy thy ignorance; her woe is at its rise, and not even yet at its height.

TUT. O unwise woman, if it is allowable to say this of one's lords, since she knows nothing of later ills.

NUR. But what is this, O aged man? grudge not to tell me.

TUT. Nothing: I have repented even of what was said before.

NUR. Do not, I beseech you by your beard, conceal it from your fellow-servant; for I will preserve silence, if it be necessary, on these subjects.

TUT. I heard from some one who was saying, not appearing to listen, having approached the places where dice is played, where the elders sit, around the hallowed font of Pirene, that the king of this land, Creon, intends to banish from the Corinthian country these children, together with their mother; whether this report be true, however, I know not; but I wish this may not be the case.

NUR. And will Jason endure to see his children suffer this, even although he is at enmity with their mother?

TUT. Ancient alliances are deserted for new, and he is no friend to this family.

NUR. We perish then, if to the old we shall add a new ill, before the former be exhausted.

TUT. But do thou, for it is not seasonable that my mistress should know this, restrain your tongue, and be silent on this report.

NUR. O my children, do you hear what your father is toward you? Yet may he not perish, for he is my master, yet he is found to be treacherous toward his friends.

TUT. And what man is not? dost thou only now know this, that every one loves himself dearer than his neighbor, some indeed with justice, but others even for the sake of gain, unless it be that their father loves not these at least on account of new nuptials.

NUR. Go within the house, my children, for all will be well. But do thou keep these as much as possible out of the way, and let them not approach their mother, deranged through grief. For but now I saw her looking with wildness in her eyes on these, as about to execute some design, nor will she cease from her fury, I well know, before she overwhelm some one with it; upon her enemies however, and not her friends, may she do some [ill.]

MEDEA. *(within)* Wretch that I am, and miserable on account of my misfortunes, alas me! would I might perish!

NUR. Thus it is, my children; your mother excites her heart, excites her fury. Hasten as quick as possible within the house, and come not near her sight, nor approach her, but guard against the fierce temper and violent nature of her self-willed mind. Go now, go as quick as possible within. But it is evident that the cloud of grief raised up from the beginning will quickly burst forth with greater fury; what I pray will her soul, great in rage, implacable, irritated by ills, perform!

MED. Alas! alas! I wretched have suffered, have suffered treatment worthy of great lamentation. O ye accursed children of a hated mother, may ye perish with your father, and may the whole house fall.

NUR. Alas! alas! me miserable! but why should your children share their father's error? Why dost thou hate these! Alas me, my children, how beyond measure do I grieve lest ye suffer any evil! Dreadful are the dispositions of tyrants, and somehow in few things controlled, in most absolute, they with difficulty lay aside their passion. The being accustomed then to live in mediocrity of life is the better: may it be my lot then to grow old if not in splendor, at least in security. For, in the first place, even to mention the name of moderation carries with it superiority, but to use it is by far the best conduct for men; but excess of fortune brings more power to men than is convenient; and has brought greater woes upon families, when the Deity be enraged.

NURSE, CHORUS.

CHOR. I heard the voice, I heard the cry of the unhappy Colchian; is not she yet appeased? but, O aged matron, tell me; for within the apartment with double doors, I heard her cry; nor am I delighted, O woman, with the griefs of the family, since it is friendly to me.

NUR. The family is not; these things are gone already: for he possesses the bed of royalty; but she, my mistress, is melting away her life in her chamber, in no way soothing her mind by the advice of any one of her friends.

MED. Alas! alas! may the flame of heaven rush through my head, what profit for me to live any longer. Alas! alas! may I rest myself in death, having left a hated life.

CHOR. Dost thou hear, O Jove, and earth, and light, the cry which the wretched bride utters? why I pray should this insatiable love of the marriage-bed hasten thee, O vain woman, to death? Pray not for this. But if thy husband courts a new bed, be not thus enraged with him. Jove will avenge these wrongs for thee: waste not thyself so, bewailing thy husband.

MED. O great Themis and revered Diana, do ye behold what I suffer, having bound my accursed husband by powerful oaths? Whom may I at some time see and his bride torn piecemeal with their very houses, who dare

to injure me first. O my father, O my city, whom I basely abandoned, having slain my brother.

NUR. Do ye hear what she says, and how she invokes Themis hearing the vow, and Jove who is considered the dispenser of oaths to mortals? It is not possible that my mistress will lull her rage to rest on any trivial circumstance.

CHOR. By what means could she come into our sight, and hear the voice of our discourse, if she would by any means remit her fierce anger and her fury of mind. Let not my zeal however be wanting ever to my friends. But go and conduct her hither from without the house, my friend, and tell her this, hasten, before she injure in any way those within, for this grief of hers is increased to a great height.

NUR. I will do it, but I fear that I shall not persuade my mistress; nevertheless I will give you this favor of my labor. And yet with the aspect of a lioness that has just brought forth does she look sternly on her attendants when any one approaches near attempting to address her. But thou wouldest not err in calling men of old foolish and nothing wise, who invented songs, for festivals, for banquets, and for suppers, the delights of life that charm the ear; but no mortal has discovered how to soothe with music and with varied strains those bitter pangs, from which death and dreadful misfortunes overthrow families. And yet for men to assuage these griefs with music were gain; but where the plenteous banquet is furnished, why raise they the song in vain? for the present bounty of the feast brings pleasure of itself to men.

CHOR. I heard the dismal sound of groans, and in a shrill voice she vents her bitter anguish on the traitor to her bed, her faithless husband — and suffering wrongs she calls upon the Goddess Themis, arbitress of oaths, daughter of Jove, who conducted her to the opposite coast of Greece, across the sea by night, over the salt straits of the boundless ocean.

MEDEA, CHORUS.

MED. Ye Corinthian dames, I have come from out my palace; do not in any wise blame me; for I have known many men who have been renowned,

some who have lived far from public notice, and others in the world; but those of a retired turn have gained for themselves a character of infamy and indolence. For justice dwells not in the eyes of man, whoever, before he can well discover the disposition of a man, hates him at sight, in no way wronged by him. But it is necessary for a stranger exactly to conform himself to the state, nor would I praise the native, whoever becoming self-willed is insolent to his fellow-citizens through ignorance. But this unexpected event that hath fallen upon me hath destroyed my spirit: I am going, and having given up the pleasure of life I am desirous to meet death, my friends. For he on whom my all rested, as you well know, my husband, has turned out the basest of men. But of all things as many as have life and intellect, we women are the most wretched race. Who indeed first must purchase a husband with excess of money, and receive him a lord of our persons; for this is a still greater ill than the former. And in this is the greatest risk, whether we receive a bad one or a good one; for divorces bring not good fame to women, nor is it possible to repudiate one's husband. But on passing to new tempers and new laws, one need be a prophetess, as one can not learn of one's self, what sort of consort one shall most likely experience. And if with us carefully performing these things a husband shall dwell not imposing on us a yoke with severity, enviable is our life; if not, to die is better. But a man, when he is displeased living with those at home, having gone abroad is wont to relieve his heart of uneasiness, having recourse either to some friend or compeer. But we must look but to one person. But they say of us that we live a life of ease at home, but they are fighting with the spear; judging ill, since I would rather thrice stand in arms, than once suffer the pangs of child-birth. But, for the same argument comes not home to you and me, this is thy city, and thy father's house, thine are both the luxuries of life, and the society of friends; but I being destitute, cityless, am wronged by my husband, brought as a prize from a foreign land, having neither mother, nor brother, nor relation to afford me shelter from this calamity. So much then I wish to obtain from you, if any plan or contrivance be devised by me to repay with justice these injuries on my husband, and on him who gave his daughter, and on her to whom he was married, that you would be silent; for a woman in other respects is full of fear, and timid to look upon deeds of courage and the sword; but when she is injured in her bed, no other disposition is more blood-thirsty.

CHOR. I will do this; for with justice, Medea, wilt thou avenge thyself on thy husband, and I do not wonder that you lament your misfortunes. But I see Creon monarch of this land advancing, the messenger of new counsels.

CREON, MEDEA, CHORUS.

CRE. Thee of gloomy countenance, and enraged with thy husband, Medea, I command to depart in exile from out of this land, taking with thee thy two children, and not to delay in any way, since I am the arbiter of this edict, and I will not return back to my palace, until I shall drive thee beyond the boundaries of this realm.

MED. Alas! alas! I wretched am utterly destroyed, for my enemies stretch out every cable against me; nor is there any easy escape from this evil, but I will speak, although suffering injurious treatment; for what, Creon, dost thou drive me from this land?

CRE. I fear thee *(there is no need for me to wrap my words in obscurity,)* lest thou do my child some irremediable mischief, And many circumstances are in unison with this dread. Thou art wise, and skilled in many evil sciences, and thou art exasperated, deprived of thy husband's bed. And I hear that thou threatenest, as they tell me, to wreak some deed of vengeance on the betrother, and the espouser and the espoused; against this then, before I suffer, will I guard. Better is it for me now to incur enmity from you, than softened by your words afterward greatly to lament it.

MED. Alas! alas! not now for the first time, but often, Creon, hath this opinion injured me, and worked me much woe. But whatever man is prudent, let him never educate his children too deep in wisdom. For, independent of the other charges of idleness which they meet with, they find hostile envy from their fellow-citizens. For holding out to fools some new-discovered wisdom, thou wilt seem to be useless and not wise. And being judged superior to others who seem to have some varied knowledge, thou wilt appear offensive in the city. But even I myself share this fortune; for being wise, to some I am an object of envy, but to others, unsuited; but I am not very wise. Thou then fearest me, lest thou suffer some grievous mischief. My affairs are not in a state, fear me not, Creon, so as to offend against princes. For in what hast thou injured me? Thou hast given thy

daughter to whom thy mind led thee; but I hate my husband: but thou, I think, didst these things in prudence. And now I envy not that thy affairs are prospering; make your alliances, be successful; but suffer me to dwell in this land, for although injured will I keep silence, overcome by my superiors.

CRE. Thou speakest soft words to the ear, but within my mind I have my fears, lest thou meditate some evil intent. And so much the less do I trust thee than before. For a woman that is quick to anger, and a man likewise, is easier to guard against, than one that is crafty and keeps silence. But begone as quick as possible, make no more words; since this is decreed, and thou hast no art, by which thou wilt stay with us, being hostile to me.

MED. No I beseech you by your knees, and your newly-married daughter.

CRE. Thou wastest words; for thou wilt never persuade me.

MED. Wilt thou then banish me, nor reverence my prayers?

CRE. For I do not love thee better than my own family.

MED. O my country, how I remember thee now!

CRE. For next to my children it is much the dearest thing to me.

MED. Alas! alas! how great an ill is love to man!

CRE. That is, I think, as fortune also shall attend it.

MED. Jove, let it not escape thine eye, who is the cause of these misfortunes.

CRE. Begone, fond woman, and free me from these cares.

MED. Care indeed; and do not I experience cares?

CRE. Quickly shalt thou be driven hence by force by the hands of my domestics.

MED. No, I pray not this at least; but I implore thee, Creon.

CRE. Thou wilt give trouble, woman, it seems.

MED. I will go; I dare not ask to obtain this of you.

CRE. Why then dost thou resist, and wilt not depart from these realms?

MED. Permit me to remain here this one day, and to bring my purpose to a conclusion, in what way we shall fly, and to make provision for my sons, since their father in no way regards providing for his children; but pity them, for thou also art the father of children; and it is probable that thou hast tenderness: for of myself I have no care whether I may suffer banishment, but I weep for them experiencing this calamity.

CRE. My disposition is least of all imperious, and through feeling pity in many cases have I injured myself. And now I see that I am doing wrong, O lady, but nevertheless thou shalt obtain thy request; but this I warn thee, if to-morrow's light of the God of day shall behold thee and thy children within the confines of these realms, thou shalt die: this word is spoken in truth. But now if thou must stay, remain here yet one day, for thou wilt not do any horrid deed of which I have dread.

MEDEA, CHORUS.

CHOR. Unhappy woman! alas wretched on account of thy griefs! whither wilt thou turn? what hospitality, or house, or country wilt thou find a refuge for these ills? how the Deity hath led thee, Medea, into a pathless tide of woes!

MED. Ill hath it been done on every side. Who will gainsay it? but these things are not in this way, do not yet think it. Still is there a contest for those lately married, and to those allied to them no small affliction. For dost thou think I ever would have fawned upon this man, if I were not to gain something, or form some plan? I would not even have addressed him. I would not even have touched him with my hands. But he hath arrived at such a height of folly, as that, when it was in his power to have crushed my plans, by banishing me from this land, he hath granted me to stay this day in

which three of mine enemies will I put to death, the father, the bride, and my husband. But having in my power many resources of destruction against them, I know not, my friends, which I shall first attempt. Whether shall I consume the bridal house with fire, or force the sharpened sword through her heart having entered the chamber by stealth where the couch is spread? But one thing is against me; if I should be caught entering the house and prosecuting my plans, by my death I shall afford laughter for my foes. Best then is it to pursue the straight path, in which I am most skilled, to take them off by poison. Let it be so. And suppose them dead: what city will receive me? What hospitable stranger affording a land of safety and a faithful home will protect my person? There is none. Waiting then yet a little time, if any tower of safety shall appear to us, I will proceed to this murder in treachery and silence. But if ill fortune that leaves me without resource force me, I myself having grasped the sword, although I should die, will kill them, and will rush to the extreme height of daring. For never, I swear by my mistress whom I revere most of all, and have chosen for my assistant, Hecate, who dwells in the inmost recesses of my house, shall any one of them wring my heart with grief with impunity. Bitter and mournful to them will I make these nuptials, and bitter this alliance, and my flight from this land. But come, spare none of these sciences in which thou art skilled, Medea, deliberating and plotting. Proceed to the deed of terror: now is the time of resolution: seest thou what thou art suffering? Ill doth it become thee to incur ridicule from the race of Sisyphus, and from the nuptials of Jason, who art sprung from a noble father, and from the sun. And thou art skilled. Besides also we women are, by nature, to good actions of the least capacity, but the most cunning inventors of every ill.

CHOR. The waters of the hallowed streams flow upward to their sources, and justice and every thing is reversed. The counsels of men are treacherous, and no longer is the faith of heaven firm. But fame changes, so that my sex may have the glory. Honor cometh to the female race; no longer shall opprobrious fame oppress the women. But the Muses shall cease from their ancient strains, from celebrating our perfidy. For Phœbus, leader of the choir, gave not to our minds the heavenly music of the lyre, since they would in turn have raised a strain against the race of men. But time of old hath much to say both of our life and the life of men. But thou hast sailed from thy father’s house with maddened heart, having passed through the

double rocks of the ocean, and thou dwellest in a foreign land, having lost the shelter of thy widowed bed, wretched woman, and art driven dishonored an exile from this land. The reverence of oaths is gone, nor does shame any longer dwell in mighty Greece, but hath fled away through the air. But thou helpless woman hast neither father's house to afford you haven from your woes, and another more powerful queen of the nuptial bed rules over the house.

JASON, MEDEA, CHORUS.

JAS. Not now for the first time, but often have I perceived that fierce anger is an irremediable ill. For though it was in your power to inhabit this land and this house, bearing with gentleness the determination of thy superiors, by thy rash words thou shalt be banished from this land. And to me indeed it is of no importance; never cease from saying that Jason is the worst of men. But for what has been said by thee against the royal family, think it the greatest good fortune that thou art punished by banishment only. I indeed was always employed in diminishing the anger of the enraged princes, and was willing that thou shouldest remain. But thou remittest not of thy folly, always reviling the ruling powers; wherefore thou shalt be banished from the land. But nevertheless even after this am I come, not wearied with my friends, providing for thee, O woman, that thou mightest not be banished with thy children, either without money, or in want of any thing. Banishment draws many misfortunes with it. For although thou hatest me, I never could wish thee evil.

MED. O thou vilest of men *(for this is the greatest reproach I have in my power with my tongue to tell thee, for thy unmanly cowardice)*, hast thou come to us, hast thou come, who art most hateful? This is not fortitude, or confidence, to look in the face of friends whom thou hast injured, but the worst of all diseases among men, impudence. But thou hast done well in coming. For both I shall be lightened in my heart while reviling thee, and thou wilt be pained at hearing me. But I will first begin to speak from the first circumstances. I preserved thee *(as those Greeks well know as many as embarked with thee on board the same ship Argo)* when sent to master the fire-breathing bulls with the yoke, and to sow the fatal seed: and having slain the dragon who watching around the golden fleece guarded it with

spiry folds, a sleepless guard, I raised up to thee a light of safety. But I myself having betrayed my father, and my house, came to the Peliotic Iolcos with thee, with more readiness than prudence. And I slew Pelias by a death which it is most miserable to die, by the hands of his own children, and I freed thee from every fear. And having experienced these services from me, thou vilest of men, thou hast betrayed me and hast procured for thyself a new bed, children being born to thee, for if thou wert still childless it would be pardonable in thee to be enamored of this alliance. But the faith of oaths is vanished: nor can I discover whether thou thinkest that the former Gods are not still in power, or whether new laws are now laid down for men, since thou art at least conscious of being perjured toward me. Alas! this right hand which thou hast often touched, and these knees, since in vain have I been polluted by a wicked husband, and have failed in my hopes. Come *(for I will converse with thee as with a friend, not expecting to receive any benefit from thee at least, but nevertheless I will; for when questioned thou wilt appear more base)*, now whither shall I turn? Whether to my father's house, which I betrayed for thee, and my country, and came hither? or to the miserable daughters of Pelias? friendly would they indeed receive me in their house, whose father I slew. For thus it is: I am in enmity with my friends at home; but those whom I ought not to injure, by obliging thee, I make my enemies. On which account in return for this thou hast made me to be called happy by many dames through Greece, and in thee I, wretch that I am, have an admirable and faithful husband, if cast out at least I shall fly this land, deserted by my friends, lonely with thy lonely children. Fair renown indeed to the new married bridegroom, that his children are wandering in poverty, and I also who preserved thee. O Jove, why I pray hast thou given to men certain proofs of the gold which is adulterate, but no mark is set by nature on the person of men by which one may distinguish the bad man.

CHOR. Dreadful is that anger and irremediable, when friends with friends kindle strife.

JAS. It befits me, it seems, not to be weak in argument, but as the prudent pilot of a vessel, with all the sail that can be hoisted, to run from out of thy violent abuse, O woman. But I, since thou thus much vauntest thy favors, think that Venus alone both of Gods and men was the protectress of my

voyage. But thou hast a fickle mind, but it is an invidious account to go through, how love compelled thee with his inevitable arrows to preserve my life. But I will not follow up arguments with too great accuracy, for where thou hast assisted me it is well. Moreover thou hast received more at least from my safety than thou gavest, as I will explain to thee. First of all thou dwellest in Greece instead of a foreign land, and thou learnest what justice is, and to enjoy laws, not to be directed by mere force. And all the Grecians have seen that thou art wise, and thou hast renown; but if thou wert dwelling in the extreme confines of that land, there would not have been fame of thee. But may neither gold in my house be be my lot, nor to attune the strain more sweet than Orpheus, if my fortune be not conspicuous. So much then have I said of my toils; for thou first broughtest forward this contest of words. But with regard to those reproaches which thou heapest on me for my royal marriage, in this will I show first that I have been wise, in the next place moderate, thirdly a great friend to thee, and my children: but be silent. After I had come hither from the Iolcian land bringing with me many grievous calamities, what measure more fortunate than this could I have invented, than, an exile as I was, to marry the daughter of the monarch? not, by which thou art grated, loathing thy bed, nor smitten with desire of a new bride, nor having emulation of a numerous offspring, for those born to me are sufficient, nor do I find fault with that; but that *(which is of the greatest consequence)* we might live honorably, and might not be in want, knowing well that every friend flies out of the way of a poor man; and that I might bring up my children worthy of my house, and that having begotten brothers to those children sprung from thee, I might place them on the same footing, and having united the family, I might flourish; for both thou hast some need of children, and to me it were advantageous to advance my present progeny by means of the children which might arise; have I determined ill? not even thou couldest say so, if thy bed did not gall thee. But thus far have you come, that your bed being safe, you women think that you have every thing. But if any misfortune befall that, the most excellent and fairest objects you make the most hateful. It were well then that men should generate children from some other source, and that the female race should not exist, and thus there would not have been any evil among men.

CHOR. Jason, thou hast well adorned these arguments of thine, but nevertheless to me, although I speak reluctantly, thou appearest, in

betraying thy wife, to act unjustly.

MED. Surely I am in many things different from many mortals, for in my judgment, whatever man being unjust, is deeply skilled in argument, merits the severest punishment. For vaunting that with his tongue he can well gloze over injustice, he dares to work deceit, but he is not over-wise. Thus do not thou also be now plausible to me, nor skilled in speaking, for one word will overthrow thee: it behooved thee, if thou wert not a bad man, to have contracted this marriage having persuaded me, and not without the knowledge of thy friends.

JAS. Well wouldest thou have lent assistance to this report, if I had mentioned the marriage to thee, who not even now endurest to lay aside this unabated rage of heart.

MED. This did not move thee, but a foreign bed would lead in its result to an old age without honor.

JAS. Be well assured of this, that I did not form this alliance with the princess, which I now hold, for the sake of the woman, but, as I said before also, wishing to preserve thee, and to beget royal children brothers to my sons, a support to our house.

MED. Let not a splendid life of bitterness be my lot, nor wealth, which rends my heart.

JAS. Dost thou know how to alter thy prayers, and appear wiser? Let not good things ever seem to you bitter, nor when in prosperity seem to be in adversity.

MED. Insult me, since thou hast refuge, but I destitute shall fly this land.

JAS. Thou chosest this thyself, blame no one else.

MED. By doing what? by marrying and betraying thee?

JAS. By imprecating unhallowed curses on the royal family.

MED. From thy house at least am I laden with curses.

JAS. I will not dispute more of this with thee. But if thou wishest to receive either for thyself or children any part of my wealth as an assistant on thy flight, speak, since I am ready to give with an unsparing hand, and to send tokens of hospitality to my friends, who will treat you well; and refusing these thou wilt be foolish, woman, but ceasing from thine anger, thou wilt gain better treatment.

MED. I will neither use thy friends, nor will I receive aught; do not give to me, for the gifts of a bad man bring no assistance.

JAS. Then I call the Gods to witness, that I wish to assist thee and thy children in every thing; but good things please thee not, but thou rejectest thy friends with audacity, wherefore shalt thou grieve the more.

MED. Begone, for thou art captured by desire of thy new bride, tarrying so long without the palace; wed her, for perhaps, but with the assistance of the God shall it be said, thou wilt make such a marriage alliance, as thou wilt hereafter wish to renounce.

CHOR. The loves, when they come too impetuously, have given neither good report nor virtue among men, but if Venus come with moderation, no other Goddess is so benign. Never, O my mistress, mayest thou send forth against me from thy golden bow thy inevitable shaft, having steeped it in desire. But may temperance preserve me, the noblest gift of heaven; never may dreaded Venus, having smitten my mind for another's bed, heap upon me jealous passions and unabated quarrels, but approving the peaceful union, may she quick of perception sit in judgment on the bed of women. O my country, and my house, never may I be an outcast of my city, having a life scarce to be endured through poverty, the most lamentable of all woes. By death, by death, may I before that be subdued, having lived to accomplish that day; but no greater misfortune is there than to be deprived of one's paternal country. We have seen it, nor have we to speak from others' accounts; for thee, neither city nor friend hath pitied, though suffering the most dreadful anguish. Thankless may he perish who desires not to assist his friends, having unlocked the pure treasures of his mind; never shall he be friend to me.

ÆGEUS, MEDEA, CHORUS.

ÆG. Medea, hail! for no one hath known a more honorable salutation to address to friends than this.

MED. Hail thou also, son of the wise Pandion, Ægeus, coming from what quarter dost thou tread the plain of this land?

ÆG. Having left the ancient oracle of Phœbus.

MED. But wherefore wert thou sent to the prophetic centre of the earth?

ÆG. Inquiring of the God how offspring may arise to me?

MED. By the Gods, tell me, dost thou live this life hitherto childless?

ÆG. Childless I am, by the disposal of some deity.

MED. Hast thou a wife, or knowest thou not the marriage-bed!

ÆG. I am not destitute of the connubial bed.

MED. What then did Apollo tell thee respecting thy offspring?

ÆG. Words deeper than a man can form opinion of.

MED. Is it allowable for me to know the oracle of the God?

ÆG. Certainly, inasmuch as it needs also a deep-skilled mind.

MED. What then did he say? Speak, if I may hear.

ÆG. That I was not to loose the projecting foot of the vessel —

MED. Before thou didst what, or came to what land?

ÆG. Before I revisit my paternal hearth.

MED. Then as desiring what dost thou direct thy voyage to this land?

ÆG. There is one Pittheus, king of the country of Trazene.

MED. The most pious son, as report says, of Pelops.

ÆG. To him I wish to communicate the oracle of the God.

MED. For he is a wise man, and versed in such matters.

ÆG. And to me at least the dearest of all my friends in war.

MED. Mayest thou prosper, and obtain what thou desirest.

ÆG. But why is thine eye and thy color thus faded?

MED. Ægeus, my husband is the worst of all men.

ÆG. What sayest thou? tell me all thy troubles.

MED. Jason wrongs me, having never suffered wrong from me.

ÆG. Having done what? tell me more clearly.

MED. He hath here a wife besides me, mistress of the house.

ÆG. Hath he dared to commit this disgraceful action?

MED. Be assured he has; but we his former friends are dishonored.

ÆG. Enamored of her, or hating thy bed?

MED. [Smitten with] violent love indeed, he was faithless to his friends.

ÆG. Let him perish then, since, as you say, he is a bad man.

MED. He was charmed to receive an alliance with princes.

ÆG. And who gives the bride to him? finish the account, I beg.

MED. Creon, who is monarch of this Corinthian land.

ÆG. Pardonable was it then that thou art grieved, O lady.

MED. I perish, and in addition to this am I banished from this land.

ÆG. By whom? thou art mentioning another fresh misfortune.

MED. Creon drives me an exile out of this land of Corinth.

ÆG. And does Jason suffer it? I praise not this.

MED. By his words he does not, but at heart he wishes [to endure my banishment:] but by this thy beard I entreat thee, and by these thy knees, and I become thy suppliant, pity me, pity this unfortunate woman, nor behold me going forth in exile abandoned, but receive me at thy hearth in thy country and thy house. Thus by the Gods shall thy desire of children be accomplished to thee, and thou thyself shalt die in happiness. But thou knowest not what this fortune is that thou hast found; but I will free thee from being childless, and I will cause thee to raise up offspring, such charms I know.

ÆG. On many accounts, O lady, am I willing to confer this favor on thee, first on account of the Gods, then of the children, whose birth thou holdest forth; for on this point else I am totally sunk in despair. But thus am I determined: if thou comest to my country, I will endeavor to receive thee with hospitality, being a just man; so much however I beforehand apprise thee of, O lady, I shall not be willing to lead thee with me from this land; but if thou comest thyself to my house, thou shalt stay there in safety, and to no one will I give thee up. But do thou of thyself withdraw thy foot from this country, for I wish to be without blame even among strangers.

MED. It shall be so, but if there was a pledge of this given to me, I should have all things from thee in a noble manner.

ÆG. Dost thou not trust me? what is thy difficulty?

MED. I trust thee; but the house of Pelias is mine enemy, and Creon too; to these then, wert thou bound by oaths, thou wouldest not give me up from the country, should they attempt to drag me thence. But having agreed by words alone, and without calling the Gods to witness, thou mightest be their

friend, and perhaps be persuaded by an embassy; for weak is my state, but theirs are riches, and a royal house.

ÆG. Thou hast spoken much prudence, O lady. But if it seems fit to thee that I should do this, I refuse not. For to me also this seems the safest plan, that I should have some pretext to show to your enemies, and thy safety is better secured; propose the Gods that I am to invoke.

MED. Swear by the earth, and by the sun the father of my father, and join the whole race of Gods.

ÆG. That I will do what thing, or what not do? speak.

MED. That thou wilt neither thyself ever cast me forth from out of thy country, nor, if any one of my enemies desire to drag me thence, that thou wilt, while living, give me up willingly.

ÆG. I swear by the earth, and the hallowed majesty of the sun, and by all the Gods, to abide by what I hear from thee.

MED. It is sufficient: but what wilt thou endure shouldest thou not abide by this oath?

ÆG. That which befalls impious men.

MED. Go with blessings; for every thing is well. And I will come as quick as possible to thy city, having performed what I intend, and having obtained what I desire.

CHOR. But may the son of Maia the king, the guide, conduct thee safely to thy house, and the plans of those things, which thou anxiously keepest in thy mind, mayest thou bring to completion, since, Ægeus, thou hast appeared to us to be a noble man.

MEDEA, CHORUS.

MED. O Jove, and thou vengeance of Jove, and thou light of the sun, now, my friends, shall I obtain a splendid victory over my enemies, and I have struck into the path. Now is there hope that my enemies will suffer

punishment. For this man, where I was most at a loss, hath appeared a harbor to my plans. From him will I make fast my cable from the stern, having come to the town and citadel of Pallas. But now will I communicate all my plans to thee; but receive my words not as attuned to pleasure. Having sent one of my domestics, I will ask Jason to come into my presence; and when he is come, I will address gentle words to him, as that it appears to me that these his actions are both honorable, and are advantageous and well determined on. And I will entreat him that my sons may stay; not that I would leave my children in a hostile country for my enemies to insult, but that by deceit I may slay the king's daughter. For I will send them bearing presents in their hands, both a fine-wrought robe, and a golden-twined wreath. And if she take the ornaments and place them round her person, she shall perish miserably, and every one who shall touch the damsel; with such charms will I anoint the presents. Here however I finish this account; but I bewail the deed such as must next be done by me; for I shall slay my children; there is no one who shall rescue them from me; and having heaped in ruins the whole house of Jason, I will go from out this land, flying the murder of my dearest children, and having dared a deed most unhallowed. For it is not to be borne, my friends, to be derided by one's enemies. Let things take their course; what gain is it to me to live longer? I have neither country, nor house, nor refuge from my ills. Then erred I, when I left my father's house, persuaded by the words of a Grecian man, who with the will of the Gods shall suffer punishment from me. For neither shall he ever hereafter behold the children he had by me alive, nor shall he raise a child by his new wedded wife, since it is fated that the wretch should wretchedly perish by my spells. Let no one think me mean-spirited and weak, nor of a gentle temper, but of a contrary disposition to my foes relentless, and to my friends kind: for the lives of such sort are most glorious.

CHOR. Since thou hast communicated this plan to me, desirous both of doing good to thee, and assisting the laws of mortals, I dissuade thee from doing this.

MED. It can not be otherwise, but it is pardonable in thee to say this, not suffering the cruel treatment that I do.

CHOR. But wilt thou dare to slay thy two sons, O lady?

MED. For in this way will my husband be most afflicted.

CHOR. But thou at least wilt be the most wretched woman.

MED. Be that as it may: all intervening words are superfluous; but go, hasten, and bring Jason hither; for I make use of thee in all matters of trust. And thou wilt mention nothing of the plans determined on by me, if at least thou meanest well to thy mistress, and art a woman.

CHOR. The Athenians happy of old, and the descendants of the blessed Gods, feeding on the most exalted wisdom of a country sacred and unconquered, always tripping elegantly through the purest atmosphere, where they say that of old the golden-haired Harmonia gave birth to the chaste nine Pierian Muses. And they report also that Venus drawing in her breath from the stream of the fair-flowing Cephisus, breathed over their country gentle sweetly-breathing gales of air; and always entwining in her hair the fragrant wreath of roses, sends the loves as assessors to wisdom; the assistants of every virtue. How then will the city of hallowed rivers, or the country which conducts thee to friends, receive the murderer of her children, the unholy one? Consider in conjunction with others of the slaughter of thy children, consider what a murder thou wilt undertake. Do not by thy knees, by every plea, by every prayer, we entreat you, do not murder your children; but how wilt thou acquire confidence either of mind or hand or in heart against thy children, attempting a dreadful deed of boldness? But how, having darted thine eyes upon thy children, wilt thou endure the perpetration of the murder without tears? Thou wilt not be able, when thy children fall suppliant at thy feet, to imbrue thy savage hand in their wretched life-blood.

JASON, MEDEA, CHORUS.

JAS. I am come, by thee requested; for although thou art enraged, thou shalt not be deprived of this at least; but I will hear what new service thou dost desire of me, lady.

MED. Jason, I entreat you to be forgiving of what has been said, but right is it that you should bear with my anger, since many friendly acts have been done by us two. But I reasoned with myself and rebuked myself; wayward woman, why am I maddened and am enraged with those who consult well for me? and why am I in enmity with the princes of the land and with my husband, who is acting in the most advantageous manner for us, having married a princess, and begetting brothers to my children? Shall I not cease from my rage? What injury do I suffer, the Gods providing well for me? Have I not children? And I know that I am flying the country, and am in want of friends. Revolving this in my mind I perceive that I had much imprudence, and was enraged without reason. Now then I approve of this, and thou appearest to me to be prudent, having added this alliance to us; but I was foolish, who ought to share in these plans, and to join in adorning and to stand by the bed, and to delight with thee that thy bride was enamored of thee; but we women are as we are, I will not speak evil of the sex; wherefore it is not right that you should put yourself on an equality with the evil, nor repay folly for folly. I give up, and say that then I erred in judgment, but now I have determined on these things better. O my children, my children, come forth, leave the house, come forth, salute, and address your father with me, and be reconciled to your friends from your former hatred together with your mother. For there is amity between us, and my rage hath ceased. Take his right hand. Alas! my misfortunes; how I feel some hidden ill in my mind! Will ye, my children, in this manner, and for a long time enjoying life, stretch out your dear hands? Wretch that I am! how near am I to weeping and full of fear! — But at last canceling this dispute with your father, I have filled thus my tender sight with tears.

CHOR. In my eyes also the moist tear is arisen; and may not the evil advance to a greater height than it is at present.

JAS. I approve of this, lady, nor do I blame the past; for it is reasonable that the female sex be enraged with a husband who barters them for another union. — But thy heart has changed to the more proper side, and thou hast discovered, but after some time, the better counsel: these are the actions of a wise woman. But for you, my sons, your father not without thought hath formed many provident plans, with the assistance of the Gods. For I think that you will be yet the first in this Corinthian country, together with your

brothers. But advance and prosper: and the rest your father, and whatever God is propitious, will effect. And may I behold you blooming arrive at the prime of youth, superior to my enemies. And thou, why dost thou bedew thine eyes with the moist tear, having turned aside thy white cheek, and why dost thou not receive these words from me with pleasure?

MED. It is nothing. I was thinking of my sons.

JAS. Be of good courage; for I will arange well for them.

MED. I will be so, I will not mistrust thy words; but a woman is of soft mould, and was born to tears.

JAS. Why, I pray, dost thou so grieve for thy children?

MED. I brought them into the world, and when thou wert praying that thy children might live, a feeling of pity came upon me if that would be. But for what cause thou hast come to a conference with me, partly hath been explained, but the other reasons I will mention. Since it appeareth fit to the royal family to send me from this country, for me also this appears best, I know it well, that I might not dwell here, a check either to thee or to the princes of the land; for I seem to be an object of enmity to the house; I indeed will set out from this land in flight; but to the end that the children may be brought up by thy hand, entreat Creon that they may not leave this land.

JAS. I know not whether I shall persuade him; but it is right to try.

MED. But do thou then exhort thy bride to ask her father, that my children may not leave this country.

JAS. Certainly I will, and I think at least that she will persuade him, if indeed she be one of the female sex.

MED. I also will assist you in this task, for I will send to her presents which *(I well know)* far surpass in beauty any now among men, both a fine-wrought robe, and a golden-twined chaplet, my sons carrying them. But as quick as possible let one of my attendants bring hither these ornaments. Thy

bride shall be blessed not in one instance, but in many, having met with you at least the best of husbands, and possessing ornaments which the sun my father's father once gave to his descendants. Take these nuptial presents, my sons, in your hands, and bear and present them to the blessed royal bride; she shall receive gifts not indeed to be despised.

JAS. Why, O fond woman, dost thou rob thy hands of these; thinkest thou that the royal palace is in want of vests? in want of gold? keep these presents, give them not away; for if the lady esteems me of any value, she will prefer pleasing me to riches, I know full well.

MED. But do not oppose me; gifts, they say, persuade even the Gods, and gold is more powerful than a thousand arguments to men. Hers is fortune, her substance the God now increases, she in youth governs all. But the sentence of banishment on my children I would buy off with my life, not with gold alone. But my children, enter you the wealthy palace, to the new bride of your father, and my mistress, entreat her, beseech her, that you may not leave the land, presenting these ornaments; but this is of the greatest consequence, that, she receive these gifts in her own hand. Go as quick as possible, and may you be bearers of good tidings to your mother in what she desires to obtain, having succeeded favorably.

CHOR. Now no longer have I any hope of life for the children, no longer [is there hope]; for already are they going to death. The bride shall receive the destructive present of the golden chaplet, she wretched shall receive them, and around her golden tresses shall she place the attire of death, having received the presents in her hands. The beauty and the divine glitter of the robe will persuade her to place around her head the golden-wrought chaplet. Already with the dead shall the bride be adorned; into such a net will she fall, and such a destiny will she, hapless woman, meet with; nor will she escape her fate. But thou, oh unhappy man! oh wretched bridegroom! son-in-law of princes, unknowingly thou bringest on thy children destruction, and on thy wife a bitter death; hapless man, how much art thou fallen from thy state! But I lament for thy grief, O wretch, mother of these children, who wilt murder thy sons on account of a bridal-bed; deserting which, in defiance of thee, thy husband dwells with another wife.

TUTOR, MEDEA, CHORUS.

TUT. Thy sons, my mistress, are reprieved from banishment, and the royal bride received thy presents in her hands with pleasure, and hence is peace to thy children.

MED. Ah!

TUT. Why dost thou stand in confusion, when thou art fortunate?

MED. Alas! alas!

TUT. This behavior is not consonant with the message I have brought thee.

MED. Alas! again.

TUT. Have I reported any ill fortune unknowingly, and have I failed in my hope of being the messenger of good?

MED. Thou hast said what thou hast said, I blame not thee.

TUT. Why then dost thou bend down thine eye, and shed tears?

MED. Strong necessity compels me, O aged man, for this the Gods and I deliberating ill have contrived.

TUT. Be of good courage; thou also wilt return home yet through thy children.

MED. Others first will I send to their home, O wretched me!

TUT. Thou art not the only one who art separated from thy children; it behooves a mortal to bear calamities with meekness.

MED. I will do so; but go within the house, and prepare for the children what is needful for the day. O my sons, my sons, you have indeed a city, and a house, in which having forsaken me miserable, you shall dwell, ever deprived of a mother. But I am now going an exile into a foreign land, before I could have delight in you, and see you flourishing, before I could adorn your marriage, and wife, and nuptial-bed, and hold up the torch. O unfortunate woman that I am, on account of my wayward temper. In vain

then, my children, have I brought you up, in vain have I toiled, and been consumed with cares, suffering the strong agonies of child-bearing. Surely once there was a time when I hapless woman had many hopes in you, that you would both tend me in my age, and when dead would with your hands decently compose my limbs, a thing desired by men. But now this pleasing thought hath indeed perished; for deprived of you I shall pass a life of misery, and bitter to myself. But you will no longer behold your mother with your dear eyes, having passed into another state of life. Alas! alas! why do you look upon me with your eyes, my children? Why do ye smile that last smile? Alas! alas! what shall I do? for my heart is sinking. Ye females, when I behold the cheerful look of my children, I have no power. Farewell my counsels: I will take my children with me from this land. What does it avail me grieving their father with the ills of these, to acquire twice as much pain for myself? never will I at least do this. Farewell my counsels. And yet what do I suffer? do I wish to incur ridicule, having left my foes unpunished? This must be dared. But the bringing forward words of tenderness in my mind arises also from my cowardice. Go, my children, into the house; and he for whom it is not lawful to be present at my sacrifice, let him take care himself to keep away. But I will not stain my hand. Alas! alas! do not thou then, my soul, do not thou at least perpetrate this. Let them escape, thou wretch, spare thy sons. There shall they live with us and delight thee. No, I swear by the infernal deities who dwell with Pluto, never shall this be, that I will give up my children to be insulted by my enemies. [At all events they must die, and since they must, I who brought them into the world will perpetrate the deed.] This is fully determined by fate, and shall not pass away. And now the chaplet is on her head, and the bride is perishing in the robes; of this I am well assured. But, since I am now going a most dismal path, and these will I send by one still more dismal, I desire to address my children: give, my sons, give thy right hand for thy mother to kiss. O most dear hand, and those lips dearest to me, and that form and noble countenance of my children, be ye blessed, but there; for every thing here your father hath taken away. O the sweet embrace, and that soft skin, and that most fragrant breath of my children. Go, go; no longer am I able to look upon you, but am overcome by my ills. I know indeed the ills that I am about to dare, but my rage is master of my counsels, which is indeed the cause of the greatest calamities to men.

CHOR. Already have I often gone through more refined reasonings, and have come to greater arguments than suits the female mind to investigate; for we also have a muse, which dwelleth with us, for the sake of teaching wisdom; but not with all, for haply thou wilt find but a small number of the race of women out of many not ungifted with the muse.

And I say that those men who are entirely free from wedlock, and have not begotten children, surpass in happiness those who have families; those indeed who are childless, through inexperience whether children are born a joy or anguish to men, not having them themselves, are exempt from much misery. But those who have a sweet blooming offspring of children in their house, I behold worn with care the whole time; first of all how they shall bring them up honorably, and how they shall leave means of sustenance for their children. And still after this, whether they are toiling for bad or good sons, this is still in darkness. But one ill to mortals, the last of all, I now will mention. For suppose they have both found sufficient store, and the bodies of their children have arrived at manhood, and that they are good; but if this fortune shall happen to them, death, bearing away their sons, vanishes with them to the shades of darkness. How then does it profit that the Gods heap on mortals yet this grief in addition to others, the most bitter of all, for the sake of children?

MEDEA, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MED. For a long time waiting for the event, my friends, I am anxiously expecting what will be the result thence. And I see indeed one of the domestics of Jason coming hither, and his quickened breath shows that he will be the messenger of some new ill.

MESS. O thou, that hast impiously perpetrated a deed of terror, Medea, fly, fly, leaving neither the ocean chariot, nor the car whirling o’er the plain.

MED. But what is done that requires this flight?

MESS. The princess is just dead, and Creon her father destroyed by thy charms.

MED. Thou hast spoken most glad tidings: and hereafter from this time shalt thou be among my benefactors and friends.

MESS. What sayest thou? Art thou in thy senses, and not mad, lady? who having destroyed the king and family, rejoicest at hearing it, and fearest not such things?

MED. I also have something to say to these words of thine at least; but be not hasty, my friend; but tell me how they perished, for twice as much delight wilt thou give me if they died miserably.

MESS. As soon as thy two sons were come with their father, and had entered the bridal house, we servants, who were grieved at thy misfortunes, were delighted; and immediately there was much conversation in our ears, that thy husband and thou had brought the former quarrel to a friendly termination. One kissed the hand, another the auburn head of thy sons, and I also myself followed with them to the women's apartments through joy. But my mistress, whom we now reverence instead of thee, before she saw thy two sons enter, held her cheerful eyes fixed on Jason; afterward however she covered her eyes, and turned aside her white cheek, disgusted at the entrance of thy sons; but thy husband quelled the anger and rage of the young bride, saying this; Be not angry with thy friends, but cease from thy rage, and turn again thy face, esteeming those as friends, whom thy husband does. But receive the gifts, and ask thy father to give up the sentence of banishment against these children for my sake. But when she saw the ornaments, she refused not, but promised her husband every thing; and before thy sons and their father were gone far from the house, she took and put on the variegated robes, and having placed the golden chaplet around her tresses she arranges her hair in the radiant mirror, smiling at the lifeless image of her person. And after, having risen from her seat, she goes across the chamber, elegantly tripping with snow-white foot; rejoicing greatly in the presents, looking much and oftentimes with her eyes on her outstretched neck. After that however there was a sight of horror to behold. For having changed color, she goes staggering back trembling in her limbs, and is scarce in time to prevent herself from falling on the ground, by sinking into a chair. And some aged female attendant, when she thought that the wrath either of Pan or some other Deity had visited her, offered up the invocation,

before at least she sees the white foam bursting from her mouth, and her mistress rolling her eyeballs from their sockets, and the blood no longer in the flesh; then she sent forth a loud shriek of far different sound from the strain of supplication; and straightway one rushed to the apartments of her father, but another to her newly-married husband, to tell the calamity befallen the bride, and all the house was filled with frequent hurryings to and fro. And by this time a swift runner, exerting his limbs, might have reached the goal of the course of six plethra; but she, wretched woman, from being speechless, and from a closed eye having groaned deeply writhed in agony; for a double pest was warring against her. The golden chaplet indeed placed on her head was sending forth a stream of all-devouring fire wonderful to behold, but the fine-wrought robes, the presents of thy sons, were devouring the white flesh of the hapless woman. But she having started from her seat flies, all on fire, tossing her hair and head on this side and that side, desirous of shaking off the chaplet; but the golden wreath firmly kept its hold; but the fire, when she shook her hair, blazed out with double fury, and she sinks upon the ground overcome by her sufferings, difficult for any one except her father to recognize. For neither was the expression of her eyes clear, nor her noble countenance; but the blood was dropping from the top of her head mixed with fire. But her flesh was dropping off her bones, as the tear from the pine-tree, by the hidden fangs of the poison; a sight of horror. But all feared to touch the body, for we had her fate to warn us. But the hapless father, through ignorance of her suffering, having come with haste into the apartment, falls on the corpse, and groans immediately; and having folded his arms round her, kisses her, saying these words; O miserable child, what Deity hath thus cruelly destroyed thee? who makes an aged father bowing to the tomb bereaved of thee? Alas me! let me die with thee, my child. But after he had ceased from his lamentations and cries, desiring to raise his aged body, he was held, as the ivy by the boughs of the laurel, by the fine-wrought robes; and dreadful was the struggle, for he wished to raise his knee, but she held him back; but if he drew himself away by force he tore the aged flesh from his bones. But at length the wretched man swooned away, and gave up his life; for no longer was he able to endure the agony. But they lie corses, the daughter and aged father near one another; a calamity that demands tears. And let thy affairs indeed be not matter for my words; for thou thyself wilt know a refuge from punishment. But the affairs of mortals not now for the first time

I deem a shadow, and I would venture to say that those persons who seem to be wise and are researchers of arguments, these I say, run into the greatest folly. For no mortal man is happy; but wealth pouring in, one man may be more fortunate than another, but happy he can not be.

CHOR. The Deity, it seems, will in this day justly heap on Jason a variety of ills. O hapless lady, how we pity thy sufferings, daughter of Creon, who art gone to the house of darkness, through thy marriage with Jason.

MED. The deed is determined on by me, my friends, to slay my children as soon as possible, and to hasten from this land; and not by delaying to give my sons for another hand more hostile to murder. But come, be armed, my heart; why do we delay to do dreadful but necessary deeds? Come, O wretched hand of mine, grasp the sword, grasp it, advance to the bitter goal of life, and be not cowardly, nor remember thy children how dear they are, how thou broughtest them into the world; but for this short day at least forget thy children; hereafter lament. For although thou slayest them, nevertheless they at least were dear, but I a wretched woman.

CHOR. O thou earth, and thou all-illuming beam of the sun, look down upon, behold this abandoned woman, before she move her blood-stained hand itself about to inflict the blow against her children; for from thy golden race they sprung; but fearful is it for the blood of Gods to fall by the hand of man. But do thou, O heaven-born light, restrain her, stop her, remove from this house this blood-stained and miserable Erinnys agitated by the Furies. The care of thy children perishes in vain, and in vain hast thou produced a dear race, O thou who didst leave the most inhospitable entrance of the Cyanean rocks, the Symplegades. Hapless woman, why does such grievous rage settle on thy mind; and hostile slaughter ensue? For kindred pollutions are difficult of purification to mortals; correspondent calamities falling from the Gods to the earth upon the houses of the murderers.

FIRST SON. *(within)* Alas! what shall I do? whither shall I fly from my mother’s hand?

SECOND SON. I know not, dearest brother, for we perish.

CHOR. Hearest thou the cry? hearest thou the children? O wretch, O ill-fated woman! Shall I enter the house? It seems right to me to ward off the murderous blow from the children.

SONS. Nay, by the Gods assist us, for it is in needful time; since now at least are we near the destruction of the sword.

CHOR. Miserable woman, art thou then a rock, or iron, who cuttest down with death by thine own hand the fair crop of children which thou producedst thyself? one indeed I hear of, one woman of those of old, who laid violent hands on her children, Ino, maddened by the Gods when the wife of Jove sent her in banishment from her home; and she miserable woman falls into the sea through the impious murder of her children, directing her foot over the sea-shore, and dying with her two sons, there she perished! what then I pray can be more dreadful than this? O thou bed of woman, fruitful in ills, how many evils hast thou already brought to men!

JASON, CHORUS.

JAS. Ye females, who stand near this mansion, is she who hath done these deeds of horror, Medea, in this house; or hath she withdrawn herself in flight? For now it is necessary for her either to be hidden beneath the earth, or to raise her winged body into the vast expanse of air, if she would not suffer vengeance from the king's house. Does she trust that after having slain the princes of this land, she shall herself escape from this house with impunity? — But I have not such care for her as for my children; for they whom she has injured will punish her. But I came to preserve my children's life, lest [Creon's] relations by birth do any injury, avenging the impious murder perpetrated by their mother.

CHOR. Unhappy man! thou knowest not at what misery thou hast arrived, Jason, or else thou wouldest not have uttered these words.

JAS. What is this, did she wish to slay me also?

CHOR. Thy children are dead by their mother's hand.

JAS. Alas me! What wilt thou say? how hast thou killed me, woman!

CHOR. Think now of thy sons as no longer living.

JAS. Where did she slay them, within or without the house?

CHOR. Open those doors, and thou wilt see the slaughter of thy sons.

JAS. Undo the bars, as quick as possible, attendants; unloose the hinges, that I may see this double evil, my sons slain, and may punish her.

MED. Why dost thou shake and unbolt these gates, seeking the dead and me who did the deed. Cease from this labor; but if thou wantest aught with me, speak if thou wishest any thing; but never shall thou touch me with thy hands; such a chariot the sun my father's father gives me, a defense from the hostile hand.

JAS. O thou abomination! thou most detested woman, both by the Gods and by me, and by all the race of man; who hast dared to plunge the sword in thine own children, thou who bore them, and hast destroyed me childless. And having done this thou beholdest both the sun and the earth, having dared a most impious deed. Mayest thou perish! but I am now wise, not being so then when I brought thee from thy house and from a foreign land to a Grecian habitation, a great pest, traitress to thy father and the land that nurtured thee. But the Gods have sent thy evil genius on me. For having slain thy brother at the altar, thou embarkedst on board the gallant vessel Argo. Thou begannest indeed with such deeds as these; and being wedded to me, and bearing me children, thou hast destroyed them on account of another bed and marriage. There is not one Grecian woman who would have dared a deed like this, in preference to whom at least, I thought worthy to wed thee, an alliance hateful and destructive to me, a lioness, no woman, having a nature more savage than the Tuscan Scylla. But I can not gall thy heart with ten thousand reproaches, such shameless confidence is implanted in thee. Go, thou worker of ill, and stained with the blood of thy children. But for me it remains to bewail my fate, who shall neither enjoy my new nuptials, nor shall I have it in my power to address while alive my sons whom I begot and educated, but I have lost them.

MED. Surely I could make long reply to these words, if the Sire Jupiter did not know what treatment thou receivedst from me, and what thou didst in

return; but you were mistaken, when you expected, having dishonored my bed, to lead a life of pleasure, mocking me, and so was the princess, and so was Creon, who proposed the match to thee, when he expected to drive me from this land with impunity. Wherefore, if thou wilt, call me lioness, and Scylla who dwelt in the Tuscan plain. For thy heart, as is right, I have wounded.

JAS. And thou thyself grievest at least, and art a sharer in these ills.

MED. Be assured of that; but this lessens the grief, that thou canst not mock me.

JAS. My children, what a wicked mother have ye found!

MED. My sons, how did ye perish by your father's fault!

JAS. Nevertheless my hand slew them not.

MED. But injury, and thy new nuptials.

JAS. And on account of thy bed didst thou think fit to slay them?

MED. Dost thou deem this a slight evil to a woman?

JAS. Whoever at least is modest; but in thee is every ill.

MED. These are no longer living, for this will gall thee.

JAS. These are living, alas me! avenging furies on thy head.

MED. The Gods know who began the injury.

JAS. They know indeed thy execrable mind.

Meo. Thou art hateful to me, and I detest thy bitter speech.

JAS. And I in sooth thine; the separation at least is without pain.

MED. How then? what shall I do? for I also am very desirous.

JAS. Suffer me, I beg, to bury and mourn over these dead bodies.

MED. Never indeed; since I will bury them with this hand bearing them to the shrine of Juno, the Goddess guardian of the citadel, that no one of my enemies may insult them, tearing up their graves. But in this land of Sisyphus will I institute in addition to this a solemn festival and sacrifices hereafter to expiate this unhallowed murder. But I myself will go to the land of Erectheus, to dwell with Ægeus son of Pandion. But thou, wretch, as is fit, shalt die wretchedly, struck on thy head with a relic of thy ship Argo, having seen the bitter end of my marriage.

JAS. But may the Fury of the children, and Justice the avenger of murder, destroy thee.

MED. But what God or Deity hears thee, thou perjured man, and traitor to the rights of hospitality?

JAS. Ah! thou abominable woman, and murderer of thy children.

MED. Go to thy home, and bury thy wife.

JAS. I go, even deprived of both my children.

MED. Thou dost not yet mourn enough: stay and grow old.

JAS. Oh my dearest sons!

MED. To their mother at least, but not to thee.

JAS. And yet thou slewest them.

MED. To grieve thee.

JAS. Alas, alas! I hapless man long to kiss the dear mouths of my children.

MED. Now them addressest, now salutest them, formerly rejecting them with scorn.

JAS. Grant me, by the Gods, to touch the soft skin of my sons.

MED. It is not possible. Thy words are thrown away in vain.

JAS. Dost thou hear this, O Jove, how I am rejected, and what I suffer from this accursed and child-destroying lioness? But as much indeed as is in my power and I am able, I lament and mourn over these; calling the Gods to witness, that having slain my children, thou preventest me from touching them with my hands, and from burying the bodies, whom, oh that I had never begotten, and seen them thus destroyed by thee.

CHOR. Jove is the dispenser of various fates in heaven, and the Gods perform many things contrary to our expectations, and those things which we looked for are not accomplished; but the God hath brought to pass things unthought of. In such manner hath this affair ended.

HERACLEIDAE

OR, HERACLES' CHILDREN

Translated by Theodore Alois Buckley

First performed in c. 430 BC, this play follows the children of Heracles *(the Heracleidae)* as they seek protection from Eurystheus, who was responsible for many of the troubles that plagued Heracles. It is the first of two surviving tragedies by Euripides where the children of Heracles are suppliants, being followed by the later drama *Heracles*.

The play begins at the altar of Zeus at Marathon, where the herald Copreus, under the instructions of King Eurystheus of Mycenae, attempts to seize the children of Heracles, together with the hero's old friend, Iolaus. When King Demophon, son of Theseus, insists that Iolaus and Heracles' children are held under his protection, Copreus threatens to return with an army. Demophon is prepared to protect the children even at the cost of fighting a war against Eurystheus, but after consulting the oracles, he learns that the Athenians will be victorious only if they sacrifice a maiden of noble birth to Persephone. Demophon tells Iolaus that as much as he would like to help, he will not sacrifice his own child or force any of the Athenians to do so. Iolaus, realising that he and the children will have to leave Athens and seek refuge elsewhere, despairs.

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Note. — The names of Copreus and Macaria were wanting in the MSS., but have been supplied from the mythologists. See Elmsley on vss. 49 and 474.

THE ARGUMENT.

Iolaus, son of Iphiclus, and nephew of Hercules, whom he had joined in his expeditions during his youth, in his old age protected his sons. For the sons of Hercules having been driven out of every part of Greece by Eurystheus, he came with them to Athens; and, embracing the altars of the Gods, was safe, Demophoon being king of the city; and when Copreus, the herald of Eurystheus, wished to remove the suppliants, he prevented him. Upon this he departed, threatening war. Demophoon despised him; but hearing the oracles promise him victory if he sacrificed the most noble Athenian virgin to Ceres, he was grieved; not wishing to slay either his own daughter, or that of any citizen, for the sake of the suppliants. But Macaria, one of the daughters of Hercules, hearing of the prediction, willingly devoted herself. They honored her for her noble death, and, knowing that their enemies were at hand, went forth to battle. The play ends with their victory, and the capture of Eurystheus.

THE HERACLIDÆ.

IOLAUS.

This has long since been my established opinion, the just man is born for his neighbors; but he who has a mind bent upon gain is both useless to the city and disagreeable to deal with, but best for himself. And I know this, not having learned it by word of mouth; for I, through shame, and reverencing the ties of kindred, when it was in my power to dwell quietly in Argos, partook of more of Hercules' labors, while he was with us, than any one man besides: and now that he dwells in heaven, keeping these his children under my wings, I preserve them, I myself being in want of safety. For since their father was removed from the earth, first Eurystheus wished to kill me, but I escaped; and my country indeed is no more, but my life is saved, and I wander in exile, migrating from one city to another. For, in addition to my other ills, Eurystheus has chosen to insult me with this insult; sending heralds whenever on earth he learns we are settled, he demands us, and drives us out of the land; alleging the city of Argos, one not paltry either to be friends with or to make an enemy, and himself too prospering as he is; but they seeing my weak state, and that these too are little, and bereaved of their sire, respecting the more powerful, drive us from the land. And I am banished, together with the banished children, and fare ill together with those who fare ill, loathing to desert them, lest some may say thus, Behold, now that the children have no father, Iolaus, their kinsman born, defends them not. But being bereft of all Greece, coming to Marathon and the country under the same rule, we sit suppliants at the altars of the Gods, that they may assist us; for it is said that the two sons of Theseus inhabit the territory of this land, of the race of Pandion, having received it by lot, being near akin to these children; on which account we have come this way to the frontiers of illustrious Athens. And by two aged people is this flight led, I, indeed, being alarmed about these children; and the female race of her son Alcmena preserves within this temple, clasping it in her arms; for we are ashamed that virgins should mingle with the mob, and stand at the altars. But Hyllus and his brothers, who are older, are seeking where there is a strong-hold that we may inhabit, if we be thrust forth from this land by force. O children, children! hither; take hold of my garments; I see the

herald of Eurystheus coming hither toward us, by whom we are pursued as wanderers, deprived of every land. O detested one, may you perish, and the man who sent you: how many evils indeed have you announced to the noble father of these children from that same mouth!

COPREUS. I suppose you think that this is a fine seat you are sitting in, and have come to a city which is an ally, thinking foolishly; for there is no one who will choose your useless power in preference to Eurystheus. Depart; why toilest thou thus? You must rise up and go to Argos, where punishment by stoning awaits you.

IOL. Not so, since the altar of the God will aid me, and the free land in which we tread.

COP. Do you wish to cause me trouble with this band?

IOL. Surely you will not drag me away, nor these children, seizing by force?

COP. You shall know; but you are not a good prophet in this.

IOL. This shall never happen, while I am alive.

COP. Depart; but I will lead these away, even though you be unwilling, considering them, wherever they may be, to belong to Eurystheus.

IOL. O ye who have dwelt in Athens a long time, defend us; for, being suppliants of Jove, the Presider over the Forum, we are treated with violence, and our garlands are profaned, both a reproach to the city, and an insult to the Gods.

CHORUS. Hollo! hollo! what is this noise near the altar? what calamity will it straightway portend?

IOL. Behold me, a weak old man, thrown down on the plain; miserable that I am.

CHOR. By whose hand do you fall this unhappy fall?

* * * *

IOL. This man, O strangers, dishonoring your Gods, drags me violently from the altar of Jupiter.

CHOR. From what land, O old man, have you come hither to this people dwelling together in four cities? or, have you come hither from across [the sea] with marine oar, having quitted the Eubœan shore?

IOL. O strangers, I am not accustomed to an islander's life, but we are come to your land from Mycenæ.

CHOR. What name, O old man, did the Mycenæan people call you?

IOL. Know that I am Iolaus, once the companion of Hercules; for this body is not unrenowned.

CHOR. I know, having heard of it before; but say whose youthful children you are leading in your hand.

IOL. These, O strangers, are the sons of Hercules, who are come as suppliants of you and the city.

CHOR. What do ye seek? or, tell me, is it wanting to have speech of the city?

IOL. Not to be given up, and not to go to Argos, being dragged from your Gods by force.

COP. But this will not be sufficient for your masters, who, having power over you, find you here.

CHOR. It is right, O stranger, to reverence the suppliants of the Gods, and not for you to leave by violent hands the habitations of the deities, for venerable Justice will not suffer this.

COP. Send now Eurystheus's subjects out of this land, and I will not use this hand violently.

CHOR. It is impious for a state to reject the suppliant prayer of strangers.

COP. But it is good to have one's foot out of trouble, being possessed of the better counsel.

CHOR. You should then have dared this, having spoken to the king of this land, but you should not drag strangers away from the Gods by force, if you respect a free land.

COP. But who is king of this country and city?

CHOR. Demophoon, the son of Theseus, of a noble father.

COP. With him, then, the contest of this argument had best be; all else is spoken in vain.

CHOR. And indeed hither he comes in haste, and Acamas, his brother, to hear these words.

DEMOPHOON. Since you, being an old man, have anticipated us, who are younger, in running to this hearth of Jove, say what hap collects this multitude here.

CHOR. These sons of Hercules sit here as suppliants, having crowned the altar, as you see. O king, and Iolaus, the faithful companion of their father.

DE. Why then did this chance occasion clamors?

CHOR. This man caused the noise, seeking to lead him by force from this hearth; and he tripped up the legs of the old man, so that I shed the tear for pity.

DE. And indeed he has a Grecian robe and style of dress; but these are the doings of a barbarian hand; it is for you then to tell me, and not to delay, leaving the confines of what land you are come hither.

COP. I am an Argive; for this you wish to learn: and I am willing to say why, and from whom, I am come. Eurystheus, the king of Mycenæ, sends me hither to lead away these men; and I have come, O stranger, having

many just things at once to do and to say; for I being an Argive myself, lead away Argives, having them as fugitives from my country condemned to die by the laws there; and we have the right, managing our city ourselves by ourselves, to fix our own punishments: but they having come to the hearths of many others also, there also we have taken our stand on these same arguments, and no one has dared to bring evils upon himself. But either perceiving some folly in you, they have come hither, or in perplexity running the risk, whether it shall be or not. For surely they do not think that you alone are mad, in so great a portion of Greece as they have been over, so as to commiserate their foolish distresses. Come, compare the two; admitting them into your land, and suffering us to lead them away, what will you gain? Such things as these you may gain from us; you may add to this city the whole power of Argos, and all the might of Eurystheus; but if looking to the words and pitiable condition of these men, you are softened by them, the matter comes to the contest of the spear; for think not that we will give up this contest without steel. What then will you say? deprived of what lands, making war with the Tirynthians and Argives, and repelling them, with what allies, and on whose behalf will you bury the dead that fall? Surely you will obtain an evil report among the citizens, if, for the sake of an old man, a mere tomb, one who is nothing, as one may say, and of these children, you will put your foot into a mess; you will say, at best, that you shall find, at least, hope; and this too is at present much wanting; for these who are armed would fight but ill with Argives if they were grown up, if this encourages your mind, and there is much time in the mean while in which ye may be destroyed; but be persuaded by me, giving nothing, but permitting me to lead away my own, gain Mycenæ. And do not *(as you are wont to do)* suffer this, when it is in your power to choose the better friends, choose the worse.

CHOR. Who can decide what is right, or understand an argument, till he has clearly heard the statement of both?

IOL. O king, this exists in thy city; I am permitted in turn to speak and to hear, and no one will reject me before that, as in other places; but with this man we have nothing to do; for since nothing of Argos is any longer ours, *(it having been decreed by a vote,)* but we are exiled our country, how can this man justly lead us away as Mycenæans, whom they have driven from

the land? for we are strangers; or else you decide that whoever is banished Argos is banished the boundaries of the Greeks. Surely not from Athens; they will not, for fear of the Argives, drive out the children of Hercules from their land; for it is not Trachis, nor the Achæan city, from whence you, not by justice, but bragging about Argos; just as you now speak, drove these men, sitting at the altars as suppliants; for if this shall be, and they ratify your words, I no longer know this Athens as free. But I know their disposition and nature; they will rather die; for among virtuous men, disgrace is considered before life. Enough of the city; for indeed it is an invidious thing to praise it too much; and often I know myself I have been oppressed at being overpraised: but I wish to say to you that it is necessary for you to save these men, since you are ruler over this land. Pittheus was son of Pelops and Æthra, daughter of Pittheus, and your father Theseus was born of her. And again I trace for you their descent: Hercules was son of Jupiter and Alcmena, and she was the child of the daughter of Pelops; so your father and theirs must be fellow-cousins. Thus you, O Demophoon, are related to them by birth; and, besides this connection, I will tell you for what you are bound to requite the children. For I say, I formerly, when shield-bearer to their father, sailed with Theseus after the belt, the cause of much slaughter, and from the murky recesses of hell did he bring forth your father. All Greece bears witness to this; for which things they beseech you to return a kindness, and that they may not be yielded up, nor be driven from this land, torn from your Gods by violence; for this would be disgraceful to you by yourself, and an evil to the city, that suppliant relations, wanderers — alas for the misery! look on them, look — should be dragged away by force. But I beseech you, and offer you suppliant garlands, by your hands and your chin, do not dishonor the children of Hercules, having received them in your power; but be thou a relation to them, be a friend, father, brother, master; for all these things are better than [for them] to fall into the power of the Argives.

CHOR. Hearing of these men's misfortunes, I pitied them, O king! and now particularly I have witnessed nobleness overcome by fortune; for these men, being sons of a noble father, are undeservedly unhappy.

DE. Three ways of misfortune urge me, O Iolaus, not to reject these suppliants. The greatest, Jupiter, at whose altars you sit, having this

procession of youths with you; and my relationship to them, and because I am bound of old that they should fare well at my hands, in gratitude to their father; and the disgrace, which one ought exceedingly to regard. For if I permitted this altar to be violated by force by a strange man, I shall not seem to inhabit a free country. But I fear to betray my suppliants to the Argives; and this is nearly as bad as the noose. But I wish you had come with better fortune; but still, even now, fear not that any one shall drag you and these children by force from this altar. And do thou, going to Argos, both tell this to Eurystheus; and besides that, if he has any charge against these strangers, he shall meet with justice; but you shall never drag away these men.

COP. Not if it be just, and I prevail in argument?

DE. And how can it be just to drag away a suppliant by force?

COP. This, then, is not disgraceful to me, but an injury to you.

DE. To me indeed, if I allow you to drag them away.

COP. But do you depart, and then will I drag them thence.

DE. You are stupid, thinking yourself wiser than a God.

COP. Hither it seems the wicked should fly.

DE. The seat of the Gods is a common defense to all.

COP. Perhaps this will not seem good to the Mycenæans.

DE. Am not I then master over those here?

COP. [Ay,] but not to injure them, if you are wise.

DE. Are ye hurt, if I do not defile the Gods?

COP. I do not wish you to have war with the Argives.

DE. I, too, am the same; but I will not let go of these men.

COP. At all events, taking possession of my own, I shall lead them away.

DE. Then you will not easily depart back to Argos.

COP. I shall soon see that by experience.

DE. You will touch them to your own injury, and that without delay.

CHOR. For God's sake, venture not to strike a herald!

DE. I will not, if the herald at least will learn to be wise.

CHOR. Depart thou; and do not you touch him, O king!

COP. I go; for the struggle of a single hand is powerless. But I will come, bringing hither many a brazen spear of Argive war; and ten thousand shield-bearers await me, and Eurystheus, the king himself, as general. And he waits, expecting news from hence, on the extreme confines of Alcathus; and, having heard of your insolence, he will make himself too well known to you, and to the citizens, and to this land, and to the trees; for in vain should we have so much youth in Argos, if we did not chastise you.

DE. Destruction on you! for I do not fear your Argos. But you are not likely, insulting me, to drag these men away from hence by force; for I possess this land, not being subject to that of Argos, but free.

CHOR. It is time to provide, before the army of the Argives approaches the borders. And very impetuous is the Mars of the Mycenæans, and on this account more than before; for it is the habit of all heralds to tower up what is twice as much. What do you not think he will say to his princes about what terrible things he has suffered, and how within a little he was losing his life.

IOL. There is not, to this man's children, a more glorious honor than to be sprung from a good and valiant father, and to marry from a good family; but I will not praise him who, overcome by desire, has mingled with the vulgar, to leave his children a reproach instead of pleasure; for noble birth wards off misfortune better than low descent; for we, having fallen into the

extremity of evils, find these men friends and relations, who alone, in so large a country as Greece, have stood forward [on our behalf.] Give, O children, give them your right hand; and do ye give yours to the children, and draw near to them. O children, we have come to experience of our friends; and if you ever have a return to your country, and [again] possess the homes and honors of your father, always consider them your saviors and friends, and never lift the hostile spear against the land, remembering these things; but consider it the dearest city of all. And they are worthy that you should revere them, who have chosen to have so great a country and the Pelasgic people as enemies instead of us, though seeing us to be beggared wanderers; but still they have not given us up, nor driven us from their land. But I, living and dying, when I do die, with much praise, my friend, will extol you when I am in company with Theseus; and telling this, I will delight him, saying how well you received and aided the children of Hercules; and, being noble, you preserve through Greece your ancestral glory; and being born of noble parents, you are nowise inferior to your father, with but few others; for among many you may find perhaps but one who is not inferior to his father.

CHOR. This land is ever willing to aid in a just cause those in difficulty; therefore it has borne numberless toils for its friends, and now I see this contest at hand.

DE. Thou hast spoken well; and I boast, old man, that their disposition is such that the kindness will be remembered. And I will make an assembly of the citizens, and draw them up so as to receive the army of the Mycenæans with a large force. First, I will send spies toward it, that it may not fall upon me by surprise: for in Argos every warrior is eager to run to assistance. And having collected the soothsayers, I will sacrifice. And do you go to my palace with the children, leaving the hearth of Jove, for there are those who, even if I be from home, will take care of you; go then, old man, to my palace.

IOL. I will not leave the altar; but we will sit here, as suppliants, waiting till the city is successful; and when you are well freed from this contest, we will go to thy palace. But we have Gods as allies not inferior to those of the Argives, O king; for Juno, the wife of Jove, is their champion, but Minerva

ours; and I say that this also tends to success, to have the best Gods, for Pallas will not endure to be conquered.

CHOR. If thou boastest greatly, others do not therefore care for thee the more, O stranger, coming from Argos; but with thy big words thou wilt not terrify my mind: may it not be so to the mighty Athens, with the beauteous dances. But both thou art foolish, the son of Sthenelus, king in Argos, who, coming to another city not less than Argos, being a stranger, seek by violence to lead away wanderers, suppliants of the Gods, and claiming the protection of my land, not yielding to our kings, nor saying any thing else that is just. How can this be thought well among the wise? Peace indeed pleases me; but, O foolish king, I tell thee, if thou comest to this city, thou wilt not thus obtain what thou thinkest for. You are not the only one who has a spear and a brazen shield; but, O lover of war, mayest thou not with the spear disturb my city dear to the Graces; but restrain thyself.

IOL. O my son, why comest thou, bringing solicitude to my eyes? Hast thou any news of the enemy? Do they delay, or are they at hand I or what do you hear? for I fear the word of the herald will in no wise be false, for their leader will come, having been fortunate in previous affairs, I clearly know, and with no moderate pride, against Athens; but Jove is the chastiser of over-arrogant thoughts.

DE. The army of the Argives is coming, and Eurystheus the king. I have seen it myself; for it behooves a man who says he knows well the duty of a general not to reconnoitre the enemy by means of messengers. He has not then, as yet, let loose his army on these plains, but, sitting on a lofty crag, he reconnoitres *(I should tell thee this as a conjecture)* to see by which way he shall now lead his expedition, and place it in a safe station in this land; and my preparations are already well arranged, and the city is in arms, and the victims stand ready for those Gods to whom they ought to be slain offered; and the city, by means of soothsayers, is preparing by sacrifices flight for the enemy and safety for the city. And having collected together all the bards who proclaim oracles, I have tested the ancient oracles, both public and concealed, which might save this land; and in their other counsels many things are different; but one opinion of all is conspicuously the same, they command me to sacrifice to the daughter of Ceres a damsel

who is of a noble father. And I have indeed, as you see, such great good-will toward you, but I will neither slay my own child nor compel any other of my citizens to do so unwillingly; and who is so mad of his own accord, as to give out of his hands his dearest children? And now you may see bitter meetings; some saying that it is right to aid foreign suppliants, and some blaming my folly; and if I do this, a civil war is at once prepared. This, then, do you consider, and devise how both you yourselves may be saved and this land, and I be not brought into ill odor with the citizens; for I have not absolute sovereignty, as over barbarians; but if I do just things, I shall receive just things.

CHOR. But does not the Goddess allow this city, although eager, to aid strangers?

IOL. O children, we are like sailors, who, fleeing from the fierce rage of the storm, have come close to land, and then, again, by gales from the land, have been driven again out to sea; thus also shall we be driven from this land, being already on shore, as if saved. Alas! why, O wretched hope, did you then delight me, not being about to perfect my joy? For his thoughts, in truth, are to be pardoned if he is not willing to slay the children of his citizens; and I acquiesce in their conduct here, if the Gods decree that I shall fare thus. My gratitude to you shall never perish. O children, I know not what to do with you: whither shall we turn? for who of the Gods has been uncrowned by us? and what bulwark of land have we not approachedl? We shall perish, my children, we shall be given up; and for myself I care nothing if it behooves me to die, except that, dying, I shall gratify my enemies; but I weep for and pity you, O children, and Alcmena, the aged mother of your father; O! unhappy art thou, because of thy long life; and miserable am I, having labored much in vain. It was our fate then, our fate, falling into the hands of an enemy, to leave life disgracefully and miserably. But do you know in what you may aid me? for all hope of their safety has not deserted me. Give me up to the Argives instead of them, O king, and so neither run any risk yourself, and let the children be saved for me; I must not love my own life, let it go; and above all, Eurystheus would like taking me, the ally of Hercules, to insult me; for he is a froward man; and the wise should pray to have enmity with a wise man, not with an ignorant

disposition, for in that case one, even if unfortunate, may meet with much respect.

CHOR. O old man, do not now blame the city, perhaps it might be a gain to us; but still it would be an evil reproach that we betrayed strangers,

DE. You have spoken things noble indeed, but impossible; the king does not lead his army hither wanting you; for what profit were it to Eurystheus for an old man to die? but he wishes to slay these children; for noble youths, who remember their fathers' injuries, springing up, are terrible to enemies; all which he must needs foresee; but if you know any other more seasonable counsel, prepare it, since I am perplexed and full of fear, having heard the oracle.

MACARIA. O strangers, do not impute boldness to me because of my advances, this I will beg first; for silence and modesty are best for a woman, and to remain quietly in-doors; but, having heard your lamentations, O Iolaus, I have come forth, not being commissioned to act as embassador for my race, but I am in some wise fit to do so; but chiefly do I care for these, my brothers: concerning myself I wish to ask whether, besides our former evils, any additional distress gnaws your mind?

IOL. O daughter, it is not a new thing that I justly have to praise you most of the children of Hercules; but our house having appeared to us to progress well, has again changed to perplexity, for this man says, that the deliverers of oracles order us to sacrifice not a bull or a heifer, but a virgin, who is of a noble father, if we and this city would exist. About this then we are perplexed, for this man says he will neither slay his own children nor those of any one else; and to me he says, not plainly indeed, but somehow or other, unless I can devise any remedy for this, that we must find some other land, but he himself wishes to preserve this country.

MAC. On this condition can we then be saved?

IOL. On this, being fortunate in other respects.

MAC. Fear not then any longer the hostile spear of the Argives; for I myself, old man, before I am commanded, am prepared to die, and to stand

for slaughter; for what shall we say if the city thinks fit for our sakes to encounter a great danger, but we putting toils on others, avoid death when we can be saved? Not so, since this would be ridiculous for suppliants sitting at the shrines of the Gods to mourn, but being of such a sire as we are, to be seen to be cowards; how can this seem good! it were more noble, I think, *(which may it never happen!)* to fall into the hands of the enemy, this city being taken, and afterward, being born of a noble father, having suffered dreadful things, to see Hades none the less; but shall I wander about, driven from this land, and shall I not indeed be ashamed if any one says, "Why have ye come hither with your suppliant branches, yourselves being too fond of life! Depart from the land, for we will not aid cowards." But neither, indeed, if these die, and I myself am saved, have I any hope to fare well; for before now many have in this way betrayed their friends. For who would choose to have me, a solitary damsel, for his wife, or to raise children from me? therefore it is better to die than to have such an unworthy fate as this; and this may even be more seemly for some other, who is not illustrious as I. Lead me then where this body must needs die, and crown me and begin the rites, if you think fit, and conquer your enemies; for this life is ready for you, willing, and not unwilling; and I promise to die for these my brethren, and for myself; for not caring for life, I have found this most glorious thing to find, namely, to leave life gloriously.

CHOR. Alas! alas! what shall I say, hearing this noble speech of the maiden who is willing to die on behalf of her brothers? Who can utter more noble words than these I who of men can do [a greater deed?]

IOL. My child, your head comes from no other source, but thou, the seed of a divine mind, art sprung from Hercules. I am not ashamed at your words, but I am grieved for your fortune; but how it may be more justly done, I will say: we must call hither all her sisters, and then let her who draws the lot die for her family; but it is not right for thee to die without casting lots.

MAC. I will not die, obtaining the lot by chance, for then there are no thanks [to me;] — speak it not, old man; but if you accept me, and are willing to use me willing, I readily give up my life to them, but not, being compelled.

IOL. Alas! this word of thine is again nobler than the former, and that other was most excellent; but you surpass daring by daring, and [good] words by good words. I do not bid you, nor do I forbid you, to die, my child; but you will benefit your brothers by dying.

MAC. Thou biddest wisely; fear not to partake of my pollution, but I shall die freely. But follow me, O old man; for I wish to die by your hand; and do you, being present, wrap my body in my garments, since I am going to the terror of sacrifice, because I am born of the father of whom I boast to be.

IOL. I could not be present at your death.

MAC. At least, then, entreat of him that I may die, not by the hands of men, but of women.

CHOR. It shall be so, O hapless virgin; since it were disgraceful to me too not to deck thee honorably on many accounts; both for your valiant spirit, and for justice' sake: but you are the most unhappy of all women that I have beheld with mine eyes; but, if thou wilt, depart, bespeaking a last address to these and to the old man.

MAC. Farewell, old man, farewell; and train up for me these children to be such as thyself, wise in all respects, nothing more, for they will suffice; and endeavor to save them, not being over-willing to die. We are your children; by your hands we were brought up, and behold see me yielding up my nuptial hour, dying for them. And ye, my company of brothers now present, may ye be happy, and may every thing be yours, for the sake of which my soul is sacrificed; and honor the old man, and the old woman in the house, Alcmena, the mother of my father, and these strangers. And if a release from troubles, and a return should ever be found for you through the Gods, remember to bury her who saves you, as is fitting; most honorably were just, for I was not wanting to you, but died for my race. This is my heir-loom instead of children and virginity, if indeed there be aught under the earth. May there indeed be nothing; for if we, mortals who die, are to have cares even there, I know not where one can turn, for to die is considered the greatest remedy for evils.

IOL. But, O you, who mightily surpass all women in courage, know that, both living and dying, you shall be most honored by us: and farewell; for I abhor to speak words of ill omen about the Goddess to whom your body is given as the first-fruits, the daughter of Ceres. O children, we are undone; my limbs are relaxed by grief; take me, and place me in my seat, veiling me there with these garments, O children; since neither am I pleased at these things which are done, and if the oracle were not fulfilled, life would be unbearable, for the ruin would be greater; but even this is a calamity.

CHOR. I say that no man is either happy or miserable but through the Gods, and that the same family does not always walk in good fortune, but different fates pursue it different ways; it is wont to make one from a lofty station insignificant, and makes the wanderer wealthy: but it is impossible to avoid what is fated; no one can repel it by wisdom, but he who is hasty without purpose will always have trouble; but do not thus bear the fortune sent by the Gods, falling down [in prayer,] and do not over-pain your mind with grief, for she hapless possesses a glorious portion of death on behalf of her brethren and her country; nor will an inglorious reputation among men await her: but virtue proceeds through toils. These things are worthy of her father, and worthy of her noble descent; and if you respect the deaths of the good, I share your feelings.

SERVANT. O children, hail! But at what distance from this place is the aged Iolaus and your father's mother?

IOL. We are here, such a presence as mine is.

SERV. On what account dost thou lie thus, and have an eye so downcast?

IOL. A domestic care has come upon me, by which I am constrained.

SERV. Raise now thyself, erect thy head.

IOL. I am an old man, and by no means strong.

SERV. But I am come, bearing to you a great joy.

IOL. And who art thou, where having met you, do I forget you?

SERV. I am a poor servant of Hyllus; do you not recognize me, seeing me?

IOL. O dearest one, dost thou then come as a savior to us from injury?

SERV. Surely; and moreover you are prosperous as to the present state of affairs.

IOL. O mother of a doughty son, I mean Alcmena, come forth, hear these most welcome words; for you have been long wasting away as to your soul in anxiety concerning those who have come hither, where they would ever arrive.

ALCMENA. Wherefore has a mighty shout filled all this house? O Iolaus, does any herald, coming from Argos, again do you violence? my strength indeed is weak, but thus much you must know, O stranger, you shall never drag these away while I am living, else may I no longer be thought to be his mother; but if you touch them with your hand, you will have no honorable contest with two old people.

IOL. Be of good cheer, old woman; fear not, the herald is not come from Argos bearing hostile words.

ALC. Why then did you raise a shout, a messenger of fear?

IOL. To you, that you should approach near before this temple.

ALC. I do not understand this; for who is this man?

IOL. He announces that your son’s son is come.

ALC. O! hail thou also for this news; but why and where is he now absent putting his foot in this country? what calamity prevents him from appearing hither with you, and delighting my mind?

SERV. He is stationing and marshaling the army which he has come bringing.

ALC. I no longer understand this speech.

IOL. I do; but it is my business to inquire about this.

SERV. What then of what has been done do you wish to learn?

IOL. With how great a multitude of allies is he come?

SERV. With many; but I can say no other number.

IOL. The chiefs of the Athenians know, I suppose.

SERV. They do; and they occupy the left wing.

IOL. Is then the army already armed as for the work?

SERV. Ay; and already the victims are led away from the ranks.

IOL. And how far distant is the Argive army?

SERV. So that the general can be distinctly seen.

IOL. Doing what? arraying the ranks of the enemies?

SERV. We conjectured this, for we did not hear him; but I will go; I should not like my masters to join battle with the enemy, deserted as far as my part is concerned.

IOL. And I will go with you; for we think the same things, being present to aid our friends as much as we can.

SERV. It is not your part to say a foolish word.

IOL. And not to share the sturdy battle with my friends!

SERV. One can not see a wound from an inactive hand.

IOL. But what, can not I too strike through a shield?

SERV. You might strike, but you yourself would fall first.

IOL. No one of the enemy will dare to behold me.

SERV. You have not, my good friend, the strength which once you had.

IOL. But I will fight with them who will not be the fewer in numbers.

SERV. You add but a slight weight to your friends.

IOL. Do not detain me who am prepared to act.

SERV. You are not able to do any thing, but you may perhaps be to advise.

IOL. You may say the rest, as I not staying to hear.

SERV. How then will you appear to the soldiers without arms?

IOL. There are within this palace arms taken in war, which I will use and restore if alive; but the God will not demand them back of me, if I fall; but go in, and taking them down from the pegs, bring me as quickly as possible the panoply of a warrior; for this is a disgraceful house-keeping, for some to fight, and some to remain behind through fear.

CHOR. Time does not depress your spirit, but it grows young again, but your body is weak: why dost thou toil in vain? which will harm you indeed, but profit our city but little; you should consider your age, and leave alone impossibilities, it can not be that you again should acquire youth.

ALC. Why are you, not being in your senses, about to leave me alone with my children?

IOL. For valor is the part of men; but it is your duty to take care of them.

ALC. But what if you die? how shall I be saved?

IOL. Your sons who are left will take care of your son.

ALC. But if they, which Heaven forbid, should meet with fate!

IOL. These strangers will not betray you, do not fear.

ALC. Such confidence indeed I have, nothing else.

IOL. And Jove, I well know, cares for your toils.

ALC. Alas! Jupiter shall never be reproached by me, but he himself knows whether he is just toward me.

SERV. You see now this panoply of arms; but you can not make too much haste in arraying your body in them, as the contest is at hand, and, above all things, Mars hates those who delay; but if you fear the weight of arms, now then go forth unarmed, and in the ranks be clad with this equipment, and I will carry it so far.

IOL. Thou hast said well; but bring the arms, having them close at hand, and put a spear in my hand, and support my left arm guiding my foot.

SERV. Is it right to lead a warrior like a child?

IOL. One must go safely for the sake of the omen.

SERV. Would you were able to do as much as you are willing.

IOL. Make haste, I shall suffer sadly if too late for the battle.

SERV. It is you who delay, and not I, seeming to do something.

IOL. Do you not see how my foot presses on?

SERV. I see you rather seeming to hasten than hastening.

IOL. You will not say so, when you behold me there.

SERV. Doing what? I wish I may see you successful.

IOL. Striking some of the enemy through the shield.

SERV. If indeed we get there; for that I have fears of.

IOL. Alas! O arm, would thou wert such an ally to me as I recollect you in your youth, when you ravaged Sparta with Hercules, how would I put Eurystheus to flight; since he is but a coward in abiding a spear. But in prosperity then is this too which is not right, a reputation for courage; for we think that he who is prosperous knows all things well.

CHOR. O earth, and moon that shinest through the night, and most brilliant rays of the God, that gave light to mortals, bring me news, and shout in heaven and at the queenly throne of the blue-eyed Minerva. I am about, on behalf of my country, on behalf of my house, having received suppliants I am about to cut through danger with the white steel. It is terrible that a city, prosperous as Mycenæ, and much praised for valor in war, should nourish secret anger against my land; but it is evil too, O city, if we are to give up strangers at the bidding of Argos. Jupiter is my ally, I fear not; Jupiter rightly has favor toward me. Never shall the Gods seem inferior to men in my opinion. But, O venerable Goddess, for the soil of this land is thine, and the city of which you are mother, mistress, and guardian, lead away by some other way him who unjustly leads on this spear-brandishing host from Argos; for as far as my virtue is concerned, I do not deserve to be banished from these halls. For honor, with much sacrifice, is ever offered to you; nor does the waning day of the month forget you, nor the songs of youths, nor the measures of dances; but on the lofty hill shouts resound in accordance with the beatings of the feet of virgins the livelong night.

SERV. O mistress, I bring news most concise for you to hear, and to myself most glorious; we have conquered our enemies, and trophies are set up bearing the panoply of your enemies.

ALC. O best beloved, this day has caused thee to be made free for this thy news; but from one disaster you do not yet free me, for I fear whether they be living to me whom I wish to be.

SERV. They live, the most glorious in the army.

ALC. Does not the aged Iolaus survive?

SERV. Surely, and having done most glorious deeds by help of the Gods.

ALC. But what? has he done any doughty act in the fight?

SERV. He has changed from an old into a young man again.

ALC. Thou tellest marvelous things, but first I wish you to relate the prosperous contest of your friends in battle.

SERV. One speech of mine shall tell you all this; for when stretching out [our ranks] face to face, we arrayed our armies against one another, Hyllus putting his foot out of his four-horse chariot, stood in the mid-space of the field; and then said, O general, you are come from Argos, why leave we not this land alone? and you will do Mycenæ no harm, depriving it of one man; but you fighting alone with me alone, either killing me, lead away the children of Hercules, or dying, allow me to possess my ancestral prerogative and palaces. And the army gave praise; that the speech was well spoken for a termination of their toils, and in respect of courage. But he neither regarding those who had heard the speech, nor, although he was general, his [own character for] cowardice, ventured not to come near the warlike spear, but was most cowardly; and being such, he came to enslave the descendants of Hercules. Hyllus then returned again back to his ranks; but the soothsayers, when they saw that the affair could not be arranged by single combat of one shield, sacrificed, and delayed not, but let fall forth immediately the propitious slaughter of mortal throats; and some mounted chariots, and some concealed their sides under the sides of their shields; but the king of the Athenians gave to his army such orders as become a high-born man. “O fellow-citizens, now it behooves one to defend the land that has produced and cherished us.” And the other also besought his allies not to disgrace Argos and Mycenæ. But when the signal was sounded on a Tyrrhenian trumpet, and they joined battle with one another, what a clash of spears dost thou think sounded, how great a groaning and lamentation at the same time! And first the dashing on of the Argive spear broke us; then they again retreated; and next foot being interchanged with foot, and man standing against man, the battle waged fierce; and many fell; and there were two cries, O ye who [dwell in] Athens, O ye who sow the land of the Argives, will ye not avert disgrace from the city? And with difficulty doing every thing, not without toils did we put the Argive force to flight; and then the old man, seeing Hyllus rushing on, Iolaus, stretching forth his right

hand, besought him to place him on the horse-chariot; and seizing the reins in his hands, he pressed hard upon the horses of Eurystheus. And what happened after this I must tell by having heard from others, I myself hitherto having seen all; for passing by the venerable hill of the divine Minerva of Pellene, seeing the chariot of Eurystheus, he prayed to Juno and Jupiter to be young for one day, and to work vengeance on his enemies. But you have a marvel to hear; for two stars standing on the horse-chariot, concealed the chariot in a dim cloud, the wiser men say it was thy son and Hebe; but he from the obscure darkness showed forth a youthful image of youthful arms. And the glorious Iolaus takes the four-horse chariot of Eurystheus at the Scironian rocks — and having bound his hands in fetters, he comes bringing as glorious first-fruits of victory, the general, him who before was prosperous; but by his present fortune he proclaims clearly to all mortals to learn not to envy him who seems prosperous, till one sees him dead, as fortune is but for the day.

CHOR. O Jupiter, thou turner to flight, now is it mine to behold a day free from dreadful fear.

ALC. O Jupiter, at length you have looked upon my miseries, but still I thank you for what has been done: and I, who formerly did not think that my son dwelt with the Gods, now clearly know it. O children, now indeed you shall be free from toils, and free from Eurystheus, who shall perish miserably; and ye shall see the city of your sire, and you shall tread on your inheritance of land; and ye shall sacrifice to your ancestral gods, debarred from whom ye have had, as strangers, a wandering miserable life. But devising what clever thing has Iolaus spared Eurystheus, so as not to slay him, tell me; for in my opinion this is not wise, having taken our enemies, not to exact punishment of them.

SERV. Having respect for you, that with your own eyes you may see him defeated and subjected to your hand; not, indeed, of his own will, but he has bound him by force in constraint, for he was not willing to come alive into your sight and to be punished. But, O old woman, farewell, and remember for me what you first said when I began my tale. Make me free; and in such noble people as you the mouth ought to be free from falsehood.

CHOR. To me the dance is sweet, if there be the thrilling delight of the pipe at the feast; and may Venus be kind. And sweet it is to see the good fortune of friends who did not expect it before; for the fate which accomplishes gifts gives birth to many things; and Time, the son of Saturn. You have, O city, a just path, you should never be deprived of it, to honor the Gods; and he who bids you not do so, is near madness, such proofs as these being shown. God, in truth, evidently exhorts us, taking away the arrogance of the unjust forever. Your son, O old woman, is gone to heaven; he shuns the report of having descended to the realm of Pluto, being consumed as to his body in the terrible flame of fire; and he embraces the lovely bed of Hebe in the golden hall. O Hymen, you have honored two children of Jupiter. Many things agree with many; for in truth they say that Minerva was an ally of their father, and the city and people of that Goddess has saved them, and has restrained the insolence of a man to whom passion was before justice, through violence. May my mind and soul, never be insatiable.

MESS. O mistress, you see, but still it shall be said, we are come, bringing to you Eurystheus here, an unhoped-for sight, and one no less so for him to meet with, for he never expected to come into your hands when he went forth from Mycenæ with a much-toiling band of spearmen, proudly planning things much greater than his fortune, that he should destroy Athens; but the God changed his fortune, and made it contrary. Hyllus, therefore, and the good Iolaus, have set up a statue, in honor of their victory, of Jove, the putter to flight; and they send me to bring this man to you, wishing to delight your mind; for it is most delightful to see an enemy unfortunate, after having been fortunate.

ALC. O hateful thing, art thou come? has justice taken you at last? first then indeed turn hither your head toward me, and dare to look your enemies in the face; for now you are ruled, and you rule no more. Art thou he, for I wish to know, who chose, O wretch, much to insult my son, though no longer existing? For in what respect didst thou not dare to insult him? who led him, while alive, down to hell, and sent him forth, bidding him destroy hydras and lions? And I am silent concerning the other evils you contrived, for it would be a long story; and it did not satisfy you that he alone should endure these things, but you drove me also, and my children, out of all Greece, sitting as suppliants of the Gods, some old, and some still infants;

but you found men and a city free, who feared you not. Thou needs must die miserably, and you shall gain every thing, for you ought to die not once only, having wrought many evil deeds.

MESS. It is not practicable for you to put him to death.

ALC. In vain then have we taken him prisoner. But what law hinders him from dying?

MESS. It seems not so to the chiefs of this land.

ALC. What is this? not good to them to slay one's enemies?

MESS. Not any one whom they have taken alive in battle.

ALC. And did Hyllus endure this decision?

MESS. He could, I suppose, disobey this land!

ALC. He ought no longer to live, nor behold the light.

MESS. Then first he did wrong in not dying.

ALC. Then it is no longer right for him to be punished?

MESS. There is no one who may put him to death.

ALC. I will. And yet I say that I am some one.

MESS. You will indeed have much blame if you do this.

ALC. I love this city. It can not be denied. But as for this man, since he has come into my power, there is no mortal who shall take him from me. For this, whoever will may call me bold, and thinking things too much for a woman; but this deed shall be done by me.

CHOR. It is a serious and excusable thing, O lady, for you to have hatred against this man, I well know it.

EURYSTHEUS. O woman, know plainly that I will not flatter you, nor say any thing else for my life, whence I may incur any imputation of cowardice. But not of my own accord did I undertake this strife — I knew that I was your cousin by birth, and a relation to your son Hercules; but whether I wished it or not, Juno, for it was a Goddess, forced me to toil through this ill. But when I took up enmity against him, and determined to contest this contest, I became a contriver of many evils, and sitting continually in council with myself, I brought forth many plans by night, how dispersing and slaying my enemies, I might dwell for the future not with fear, knowing that your son was not one of the many, but truly a man; for though he be mine enemy, yet shall he be well spoken of, as he was a doughty man. And when he was released [from life], did it not behoove me, being hated by these children, and knowing their father's hatred to me, to move every stone, slaying and banishing them, and contriving, that, doing such things, my own affairs would have been safe? You, therefore, had you obtained my fortunes, would not have oppressed with evils the hostile offspring of a hated lion, but would wisely have permitted them to live in Argos; you will persuade no one of this. Now then, since they did not destroy me then, when I was willing, by the laws of the Greeks I shall, if slain, bear pollution to my slayer; and the city, being wise, has let me go, having greater honor for God than for its enmity toward me. And to what you said you have heard a reply: and now you may call me at once suppliant and brave. Thus is the case with me, I do not wish to die, but I should not be grieved at leaving life.

CHOR. I wish, O Alcmena, to advise you a little, to let go this man, since it seems so to the city.

ALC. But how, if he both die, and still we obey the city?

CHOR. That would be best; but how can that be?

ALC. I will teach you, easily; for having slain him, then I will give his corpse to those of his friends who come after him; for I will not deny his body to the earth, but he dying, shall satisfy my revenge.

EU. Slay me, I do not deprecate thy wrath. But this city indeed, since it has released me, and feared to slay me, I will present with an ancient oracle of

Apollo, which, in time, will be of greater profit than you would expect; for ye will bury me when I am dead, where it is fated, before the temple of the divine virgin of Pallene; and being well disposed to you, and a protector to the city, I shall ever lie as a sojourner under the ground, but most hostile to their descendants when they come hither with much force, betraying this kindness: such strangers do ye now defend. How then did I, knowing this, come hither, and not respect the oracle of the God? Thinking Juno far more powerful than oracles, and that she would not betray me, [I did so.] But suffer neither libations nor blood to be poured on my tomb, for I will give them an evil return as a requital for these things; and ye shall have a double gain from me, I will both profit you and injure them by dying.

ALC. Why then do ye delay, if you are fated to accomplish safety to the city and to your descendants, to slay this man, hearing these things? for they show us the safest path. The man is an enemy, but he will profit us dying. Take him away, O servants; then having slain him, ye must give him to the dogs; for hope not thou, that living, thou shalt again banish me from my native land.

CHOR. These things seem good to me, proceed, O attendants, for every thing on our part shall be done completely for our sovereigns.

HIPPOLYTUS

Translated by Theodore Alois Buckley

Based on the myth of the eponymous son of Theseus, this tragedy was first produced for the City Dionysia of Athens in 428 BC and won first prize as part of a trilogy. Euripides first used events from the myth in an earlier play, *Hippolytus Veiled*, which is now lost, like many of the great tragedian's works. Scholars believe this first play failed with audiences due to a scene where a shamelessly lustful Phaedra directly propositions Hippolytus, causing much scandal for the playwright. This failure prompted Euripides to revisit the myth, this time offering a much more even-handed and psychologically complex treatment of the characters than is commonly found in traditional retelling of myths.

The play is set in Troezen, a coastal town in the north-eastern Peloponnese. Theseus, the king of Athens, is serving a year's voluntary exile after having murdered a local king and his sons. His illegitimate son Hippolytus, whose mother is the Amazon Hippolyta, has been trained here since childhood by the king of Troezen, Pittheus. As the play opens, Aphrodite, the Goddess of love, explains that Hippolytus has sworn chastity and refuses to revere her. Instead, he honours the Goddess of the hunt, Artemis. This has led her to initiate a plan of vengeance on the young man. When Hippolytus went to Athens two years previously, Aphrodite inspired Phaedra, Hippolytus' stepmother, to fall in love with him, setting into action the events that will lead to the play's tragic outcome.

'The Death of Hippolytus' by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, 1860

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THE ARGUMENT.

Theseus was the son of Othra and Neptune, and king of the Athenians; and having married Hippolyta, one of the Amazons, he begat Hippolytus, who excelled in beauty and chastity. When his wife died, he married, for his second wife, Phædra, a Cretan, daughter of Minos, king of Crete, and Pasiphaë. Theseus, in consequence of having slain Pallas, one of his kinsmen, goes into banishment, with his wife, to Trœzene, where it happened that Hippolytus was being brought up by Pittheus: but Phædra having seen the youth was desperately enamored, not that she was incontinent, but in order to fulfill the anger of Venus, who, having determined to destroy Hippolytus on account of his chastity, brought her plans to a conclusion. She, concealing her disease, at length was compelled to declare it to her nurse, who had promised to relieve her, and who, though against her inclination, carried her words to the youth. Phædra, having learned that he was exasperated, eluded the nurse, and hung herself. At which time Theseus having arrived, and wishing to take her down that was strangled, found a letter attached to her, throughout which she accused Hippolytus of a design on her virtue. And he, believing what was written, ordered Hippolytus to go into banishment, and put up a prayer to Neptune, in compliance with which the god destroyed Hippolytus. But Diana declared to Theseus every thing that had happened, and blamed not Phædra, but comforted him, bereaved of his child and wife, and promised to institute honors in the place to Hippolytus.

The scene of the play is laid in Trœzene. It was acted in the archonship of Ameinon, in the fourth year of the 87th Olympiad. Euripides first, Jophon second, Jon third. This Hippolytus is the second of that name, and is called ΣΤΕΦΑΝΙΑΣ: but it appears to have been written the latest, for what was unseemly and deserved blame is corrected in this play. The play is ranked among the first.

HIPPOLYTUS.

VENUS.

Great in the sight of mortals, and not without a name am I the Goddess Venus, and in heaven: and of as many as dwell within the ocean and the boundaries of Atlas, beholding the light of the sun, those indeed, who reverence my authority, I advance to honor; but overthrow as many as hold themselves high toward me. For this is in sooth a property inherent even in the race of the Gods, that "they rejoice when honored by men." But quickly will I show the truth of these words: for the son of Theseus, born of the Amazon, Hippolytus, pupil of the chaste Pittheus, alone of the inhabitants of this land of Trœzene, says that I am of deities the vilest, and rejects the bridal bed, and will have nothing to do with marriage. But Dian, the sister of Phœbus, daughter of Jove, he honors, esteeming her the greatest of deities. And through the green wood ever accompanying the virgin, with his swift dogs he clears the beasts from off the earth, having formed a fellowship greater than mortal ought. This indeed I grudge him not; for wherefore should I? but wherein he has erred toward me, I will avenge me on Hippolytus this very day: and having cleared most of the difficulties beforehand, I need not much labor. For Phædra, his father's noble wife, having seen him, *(as he was going once from the house of Pittheus to the land of Pandion, in order to see and afterward be fully admitted to the hallowed mysteries,)* was smitten in her heart with fierce love by my design. And even before she came to this land of Trœzene, at the very rock of Pallas that overlooks this land, she raised a temple to Venus, loving an absent love; and gave out afterward, that the Goddess was honored with her temple for Hippolytus's sake. But now since Theseus has left the land of Cecrops, in order to avoid the pollution of the murder of the sons of Pallas, and is sailing to this land with his wife, having submitted to a year's banishment from his people; there indeed groaning and stricken with the stings of love, the wretched woman perishes in secret; and not one of her domestics is conscious of her malady. But this love must by no means fall to the ground in this way: but I will open the matter to Theseus, and it shall become manifest. And him that is our enemy shall the father kill with imprecations, which Neptune, king of the ocean, granted as a privilege to Theseus, that he should make no prayer thrice to the God in vain. But

Phædra dies, an illustrious woman indeed, yet still [she must die]; for I will not make her ills of that high consequence, that will hinder my enemies from giving me such full vengeance as may content me. But, as I see the son of Theseus coming, having left the toil of the chase, I will depart from this spot. But with him a numerous train of attendants following behind raise a clamor, praising the Goddess Dian with hymns, for he knows not that the gates of hell are opened, and that this day is the last he beholds.

HIPPOLYTUS, ATTENDANTS.

HIPP. Follow, follow, singing the heavenly Dian, daughter of Jove; Dian, under whose protection we are.

ATT. Holy, holy, most hallowed offspring of Jove, hail! hail! O Dian, daughter of Latona and of Jove, most beauteous by far of virgins, who, born of an illustrious sire, in the vast heaven dwellest in the palace of Jove, that mansion rich in gold.

HIPP. Hail, O most beauteous, most beauteous of virgins in Olympus, Dian! For thee, my mistress, bear I this wreathed garland from the pure mead, where neither does the shepherd think fit to feed his flocks, nor yet came iron there, but the bee ranges over the pure and vernal mead, and Reverence waters it with river dews. Whosoever has chastity, not that which is taught in schools, but that which is by nature, for this description of persons it is lawful thence to pluck, but for the evil it is not lawful. But, O my dear mistress, receive this wreath to bind your golden tresses from a pious hand. For to me alone of mortals is allowed this privilege. With thee I am both present, and exchange words with thee, hearing thy voice, but not seeing thy countenance. But may I finish the last turn of my course of life, even as I began.

ATT. O king, *(for the Gods alone ought we to call Lords,)* will you hear somewhat from me, who advise you well?

HIPP. Most certainly, or else I should not seem wise.

ATT. Knowest thou then the law, which is established among men?

HIPP. I know not; but what is the one, about which thou askest me?

ATT. To hate haughtiness, and that which is disagreeable to all.

HIPP. And rightly; for what haughty mortal is not odious?

ATT. And in the affable is there any charm?

HIPP. A very great one indeed, and gain with little toil.

ATT. Dost thou suppose that the same thing holds also among the Gods?

HIPP. Certainly, forasmuch as we mortals use the laws of the Gods.

ATT. How is it then that thou addressest not a venerable Goddess?

HIPP. Whom? but take heed that thy mouth err not.

ATT. Venus, who hath her station at thy gates.

HIPP. I, who am chaste, salute her at a distance.

ATT. Venerable is she, however, and of note among mortals.

HIPP. Different Gods and men are objects of regard to different persons.

ATT. May you be blest, having as much sense as you require.

HIPP. No one of the Gods, that is worshiped by night, delights me.

ATT. My son, we must conform to the honors of the Gods.

HIPP. Depart, my companions, and having entered the house, prepare the viands: delightful after the chase is the full table. — And I must rub down my horses, that having yoked them to the car, when I am satiated with the repast, I may give them their proper exercise. But to your Venus I bid a long farewell.

ATT. But we, for one must not imitate the young, having our thoughts such, as it becomes slaves to give utterance to, will adore thy image, O Venus, our mistress; but thou shouldest pardon, if any one having intense feelings of mind by reason of his youth, speak foolishly: seem not to hear these things, for Gods must needs be wiser than men.

CHOR. There is a rock near the ocean, distilling water, which sends forth from its precipices a flowing fountain, wherein they dip their urns; where was a friend of mine wetting the purple vests in the dew of the stream, and she laid them down on the back of the warm sunny cliff: from hence first came to me the report concerning my mistress, that she, worn with the bed of sickness, keeps her person within the house, and that fine vests veil her auburn head. And I hear that she this day for the third keeps her body untouched by the fruit of Ceres, [which she receives not] into her ambrosial mouth, wishing in secret suffering to hasten to the unhappy goal of death. For heaven-possessed, O lady, or whether by Pan, or by Hecate, or by the venerable Corybantes, or by the mother who haunts the mountains, thou art raving. But thou art thus tormented on account of some fault committed against the Cretan huntress, profane because of unoffered sacred cakes. For she goes through the sea and beyond the land on the eddies of the watery brine. Or some one in the palace misguides thy noble husband, the chief of the Athenians, by secret concubinage in thy bed. Or some sailor who put from port at Crete, hath sailed to the harbor most friendly to mariners, bringing some message to the queen; and, confined to her couch, she is bound in soul by sorrow for its sufferings. But wretched helplessness is wont to dwell with the wayward constitution of women, both on account of their throes and their loss of reason. Once through my womb shot this thrill, but I invoked the heavenly Dian, who gives easy throes, who presides over the bow, and to me she came ever much to be blessed, as well as the other Gods. But lo! the old nurse is bringing her out of the palace before the gates; and the sad cloud upon her brows is increased. What it can possibly be, my soul desires to know, with what can be afflicted the person of the queen, of color so changed.

PHÆDRA, NURSE, CHORUS.

Alas! the evils of men, and their odious diseases! what shall I do for thee? and what not do? lo! here is the clear light for thee, here the air: and now is thy couch whereon thou liest sick removed from out of the house: for every word you spoke was to come hither; but soon you will be in a hurry to go to your chamber back again: for you are soon changed, and are pleased with nothing. Nor does what is present delight you, but what is not present you think more agreeable. It is a better thing to be sick, than to tend the sick: the one is a simple ill, but with the other is joined both pain of mind and toil of hands. But the whole life of men is full of grief, nor is there rest from toils. But whatever else there be more dear than life, darkness enveloping hides it in clouds. Hence we appear to dote on this present state, because it gleams on earth, through inexperience of another life, and the non-appearance of the things beneath the earth. But we are blindly carried away by fables.

PHÆ. Raise my body, place my head upright — I am faint in the joints of my limbs, my friends, lay hold of my fair-formed hands, O attendants — The dressing on my head is heavy for me to support — take it off, let flow my ringlets on my shoulders.

NUR. Be of good courage, my child, and do not thus painfully shift [the posture of] your body. But you will bear your sickness more easily both with quiet, and with a noble temper, for it is necessary for mortals to suffer misery.

PHÆ. Alas! alas! would I could draw from the dewy fountain the drink of pure waters, and that under the alders, and in the leafy mead reclining I might rest!

NUR. O my child, what sayest thou? Wilt thou not desist from uttering these things before the multitude, blurting forth a speech of madness?

PHÆ. Bear me to the mountain — I will go to the wood, and by the pine-trees, where tread the dogs the slayers of beasts, pursuing the dappled hinds — By the Gods I long to cheer on the hounds, and by the side of my auburn hair to hurl the Thessalian javelin bearing the lanced weapon in my hand.

NUR. Wherefore in the name of heaven, my child, do you hanker after these things? wherefore have you any anxiety for hunting? and wherefore

do you long for the fountain streams? for by the towers there is a perpetual flow of water, whence may be your draught.

PHÆ. O Dian, mistress of Limna near the sea, and of the exercises of the rattling steeds, would that I were on thy plains, breaking the Henetian colts.

NUR. Wherefore again have you madly uttered this word? at one time having ascended the mountain you set forth with the desire of hunting; but now again you long for the colts on the wave-beaten sands. These things demand much skill in prophecy [to find out], who it is of the Gods that torments thee, O lady, and strikes mad thy senses.

PHÆ. Wretch that I am, what then have I committed? whither have I wandered from my sound mind? I have gone mad; I have fallen by the evil influence of some God. Alas! alas! unhappy that I am — Nurse, cover my head again, for I am ashamed of the things I have spoken: cover me; a tear trickles down my eyes, and my sight is turned to my disgrace. For to be in one's right mind causes grief: but madness is an ill; yet it is better to perish, nothing knowing of one's ills.

NUR. I cover thee — but when in sooth will death cover my body? Length of life teaches me many things. For it behooves mortals to form moderate friendships with each other, and not to the very marrow of the soul: and the affections of the mind should be dissoluble, and so that we can slacken them, or tighten. But that one soul should feel pangs for two, as I now grieve for her, is a heavy burden. The concerns of life carried to too great an extent, they say, bring rather destruction than delight, and are rather at enmity with health. Thus I praise what is in extreme less than *the sentiment of* "Nothing in excess;" and the wise will agree with me.

CHOR. O aged woman, faithful nurse of the queen Phædra, we see indeed the wretched state of this lady, but it is not clear what her disease is: but we would wish to inquire and hear from you.

NUR. I know not by my inquiries; for she is not willing to speak.

CHOR. Nor what is the origin of these pangs?

NUR. You come to the same result; for she is silent with regard to all these things.

CHOR. How feeble she is, and wasted away as to her body!

NUR. How could it be otherwise, seeing that she has abstained from food these three days?

CHOR. From the violence of her calamity is it, or does she endeavor to die?

NUR. To die; but she fasts to the dissolution of her life.

CHOR. An extraordinary thing you have been telling me, if this conduct meets the approbation of her husband.

NUR. [He nothing knows,] for she conceals this calamity, and denies that she is ill.

CHOR. But does he not guess it, looking into her face?

NUR. [How should he?] for he is out of this country.

CHOR. But do you not urge it as a matter of necessity, when you endeavor to ascertain her disease and the wandering of her senses?

NUR. I have tried every thing, and have made no further advances. I will not however abate even now from my zeal, so that you being present may bear witness with me, how I behave to my mistress when in calamity — Come, dear child, let us both forget our former conversations; and be both thou more mild, having smoothed that contracted brow, and altered the bent of your design; and I giving up that wherein I did not do right to follow thee, will have recourse to other better words. And if indeed you are ill with any of those maladies that are not to be mentioned, these women here can allay the disease: but if it may be related to men, tell it, that the thing may be mentioned to physicians. — Well! why art thou silent? It doth not behoove thee to be silent, my child, but either shouldst thou convict me, if aught I say amiss, or yield to words well spoken. — Say something — look hither — O wretch that I am! Ladies, in vain do we undergo these toils,

while we are as far off from our purpose as before: for neither then was she softened by our words, nor now does she give heed to us. Still however know *(now then be more obstinate than the sea)* that, if thou shalt die, thou wilt betray thy children, who will have no share in their paternal mansion. I swear by the warlike queen the Amazon, who brought forth a lord over thy children, base-born yet of noble sentiments, thou knowest him well, Hippolytus.

PHÆ. Ah me!

NUR. This touches thee.

PHÆ. You have destroyed me, nurse, and by the Gods I entreat thee henceforth to be silent with respect to this man.

NUR. Do you see? you judge well indeed, but judging well you are not willing both to assist your children and to save your own life.

PHÆ. I love my children; but I am wintering in the storm of another misfortune.

NUR. You have your hands, my child, pure from blood.

PHÆ. My hands are pure, but my mind has some pollution.

NUR. What! from some calamity brought on you by any of your enemies?

PHÆ. A friend destroys me against my will, himself unwilling.

NUR. Has Theseus sinned any sin against thee?

PHÆ. Would that I never be discovered to have injured him.

NUR. What then this dreadful thing that impels thee to die?

PHÆ. Suffer me to err, for against thee I err not.

NUR. Not willingly [dost thou do so,] but ’tis through thee that I shall perish.

PHÆ. What are you doing? you oppress me, hanging on me with your hand.

NUR. And never will I let go these knees.

PHÆ. Ills to thyself wilt thou hear, O wretched woman, if thou shalt hear these ills.

NUR. [Still will I cling:] for what greater evil can befall me than to lose thee?

PHÆ. You will be undone. The thing however brings honor to me.

NUR. And dost thou then hide what is useful, when I beseech thee?

PHÆ. *Yes*, for from base things we devise things noble.

NUR. Wilt not thou, then, appear more noble by telling it?

PHÆ. Depart, by the Gods, and let go my hand!

NUR. No in sooth, since thou givest me not the boon that were right.

PHÆ. I will give it; for I have respect unto the reverence of thy hand.

NUR. Now will I be silent: for hence is it yours to speak.

PHÆ. O wretched mother, what a love didst thou love!

NUR. That which she had for the bull, my child, or what is this thou meanest?

PHÆ. Thou, too, O wretched sister, wife of Bacchus!

NUR. Child, what ails thee? thou speakest ill against thy relations.

PHÆ. And I the third, how unhappily I perish!

NUR. I am struck dumb with amazement. Whither will thy speech tend?

PHÆ. *To that point*, whence we have not now lately become unfortunate.

NUR. I know not a whit further of the things I wish to hear.

PHÆ. Alas! would thou couldst speak the things which I must speak.

NUR. I am no prophetess so as to know clearly things hidden.

PHÆ. What is that thing, which they do call men's loving!

NUR. The same, my child, a most delightful thing, and painful withal.

PHÆ. One of the two feelings I must perceive.

NUR. What say'st? Thou lovest, my child? What man!

PHÆ. Him whoever he is, that is born of the Amazon.

NUR. Hippolytus dost thou say?

PHÆ. From thyself, not me, you hear — this name.

NUR. Ah me! what wilt thou go on to say? my child, how hast thou destroyed me! Ladies, this is not to be borne; I will not endure to live, hateful is the day, hateful the light I behold. I will hurl myself down, I will rid me of this body: I will remove from life to death — farewell — I no longer am. For the chaste are in love with what is evil, not willingly indeed, yet still [they love.] Venus then is no deity, but if there be aught mightier than deity, that is she, who hath destroyed both this my mistress, and me, and the whole house.

CHOR. Thou didst hear, O thou didst hear the queen lamenting her wretched sufferings that should not be heard. Dear lady, may I perish before I come to thy state of mind! Alas me! alas! alas! O hapless for these pangs! O the woes that attend on mortals! Thou art undone, thou hast disclosed thy evils to the light. What time is this that has eternally awaited thee? Some new misfortune will happen to the house. And no longer is it obscure where the fortune of Venus sets, O wretched Cretan daughter.

PHÆ. Women of Trœzene, who inhabit this extreme frontier of the land of Pelops. Often at other times in the long season of night have I thought in what manner the life of mortals is depraved. And to me they seem to do ill, not from the nature of their minds, for many have good thoughts, but thus must we view these things. What things are good we understand and know, but practice not; some from idleness, and others preferring some other pleasures to what is right: for there are many pleasures in life-long prates, and indolence, a pleasing ill, and shame; but there are two, the one indeed not base, but the other the weight that overthrows houses, but if the occasion on which each is used, were clear, the two things would not have the same letters. Knowing them as I did these things beforehand, by no drug did I think I should so far destroy these *sentiments*, as to fall into an opposite way of thinking. But I will also tell you the course of my determinations. After that love had wounded me, I considered how best I might endure it. I began therefore from this time to be silent, and to conceal this disease. For no confidence can be placed in the tongue, which knows to advise the thoughts of other men, but itself from itself has very many evils. But in the second place, I meditated to bear well my madness conquering it by my chastity. But in the third place, since by these means I was not able to subdue Venus, it appeared to me best to die: no one will gainsay this resolution. For may it be my lot, neither to be concealed where I do noble deeds, nor to have many witnesses, where I act basely. Besides this I knew I was a woman — a thing hated by all. O may she most miserably perish who first began to pollute the marriage-bed with other men! From noble families first arose this evil among women: for when base things appear right to those who are accounted good, surely they will appear so to the bad. I hate moreover those women who are chaste in their language indeed, but secretly have in them no good deeds of boldness: who, how, I pray, O Venus my revered mistress, look they on the faces of their husbands, nor dread the darkness that aided their deeds, and the ceilings of the house, lest they should some time or other utter a voice? For this bare idea kills me, friends, lest I should ever be discovered to have disgraced my husband, or my children, whom I brought forth; but free, happy in liberty of speech may they inhabit the city of illustrious Athens, in their mother glorious! For it enslaves a man, though he be valiant-hearted, when he is conscious of his mother’s or his father’s misdeeds. But this alone they say in endurance compeers with life, an honest and good mind, to whomsoever it belong. But

Time, when it so chance, holding up the mirror as to a young virgin, shows forth the bad, among whom may I be never seen!

CHOR. Alas! alas! In every way how fair is chastity, and how goodly a report has it among men!

NUR. My mistress, just now indeed thy calamity coming upon me unawares, gave me a dreadful alarm. But now I perceive I was weak; and somehow or other among mortals second thoughts are the wisest. For thou hast not suffered any thing excessive nor extraordinary, but the anger of the Goddess hath fallen upon thee. Thou lovest — what wonder this? with many mortals. — And then will you lose your life for love? There is then no advantage for those who love others, nor to those who may hereafter, if they must needs die. For Venus is a thing not to be borne, if she rush on vehement. Who comes quietly indeed on the person who yields; but whom she finds haughty and of lofty notions, him taking *(how thinkest thou?)* she chastises. But Venus goes through air, and is on the ocean wave; and all things from her have their birth. She it is that sows and gives forth love, from whence all we on earth are engendered. As many indeed as ken the writings of the ancients, or are themselves ever among the muses, they know indeed, how that Jove was formerly inflamed with the love of Semele; they know too, how that formerly the lovely bright Aurora bore away Cephalus up to the Gods, for love, but still they live in heaven, and fly not from the presence of the Gods: but they acquiesce yielding, I ween, to what has befallen them. And wilt thou not bear it? Thy father then ought to have begotten thee on stipulated terms, or else under the dominion of other Gods, unless thou wilt be content with these laws. How many, thinkest thou, are in full and complete possession of their senses, who, when they see their bridal bed diseased, seem not to see it! And how many fathers, thinkest thou, have aided their erring sons in matters of love, for this is a maxim among the wise part of mankind, “that things that show not fair should be concealed.” Nor should men labor too exactly their conduct in life, for neither would they do well to employ much accuracy in the roof wherewith their houses are covered; but having fallen into fortune so deep as thou hast, how dost thou imagine thou canst swim out? But if thou hast more things good than bad, mortal as thou art, thou surely must be well off. But cease, my dear child, from these evil thoughts, cease too from being haughty, for

nothing else save haughtiness is this, to wish to be superior to the Gods. But, as thou art in love, endure it; a God hath willed it so: and, being ill, by some good means or other try to get rid of thy illness. But there are charms and soothing spells: there will appear some medicine for this sickness. Else surely men would be slow indeed in discoveries, if we women should not find contrivances.

CHOR. Phædra, she speaks indeed most useful advice in thy present state: but thee I praise. Yet is this praise less welcome than her words, and to thee more painful to hear.

PHÆ. This is it that destroys cities of men and families well governed — words too fair. For it is not at all requisite to speak words pleasant to the ear, but that whereby one may become of fair report.

NUR. Why dost thou talk in this grand strain? thou needest not gay decorated words, but a man: as soon as possible must those be found, who will speak out the plain straightforward word concerning thee. For if thy life were not in calamities of such a cast, I never would have brought thee thus far for the sake of lust, and for thy pleasure: but now the great point is to save thy life; and this is not a thing deserving of blame.

PHÆ. O thou that hast spoken dreadful things, wilt thou not shut thy mouth? and wilt not cease from uttering again those words most vile?

NUR. Vile they are, but better these for thee than fair; but better will the deed be *(if at least it will save thee)*, than the name, in the which while thou boastest, thou wilt die.

PHÆ. Nay do not, I entreat thee by the Gods *(for thou speakest well, but base are [the things thou speakest])* go beyond this, since rightly have I surrendered my life to love; but if thou speak base things in fair phrase, I shall be consumed, [being cast] into that [evil] which I am now avoiding.

NUR. If in truth this be thy opinion, thou oughtest not to err, but if thou hast erred, be persuaded by me, for this is the next best thing thou canst do. I have in the house soothing philters of love *(and they but lately came into my thought)*; which, by no base deed, nor to the harm of thy senses, will rid you

of this disease, unless you are obstinate. But it is requisite to receive from him that is the object of your love, some token, either some word, or some relic of his vest, and to join from two one love.

PHÆ. But is the charm an unguent or a potion?

NUR. I know not: wish to be relieved, not informed, my child.

PHÆ. I fear thee, lest thou should appear too wise to me.

NUR. Know that you would fear every thing, *if you fear this*, but what is it you are afraid of?

PHÆ. Lest you should tell any of these things to the son of Theseus.

NUR. Let be, my child, I will arrange these matters honorably, only be thou my coadjutor, O Venus, my revered mistress; but the other things which I purpose, it will suffice to tell to my friends within.

CHORUS, PHÆDRA.

CHOR. Love, love, O thou that instillest desire through the eyes, inspiring sweet affection in the souls of those against whom thou makest war, mayst thou never appear to me to my injury, nor come unmodulated: for neither is the blast of fire nor the bolt of heaven more vehement, than that of Venus, which Love, the boy of Jove, sends from his hands. In vain, in vain, both by the Alpheus, and at the Pythian temples of Phœbus does Greece then solemnize the slaughter of bulls: but Love, the tyrant of men, porter of the dearest chambers of Venus, we worship not, the destroyer and visitant of men in all shapes of calamity, when he comes. That virgin in Œchalia, yoked to no bridal bed, till then unwedded, and who knew no husband, having taken from her home a wanderer impelled by the oar, her, like some Bacchanal of Pluto, with blood, with smoke, and murderous hymeneals did Venus give to the son of Alcmena. O unhappy woman, because of her nuptials! O sacred wall of Thebes, O mouth of Dirce, you can assist me in telling, in what manner Venus comes: for by the forked lightning, by a cruel fate, did she put to eternal sleep the parent of the Jove-begotten Bacchus,

when she was visited as a bride. For dreadful doth she breathe on all things, and like some bee hovers about.

PHÆ. Women, be silent: I am undone.

CHOR. What is there that affrights thee, Phædra, in thine house?

PHÆ. Be silent, that I may make out the voice of those within.

CHOR. I am silent: this however is an evil bodement.

PHÆ. Alas me! O! O! O! oh unhappy me, because of my sufferings!

CHOR. What sound dost thou utter? what word speakest thou? tell me what report frightens thee, lady, rushing upon thy senses!

PHÆ. We are undone. Do you, standing at these gates, hear what the noise is that strikes on the house?

CHOR. Thou art by the gate, the noise that is sent forth from the house is thy care. But tell me, tell me, what evil, I pray thee, came *to thine ears*?

PHÆ. The son of the warlike Amazon, Hippolytus, cries out, abusing in dreadful forms my attendant.

CHOR. I hear indeed a noise, but can not plainly tell how it is. The voice came, it came through to the door.

PHÆ. But hark! he calls her plainly the pander of wickedness, the betrayer of her master's bed.

CHOR. Alas me for thy miseries! Thou art betrayed, dear mistress. What shall I counsel thee? for hidden things are come to light, and thou art utterly destroyed ——

PHÆ. O! O!

CHOR. Betrayed by thy friends.

PHÆ. She hath destroyed me by speaking of my unhappy state, kindly but not honorably endeavoring to heal this disease.

CHOR. How then? what wilt thou do, O thou that hast suffered things incurable?

PHÆ. I know not, save one thing; to die as soon as possible is the only cure of my present sufferings.

HIPPOLYTUS, PHÆDRA, NURSE, CHORUS.

HIPP. O mother earth, and ye disclosing rays of the sun, of what words have I heard the dreadful sound!

NUR. Be silent, my son, before any one hears thy voice.

HIPP. It is not possible for me to be silent, when I have heard such dreadful things.

NUR. Nay, I implore thee by thy beauteous hand.

HIPP. Wilt not desist from bringing thy hand near me, and from touching my garments?

NUR. O! by thy knees, I implore thee, do not utterly destroy me.

HIPP. But wherefore this? since, thou sayest, thou hast spoken nothing evil.

NUR. This word, my son, is by no means to be divulged.

HIPP. It is more fair to speak fair things to many.

NUR. O my child, by no means dishonor your oath.

HIPP. My tongue hath sworn — my mind is still unsworn.

NUR. O my son, what wilt thou do? wilt thou destroy thy friends?

HIPP. *Friends!* I reject the word: no unjust person is my friend.

NUR. Pardon, my child: that men should err is but to be expected.

HIPP. O Jove, wherefore in the name of heaven didst thou place in the light of the sun that specious evil to men, women? for if thou didst will to propagate the race of mortals, there was no necessity for this to be done by women, but men might, having placed an equivalent in thy temples, either in brass, or iron, or the weighty gold, buy a race of children, each for the consideration of the value paid, and thus might dwell in unmolested houses, without females. But now, first of all, when we prepare to bring this evil to our homes, we squander away the wealth of our houses. By this too it is evident, that woman is a great evil; for the father, who begat her and brought her up, having given her a dowry sends her away in order to be rid of the evil. But the husband, on the other hand, when he has received the baneful evil into his house, rejoices, having added a beautiful decoration to a most vile image, and tricks her out with robes, unhappy man, while he has been insensibly minishing the wealth of the family. But he is constrained; so that having made alliance with noble kinsmen, he retains with [seeming] joy a marriage bitter to him: or if he has received a good bride, but worthless parents in law, he suppresses the evil that has befallen him by the consideration of the good. But his state is the easiest, whose wife is settled in his house, a cipher, but useless by reason of simplicity. But a wise woman I detest: may there not be in my house at least a woman more highly gifted with mind than woman ought to be. For Venus engenders mischief rather among clever women, but a woman who is not endowed with capacity, by reason of her small understanding, is removed from folly. But it is right that an attendant should have no access to a woman, but with them ought to dwell the speechless brute beasts, in which case they would be able neither to address any one, nor from them to receive a voice in return. But now, they that are evil follow after their evil devices within, and the servants carry it forth abroad. As thou also hast, O evil woman, come to the purpose of admitting me to share a bed which must not be approached — a father's. Which impious things I will wash out with flowing stream, pouring it into my ears: how then could I be the vile one, who do not even deem myself pure, because I have heard such things? — But be well assured, my piety protects thee, woman, for, had I not been taken unawares by the oaths of the Gods, never would I have refrained from telling these things to my father. But now will I depart from the house, *and stay* during the time that

Theseus is absent from the land, and will keep my mouth silent; but I will see, returning with my father's return, how you will look at him, both you and your mistress. But your boldness I shall know, having before had proof of it. May you perish: but never shall I take my fill of hating women, not even if any one assert, that I am always saying this. For in some way or other they surely are always bad. Either then let some one teach them to be modest, or else let him suffer me ever to utter my invectives against them.

CHORUS, PHÆDRA, NURSE.

CHOR. Oh unhappy ill-fated fortune of women! what art now or what words have we, having failed as we have, to extricate the knot caused by [these] words?

PHÆ. We have met a just reward; O earth, and light, in what manner, I pray, can I escape from my fortunes? and how, my friends, can I conceal my calamity? Who of the Gods will appear my succorer, or what mortal my ally, or my fellow-worker in unjust works? for the suffering of my life that is at present on me comes hardly to be escaped. I am the most ill-fated of women.

CHOR. Alas! alas! we are undone, lady, and the arts of thy attendant have not succeeded, and it fares ill with us.

PHÆ. O thou most vile, and the destruction of thy friends, what hast thou done to me! May Jove, my ancestor, tear thee up by the roots, having stricken thee by his fire. Did not I tell thee *(did not I foresee thy intention?)* to be silent with regard to those things with which I am now tormented? but thou couldst not refrain; wherefore I can no longer die with glory: but I must now in sooth employ new measures. For he, now that his mind is made keen with rage, will tell, to my detriment, thy errors to his father, and will fill the whole earth with the most vile reports. Mayst thou perish, both thou and whoever else is forward to assist friends against their will otherwise than by honorable means.

NUR. Lady, thou canst indeed blame the evil I have wrought; for that which gnaws upon thee masters thy better judgment; — but I too have somewhat to say in answer to these things, if thou wilt admit it: I brought thee up, and

have a kind affection toward thee; but, while searching for medicine for thy disease, I found not that I wished for. But if I had succeeded, I had been surely ranked among the wise; for we have the reputation of sense according to our success.

PHÆ. What? is this conduct just, and satisfactory to me, to injure me first, and then to meet me in argument?

NUR. We talk too long — I did not behave wisely. But even from this state of things it is possible that thou mayest be saved, my child.

PHÆ. Desist from speaking; for before also thou didst not well advise for me, and didst attempt evil things. But depart from my sight, and take care about thyself; for I will settle my own affairs in an honorable manner. But you, noble daughters of Trœzene, grant thus much to me requesting it, bury in silence what you here have heard.

CHOR. I swear by hallowed Dian, daughter of Jove, that I will never reveal to the face of day one of thy evils.

PHÆ. Thou hast well spoken: but one kind of resource, while I search around me, do I find for my present calamity, so that I may make the life of my children glorious, and may myself be assisted as things have now fallen out. For never will I disgrace the house of Crete at least, nor will I come before the face of Theseus having acted basely, for one's life's sake.

CHOR. But what irremediable evil art thou then about to perpetrate?

PHÆ. To die: but how, this will I devise.

CHOR. Speak words of better omen.

PHÆ. And do thou at least advise me well. But having quitted life this day, I shall gratify Venus, who destroys me, and shall be conquered by bitter love. But when I am dead, I shall be an evil to another at least, so that he may know not to exult over my misfortunes; but, having shared this malady in common with me, he shall learn to be modest.

CHOR. Would that I were under the rocks' vast retreats, and that there the God would make me a winged bird among the swift flocks, and that I were lifted up above the ocean wave that dashes against the Adriatic shore, and the water of Eridanus, where for grief of Phaethon the thrice wretched virgins let fall into their father's billow the amber-beaming brightness of their tears: and that I could make my way to the shore where the apples grow of the harmonious daughters of Hesperus, where the ruler of the ocean no longer permits the passage of the purple sea to mariners, dwelling in that dread bourn of heaven which Atlas doth sustain, and the ambrosial founts stream forth hard by the couches of Jove's palaces, where the divine and life-bestowing earth increases the bliss of the Gods. O white-winged bark of Crete, who didst bear my queen through the perturbed ocean wave of brine from a happy home, thereby aiding her in a most evil marriage. For surely in both instances, or at any rate from Crete she came ill-omened to renowned Athens, when on the Munychian shore they bound the platted ends of their cables, and disembarked on the continent. Wherefore she was heartbroken with the terrible disease of unhallowed love by the influence of Venus; and now that she can no longer hold out against the heavy calamity, she will fit around her the noose suspended from the ceiling of her bridal chamber, adjusting it to her white neck, having revered the hateful Goddess, and embracing an honorable name, and ridding from her breast the painful love.

FEMALE SERVANT, CHORUS, THESEUS.

SERV. Alack! alack! run to my succor all that are near the house — My mistress the wife of Theseus is hanging.

CHOR. Alas! alas! the deed is done: the queen is indeed no more — she is suspended in the noose that hangs there.

SERV. Will ye not haste? will not some one bring a two-edged sword, with which we may undo this knot around her neck?

SEMICHOR. My friends, what do we? does it seem good to enter the house and to free the queen from the tight-drawn noose?

SEMICHOR. Why we? Are not the young men-servants at hand? The being over-busy is not a safe plan through life.

SERV. Lay right the wretched corpse, pull her limbs straight. A grievous housekeeping this for my master!

CHOR. The unhappy woman, as I hear, has perished, for already are they laying her out as a corpse.

THES. Know ye, females, what noise this is in my house? a heavy sound of my attendants reached me. For the family does not think fit to open the gates to me and to hail me with joy as having returned from the oracle. Has any ill befallen the aged Pittheus? His life is now indeed far advanced; but still he would be much lamented by us, were he to leave this house.

CHOR. This that has happened, Theseus, extends not to the old; the young are they that by their death will grieve thee.

THES. Alas me! is the life of any of my children stolen from me?

CHOR. They live, but their mother is dead in a way that will grieve thee most.

THES. What sayest? My wife dead? By what fate?

CHOR. She suspended the noose, wherewith she strangled herself.

THES. Wasted with sorrow, or from some sudden calamity?

CHOR. Thus much we know — *nothing further*; for I am but just come to thy house, Theseus, to bewail thy evils.

THES. Alas! alas! why then have I my head crowned with entwined leaves, who am the unhappy inquirer of the oracle? Servants, undo the bars of the gates; unloose the bolts, that I may behold the mournful spectacle of my wife, who by her death hath utterly undone me.

CHOR. Alas! alas! unhappy for thy wretched ills: thou hast been a sufferer; thou hast perpetrated a deed of such extent as to throw this house into utter

confusion. Alas! alas! thy boldness, O thou who hast died a violent death, and, by an unhallowed chance, the act committed by thy wretched hand. Who is it then, thou unhappy one, that destroys thy life?

THES. Alas me for my sufferings! I have suffered, unhappy wretch, the extreme of my troubles — O fortune, how heavy hast thou come upon me and my house, an imperceptible spot from some evil demon! the wearing out of a life not to be endured; and I, unhappy wretch, perceive a sea of troubles so great, that never again can I emerge from it, nor escape beyond the flood of this calamity. What mention making can I unhappy, what heavy-fated fortune of thine, lady, saying that it was, can I be right? For as some bird thou art vanished from my hand, having leaped me a sudden leap to the realms of Pluto. Alas! alas! wretched, wretched are these sufferings, but from some distant period or other receive I this calamity from the Gods, for the errors of some of those of old.

CHOR. Not to thee alone, O king, have these evils happened; but with many others thou hast lost an excellent wife.

THES. In the shades beneath the earth, I unhappy wish, dying, to dwell in darkness, reft as I am of thy most dear company, for thou hast destroyed rather than perished — What then do I hear? whence came the deadly chance, lady, to thine heart? Will any speak what has happened, or does my royal palace contain to no purpose the crowd of my attendants? — Alas me on thy account! unhappy that I am, what grief in my house have I seen, intolerable, indescribable! but — we are undone! my house left desolate, and my children orphans.

CHOR. Thou hast left us, thou hast left us, O dear among women, and most excellent of those as many as both the light of the sun, and the star-visaged moon of night behold. O unhappy man! how great ill doth the house contain! with tears gushing over, my eyelids are wet at thy calamity. But the woe that will ensue on this I have long since been dreading.

THES. Alas! alas! What I pray is this letter suspended from her dear hand? does it mean to betoken some new calamity? — What, has the unhappy woman written injunctions to me, making some request about my bridal bed and my children? Be of good courage, hapless one; for no woman exists,

who shall enter the bed and the house of Theseus. But lo! the impressions of the golden seal of her no more here court my attention. Come, let me unfold the envelopments of the seal, and see what this letter should say to me.

CHOR. Alas! alas! this new evil in succession again doth the God bring on. To me indeed the condition of life will be impossible to bear, from what has happened; for I consider, alas! as ruined and no more the house of my kings. O God, if it be in any way possible, do not overthrow the house; but hear me as I pray, for from some quarter, as though a prophet, I behold an evil omen.

THES. Ah me! what other evil is this in addition to evil, not to be borne, nor spoken! alas wretched me!

CHOR. What is the matter? Tell me if it may be told me.

THES. It cries out — the letter cries out things most dreadful: which way can I fly the weight of my ills; for I perish utterly destroyed. What, what a complaint have I seen speaking in her writing!

CHOR. Alas! thou utterest words foreboding woes.

THES. No longer will I keep within the door of my lips this dreadful, dreadful evil hardly to be uttered. O city, city, Hippolytus has dared by force to approach my bed, having despised the awful eye of Jove. But O father Neptune, by one of these three curses, which thou formerly didst promise me, by one of those destroy my son, and let him not escape beyond this day, if thou hast given me curses that shall be verified.

CHOR. O king, by the Gods recall back this prayer, for hereafter you will know that you have erred; be persuaded by me.

THES. It can not be: and moreover I will drive him from this land. And by one or other of the two fates shall he be assailed: for either Neptune shall send him dead to the mansions of Pluto, having respect unto my wish; or else banished from this country, wandering over a foreign land, he shall drag out a miserable existence.

CHOR. And lo! thy son Hippolytus is present here opportunely, but if thou let go thy evil displeasure, king Theseus, thou wilt advise the best for thine house.

HIPPOLYTUS, THESEUS, CHORUS.

HIPP. I heard thy cry, my father, and came in haste; the thing however, for which you are groaning, I know not; but would fain hear from you. Ha! what is the matter? I behold thy wife, my father, a corpse: this is a thing meet for the greatest wonder. — Her, whom I lately left, her, who beheld the light no great time since. What ails her? In what manner died she, my father, I would fain hear from you. Art silent? But there is no use of silence in misfortunes; for the heart which desires to hear all things, is found eager also in the case of ills. It is not indeed right, my father, to conceal thy misfortunes from friends, and even more than friends.

THES. O men, who vainly go astray in many things, why then do ye teach ten thousand arts, and contrive and invent every thing; but one thing ye do not know, nor yet have investigated, to teach those to be wise who have no intellect!

HIPP. A clever sophist this you speak of, who is able to compel those who have no wisdom to be rightly wise. But *(for thou art arguing too refinedly on no suitable occasion)* I fear, O father, lest thy tongue be talking at random through thy woes.

THES. Alas! there ought to be established for men some infallible proof of their friends, and some means of knowing their dispositions, both who is true, and who is not a friend, and men ought all to have two voices, the one true, the other as it chanced, that the untrue one might be convicted by the true, and then we should not be deceived.

HIPP. Has some one then falsely accused me in your ear, and am I suffering who am not at all guilty? I am amazed, for your words, wandering beyond the bounds of reason, do amaze me.

THES. Alas! the mind of man, to what lengths will it go? what will be the limit to its boldness and temerity? For if it shall increase with each

generation of man, and the successor shall be wicked a degree beyond his predecessor, it will be necessary for the Gods to add to the earth another land, which will contain the unjust and the evil ones. — But look: ye on this man, who being born of me hath defiled my bed, and is manifestly convicted by the deceased of being most base. — But, since thou hast come to this attaint, show thy face here before thy father. Dost thou forsooth associate with the Gods, as being an extraordinary person? art thou chaste and uncontaminated with evil? I will not believe thy boasts, attributing *(as I must, if I do believe)* to the Gods the folly of thinking evil. Now then vaunt, and with thy feeding on inanimate food retail your doctrines upon men, and having Orpheus for your master, revel it, reverencing the emptiness of many letters; *which avail you not*; since you are caught.

But such sort of men I warn all to shun; for they hunt with fair-sounding words, while they devise base things. She is dead: dost thou think this will save thee? By this thou art most detected, O thou most vile one! For what sort of oaths, what arguments can be more strong than what she says, so that thou canst escape the accusation? Wilt thou say that she hated thee, and that the bastard race is hateful forsooth to those of noble birth? A bad housewife then of life you account her, if through hatred of thee she lost what was most dear to her. But wilt thou say that there is not this folly in men, but that there is in women? I myself have known young men who were not a whit more steady than women, when Venus disturbed the youthful mind: but their pretense of manliness protects them. Now however, why do I thus contend against thy words, when the corse, the surest witness, is here? Depart an exile from this land as soon as possible. And neither go to the divine-built Athens, nor to the confines of that land over which my sceptre rules. For if I thus suffering by thee be vanquished, never will the Isthmian Sinis bear witness of me that I killed him, but will say that I vainly boast. Nor will the Scironian rocks, that dwell by the sea, confess that I am formidable to the bad.

CHOR. I know not how I can say that any of mortals is happy; for the things that were most excellent are turned back again.

HIPP. Father, thy rage indeed, and the commotion of thy mind is terrible; this thing, however, though it have fair arguments, if any one unravel it, is

not fair. But I am unadorned with phrase to speak to the multitude, but to speak to my equals and to a few, more expert: but this also has consistency in it; for those, who are of no account among the wise, are more fitted to speak before the rabble. But yet it is necessary for me, since this calamity has come, to unloose my tongue. But first will I begin to speak from that point where first you attacked, as though you would destroy, and as though I should not answer again. Dost thou behold this light and this earth? In these there is not a man more chaste than me, not even though thou deny it. For, first indeed, I know to reverence the Gods, and to have such friends as attempt not to be unjust, but those, to whom there is modesty, so that neither they give utterance to evil thoughts, nor minister in return base services to those who use their friendship: nor am I the derider of my associates, O father, but the same man to my friends when they are not present, and when I am with them. But of one thing by which thou thinkest to crush me, I am pure; for to this day my body is undefiled by the couch of love; and I know not the deed except hearing of it by report, and seeing it in a picture, nor even am I forward to look at these things, having a virgin mind. And perhaps my modesty persuades you not. Behooves it thee then to show in what manner I lost it. Did this woman's person excel in beauty all women? Or did I hope to rule over thine house, having thy bridal bed as carrying dowry with it? I must in that case have been a fool, and not at all in my senses. But did I do it as though to reign were pleasant to the modest? By no means indeed is it, except monarchy have destroyed the minds of men who are pleased with her. But I would wish indeed to be first victor in the Grecian games, but second in the state ever to be happy with the most excellent friends. For thus is it possible to be well circumstanced: but the absence of the danger gives greater joy than dominion. One of my arguments has not been spoken, but the rest you are in possession of: for, if I had a witness such as myself am, and were she alive during my contention, you would know the evil ones, searching them by their works. But now I swear by Jove, the guardian of oaths, and by the plain of the earth, that never touched I thy bridal bed, nor ever wished it, nor conceived the thought. Else may I perish inglorious, without a name, and may neither sea nor earth receive the flesh of me when dead, if I be a wicked man. But whether or no she have destroyed her life through fear, I know not: for it is not lawful for me to speak further. Cautious she was, though she could not be chaste; but I, who could be, had the power to no good purpose.

CHOR. Thou hast said sufficient to rebut the charge, in offering the oaths by the Gods, no slight proof.

THES. Is not this man then an enchanter and a juggler, who trusts that he will overcome my mind by his goodness of disposition, after he has dishonored his father?

HIPP. I too very much wonder at this conduct of yours, my father; for if you were my son, and I your father, I should slay you, and not punish you by banishment, if you had dared to defile my wife.

THES. How fitly hast thou said this! yet thou shalt not so die, as thou hast laid down this law for thyself; for a quick grave is easiest to the miserable man; but wandering an exile from thy country's land to foreign realms, thou shalt drag out a life of bitterness; for this is the reward for the impious man.

HIPP. Ah me! what wilt thou do? wilt thou not even await time as evidence against me, but wilt thou banish me from the land?

THES. Ay, beyond the ocean, and the place of Atlas, if any way I could, so much do I hate thee.

HIPP. Without having even examined oath, or proof, or the sayings of the seers, wilt thou cast me uncondemned from out the land?

THES. This letter here, that waiteth no seer's observations, accuses thee faithfully; but to the birds that flit above my head I bid a long farewell.

HIPP. O Gods, wherefore then do I not ope my mouth, who am destroyed by you whom I worship? — And yet not so — for thus I should not altogether persuade those whom I ought, but should be violating to no purpose the oaths which I have sworn.

THES. Alas me! how thy sanctity kills me! Wilt not thou go as quick as possible from thy country's land?

HIPP. Whither then shall I unhappy turn me; what stranger's mansion shall I enter, banished on this charge?

THES. His, who delights to entertain defilers of women, and those who dwell with evil deeds.

HIPP. Alas! alas! this goes to my heart, and almost makes me weep: if indeed I appear vile, and seem so to thee.

THES. Then oughtest thou to have groaned, and owned the guilt before, when thou daredst to wrong thy father's wife.

HIPP. O mansions, would that ye could utter me a voice, and bear witness whether I be a vile man!

THES. Dost fly to dumb witnesses? this deed, though it speak not, clearly proves thee vile.

HIPP. Alas! would that I could look upon myself standing opposite, to that degree do I weep for the evils which I suffer!

THES. Thou hast accustomed thyself much more to regard thyself, than to be a just man, and to do what is righteous to thy parents.

HIPP. O unhappy mother! O wretched natal hour! may none of my friends ever be illegitimate.

THES. Servants, will ye not drag him out? did you not hear me long ago pronounce him banished!

HIPP. Any one of them shall touch me to his cost however; but thou thyself, if it be thy desire, thrust me out from the land.

THES. I will do this, unless thou wilt obey my words, for no pity for thy banishment comes over me.

HIPP. It is fixed, as it seems; alas, wretch that I am! since I know these things indeed, but know not how to say them. O most dear to me of deities, daughter of Latona, thou that assortest with me, huntest with me, we shall then indeed be banished illustrious Athens: but farewell O city, and land of Erectheus. O plain of Trœzene, how many things hast thou to employ the happy youth! Farewell! for I address thee, beholding thee for the last time

— Come youths of this land my companions, bid me farewell, and conduct me from the land, for never shall you see a man more chaste, even though I seem not to my father.

CHORUS.

Surely the providence of the Gods, when it comes into my mind, greatly takes away sorrow: but cherishing in my hope some knowledge, I am utterly deficient, when I look on the fortunes and on the deeds of men, for they are changed in different manners, and the life of man varies, ever exceeding vague. Would that in answer to my petitions fate from the Gods would give me this, prosperity with riches, and a mind unsullied by griefs. And be my character neither too high, nor on the other hand infamous. But changing my easy habits with the morrow ever may I lead a happy life; for no longer have I an unperturbed mind, but I see things contrary to my expectations: since we have seen the brightest star of Grecian Minerva sent forth to another land on account of his father's rage. O sands of the neighboring shore, and mountain wood, where with the swift-footed dogs he wont to slay the wild beasts, accompanying the chaste Dian! No more shalt thou mount the car drawn by the team of Henetian steeds, restraining with thy foot the horses in their exercise on the course round Limna. And the sleepless song that used to dwell under the bridge of the chords shall cease in thy father's house. And the haunts of the daughter of Latona in the deep wood shall be without their garlands: and the contest among the damsels for thy bridal bed has died away by reason of thy exile. But I, for thy misfortunes, shall endure with tears a fortuneless fortune. O unhappy mother, thou hast brought forth in vain! Alas! I am enraged with the Gods. Alas! alas! united charms of marriage, wherefore send ye the unhappy one, guilty of no crime, away from his country's land — away from these mansions?

But lo! I perceive a follower of Hippolytus with a sad countenance coming toward the house in haste.

MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MESS. Ye females, whither going can I find Theseus, king of this land? If ye know, tell me: is he within this palace?

CHOR. The [king] himself is coming out of the palace.

MESSENGER, THESEUS, CHORUS.

MESS. I bring a tale that demands concern, of thee and of thy subjects, both those who inhabit the city of the Athenians, and the realms of the Trœzenian land.

THES. What is it? Has any sudden calamity come upon the two neighboring states?

MESS. To speak the word — Hippolytus is no more. He views the light however for a short moment.

THES. *Killed*? By whom? Has any come to enmity with him, whose wife, as his father's, he has forcibly defiled?

MESS. His own chariot slew him, and the imprecations of thy mouth, which thou didst put up to thy father, the ruler of the ocean, concerning thy son.

THES. O ye Gods! and O Neptune! how truly then wert thou my father, when thou didst duly hear my imprecations! Tell me too, how did he perish? in what way did the staff of Justice strike him that disgraced me?

MESS. We indeed near the wave-beaten shore were combing out with combs the horses' hair, weeping, for there had come a messenger saying, that Hippolytus no longer trod on this land, having from thee received the sentence of wretched banishment. But he came bringing to us on the shore the same strain of tears: and an innumerable throng of his friends and companions came following with him. But at length after some time he spake, having ceased from his groans. "Wherefore am I thus disquieted? My father's words must be obeyed. My servants, yoke to my car the harnessed steeds, for this city is for me no more." Then indeed every man hasted, and sooner than one could speak we drew up the horses caparisoned before our master; and he seizes with his hands the reins from off the bow of the chariot, mounting with his foot sandaled as it was. And first indeed he addressed the Gods with outstretched hands: "Jove, may I no longer

exist, if I am a base man; but may my father perceive how unworthily he treats me, either when I am dead, or while I view the light." And on this having taken the whip in his hands he struck the horses both at once: and we the attendants followed our master by the chariot close to the reins, along the road that leads straightway to Argos and Epidauria, but when we came into the desert country, there is a certain shore beyond this land which slopes even down to the Saronic Sea, from thence a voice like the subterraneous thunder of Jove sent forth a dreadful groan appalling to hear, and the horses pointed their heads erect and their ears toward the sky, and on us there came a vehement fear, whence possibly the voice could come: but looking toward the sea-beaten shore we beheld a vast wave pillared in heaven, so that the view of the heights of Sciron was taken from mine eye: and it concealed the Isthmus and the rock of Æsculapius. And then swelling up and splashing forth much foam around in the ocean surf, it moves toward the shore, where was the chariot drawn by its four horses. But together with its breaker and its tripled surge, the wave sent forth a bull, a fierce monster; with whose bellowing the whole land filled resounded fearfully: and to the lookers-on a sight appeared more dreadful than the eyes could bear. And straightway a dreadful fear comes over the steeds. But their master, being much conversant with the ways of horses, seized the reins in his hands, and pulls them as a sailor pulls his oar, having fixed his body in an opposite direction to the reins. But they, champing with their jaws the forged bits, bare him on forcibly, heeding neither the hand that steered them, nor the traces, nor the compact chariot: and, if indeed holding the reins he directed their course toward the softer ground, the bull appeared in front, so as to turn them away maddening with fright the four horses that drew the chariot. But if they were borne to the rocks maddened in mettle, silently approaching the chariot he followed so far, until he overthrew it and drove it backward, dashing the felly of the wheel against the rock. And all was in confusion, and the naves of the wheels flew up, and the linch-pins of the axles. But the unhappy man himself entangled in the reins is dragged along, bound in a difficult bond, his head dashed against the rocks, and torn his flesh, and crying out in a voice dreadful to hear, "Stop, O ye that have been trained up in my stalls, do not destroy me. Oh unhappy imprecation of my father! Who will come near and save a most excellent man?" But many of us wishing so to do failed through want of swiftness: and he indeed freed, in what manner I know not, from the entanglements of the reins, falls, having

the breath of life in him, but for a very short time. And the horses vanished, and the woeful monster of the bull I know not where in the mountain country. I am indeed the slave of thy house, O king, but thus much never shall I at least be able to be persuaded of thy son, that he is evil, not even if the whole race of women were hung, and though one should fill with writing all the fir of Ida, since I am confident that he is virtuous.

CHOR. Alas! alas! The calamity of new evils is consummated, nor is there refuge from fate and from what must be.

THES. Through hate of the man, who has thus suffered, I was pleased with this account; but now, having respect unto the Gods, and to him, because he is of me, I am neither pleased, nor yet troubled at these ills.

MESS. How then? Must we bring him hither, or what must we do to the unhappy man to gratify thy wishes! Think; but if thou take my advice, thou wilt not be harsh toward thy son in his misfortunes.

THES. Bear him hither, that seeing him before my eyes that denied he had defiled my bed, I may confute him with words, and with what has happened from the Gods.

CHOR. Thou, Venus, bendest the stubborn mind of the Gods, and of mortals, and with thee he of varied plume, that darts about on swiftest wing; and flies over the earth and over the loud-resounding briny ocean; and Love charms to subjection, on whose maddened heart the winged urchin come gleaming with gold, the race of the mountain whelps, and of those that inhabit the sea, and as many things as the earth nourisheth, which the sun doth behold scorched [with its rays,] and men: but over all these things thou, Venus, alone holdest sovereign rule.

DIANA, THESEUS, CHORUS.

DI. Thee, the noble son of Ægeus, I command to listen; but it is I, Diana, daughter of Latona, who am addressing thee: Theseus, wherefore dost thou, wretched man, take delight in these things, seeing that thou hast slain in no just way thy son, being persuaded by the lying words of thy wife in things not seen? But the guilt that has seized on thee is manifest. How canst thou,

shamed as thou art, refrain from hiding thy body beneath the dark recesses of the earth? or from withdrawing thy foot from this suffering, by changing thy nature, and becoming a winged creature above? Since among good men at least thou hast not a part in life to possess. Hear, O Theseus, the state of thy ills. Even though I gain no advantage from it, yet will I torment thee; but for this purpose came I to show thee the upright mind of thy son, that he may die with a good reputation, and thy wife's passion, or, in some sort, nobleness; for, gnawed by the stings of that deity most hateful to us, as many as delight in virginity, she became enamored of thy son. But while she endeavored by right feeling to conquer Venus, she was destroyed not willingly by the means employed by the nurse, who having first bound him by oaths, told thy son her malady. But he, as was right, obeyed not her words; nor, again, though evil-entreated by thee, did he violate the sanctity of his oaths, being a pious man. But she, fearing lest her conduct should be scrutinized, wrote a false letter, and by deceit destroyed thy son, but nevertheless persuaded thee.

THES. Ah me!

DI. My tale torments thee, Theseus, but be still, that having heard what follows thou mayest groan the more — Knowest thou then that thou receivedst from thy father three wishes with a certainty of their being granted? Whereof one thou hast expended, O most evil one, on thy son, when thou mightest have done it on some of thine enemies. Thy father then that dwelleth in the ocean, gave thee as much as he was bound to give, because he promised. But thou both in his eyes and in mine appearest evil, who neither didst await nor examine proof, nor the voice of the prophets, didst not leave the consideration to length of time, but, quicker than became thee, didst vent thy curses against thy son and slay him.

THES. Mistress, let me die!

DI. Thou hast committed dreadful deeds, but nevertheless, it is still possible even for thee to obtain pardon for these things. For Venus willed that these things should be in order to satiate her rage. But among the Gods the law is thus — None wishes to thwart the purpose of him that wills anything, but we always give way. Since, be well assured, were it not that I feared Jove, never should I have come to such disgrace, as to suffer to die a man of all

mortals the most dear to me. But thine error, first of all thine ignorance frees from malice; and then thy wife by her dying put an end to the proof of words, so as to persuade thy mind. Chiefly then on thee these ills are burst, but sorrow is to me too; for Gods rejoice not when the pious die; the wicked however we destroy with their children and their houses.

CHOR. And lo! the unhappy man there is coming, all mangled his young flesh and auburn head. Oh the misery of the house! such double anguish coming down from heaven has been wrought in the palaces!

HIPPOLYTUS, DIANA, THESEUS, CHORUS.

HIPP. O! O! O! Unhappy I was thus foully mangled by the unjust prayers of an unjust father — I am destroyed miserably. Ah me! ah me! Pains rush through my head, and the spasm darts across my brain. Stop, I will rest my fainting body. Oh! oh! O those hateful horses of my chariot, things which I fed with my own hand, ye have destroyed me utterly and slain me. Oh! oh! by the Gods, gently, my servants, touch with your hands my torn flesh. Who stands by my side on the right? Lift me up properly, and take hold all equally on me, the unblessed of heaven, and cursed by my father's error — Jove, Jove, beholdest thou these things? Lo! I, the chaste, and the reverencer of the Gods, I who in modesty exceed all, have lost my life, and go to a manifest hell beneath the earth; but in vain have I labored in the task of piety toward men. O! O! O! O! and now the pain, the pain comes upon me, loose unhappy me, and let death come to be my physician. Destroy me, destroy the unhappy one — I long for a two-edged blade, wherewith to cut me in pieces, and to put my life to an eternal rest. Oh unhappy curse of my father! the evil too of my blood-polluted kinsmen, my old forefathers, bursts forth upon me; nor is it at a distance; and it hath come on me, wherefore, I pray, who am nothing guilty of these ills? Alas me! me! what can I say? how can I free my life from this cruel calamity? Would that the black and nightly fate of Pluto would put me wretched to eternal sleep!

DI. Oh unhappy mortal, with what a calamity art thou enthralled! but the nobleness of thy mind hath destroyed thee.

HIPP. Let be. O divine breathing of perfume, for, even though being in ills, I perceived thee, and felt my body lightened of its pain. The Goddess Dian

is in this place.

DI. Oh unhappy one! she is, to thee the most dear of deities.

HIPP. Mistress, thou seest wretched me, in what state I am.

DI. I see; but it is not lawful for me to shed a tear down mine eyes.

HIPP. Thy hunter, and thy servant is no more.

DI. No in sooth; but beloved by me thou perishest.

HIPP. And he that managed they steeds, and guarded thy statutes.

DI. *Ay*, for the crafty Venus hath so wrought.

HIPP. Ah me! I perceive indeed the power that hath destroyed me.

DI. She thought her honor aggrieved, and hated thee for being chaste.

HIPP. One Venus hath destroyed us three.

DI. Thy father, and thee, and his wife the third.

HIPP. I mourn therefore also my father's misery.

DI. He was deceived by the devices of the Goddess.

HIPP. Oh! unhappy thou, because of this calamity, my father!

THES. I perish, my son, nor have I delight in life.

HIPP. I lament thee rather than myself on account of thy error.

THES. My son, would that I could die in thy stead!

HIPP. Oh! the bitter gifts of thy father Neptune!

THES. Would that the prayer had never come into my mouth.

HIPP. Wherefore this wish? thou wouldst have slain me, so enraged wert thou then.

THES. For I was deceived in my notions by the Gods.

HIPP. Alas! would that the race of mortals could curse the Gods!

DI. Let be; for not even when thou art under the darkness of the earth shall the rage arising from the bent of the Goddess Venus descend upon thy body unrevenged: by reason of thy piety and thy excellent mind. For with these inevitable weapons from mine own hand will I revenge me on another, whoever to her be the dearest of mortals. But to thee, O unhappy one, in recompense for these evils, will I give the greatest honors in the land of Trœzene; for the unwedded virgins before their nuptials shall shear their locks to thee for many an age, owning the greatest sorrow tears can give; but ever among the virgins shall there be a remembrance of thee that shall awake the song, nor dying away without a name shall Phædra's love toward thee pass unrecorded: — But thou, O son of the aged Ægeus, take thy son in thine arms and clasp him to thee; for unwillingly thou didst destroy him, but that men should err, when the Gods dispose events, is but to be expected! — and thee, Hippolytus, I exhort not to remain at enmity with thy father; for thou perceivest the fate, whereby thou wert destroyed. And farewell! for it is not lawful for me to behold the dead, nor to pollute mine eye with the gasps of the dying; but I see that thou art now near this calamity.

HIPP. Go thou too, and farewell, blessed virgin! But thou easily quittest a long companionship. But I give up all enmity against my father at thy request, for before also I was wont to obey thy words. Ah! ah! darkness now covers me over mine eyes. Take hold on me, my father, and lift up my body.

THES. Ah me! my son, what dost thou, do to me unhappy?

HIPP. I perish, and do indeed see the gates of hell.

THES. What? leaving my mind uncleansed from thy blood?

HIPP. No in sooth, since I free thee from this murder.

THES. What sayest thou? dost thou remit me free from the guilt of blood?

HIPP. I call to witness Dian that slays with the bow.

THES. O most dear, how noble thou appearest to thy father!

HIPP. O farewell thou too, take my best farewell, my father!

THES. Oh me! for thy pious and brave soul!

HIPP. Pray to have legitimate sons like me.

THES. Do not, I prithee, leave me, my son, but be strong.

HIPP. My time of strength is past; for I perish, my father: but cover my face as quickly as possible with robes.

THES. O famous realms of Athens and of Pallas, of what a man will ye have been bereaved! Oh unhappy I! What abundant reason, Venus, shall I have to remember thy ills!

CHOR. This common grief to all the citizens hath come unexpectedly. There will be a fast falling of many tears; for the mournful stories of great men rather obtain.

ANDROMACHE

Translated by Edward P. Coleridge

Andromache dramatises Hector's wife's time as a slave, years after the events of the Trojan War, and her conflict with her master's new wife, Hermione. The date of its first performance is unknown, although scholars place it sometime between 428 and 425 BC. A Byzantine scholion to the play suggests that its first production was staged outside of Athens, though modern scholarship regards this claim as dubious.

Prior to the action of the play, during the Trojan War, Achilles killed Andromache's husband Hector. The Greeks threw Andromache and Hector's child Astyanax from the Trojan walls for fear that he would grow up and avenge his father. Andromache was made a slave of Achilles' son Neoptolemus. Euripides dramatised these events ten years after *Andromache* in his famous tragedy *The Trojan Women*.

Years pass and Andromache has a child with Neoptolemus, who then weds Hermione, daughter of Menelaus and Helen. As Andromache is still devoted to her dead husband, Hector, Hermione is deeply jealous and plots her revenge. Fearing for her life and the life of her child, Andromache hides the infant and seeks refuge in the temple of Thetis, who was the mother of Achilles. Clinging to the altar of the sea-goddess Thetis for sanctuary, Andromache delivers the play's prologue, in which she mourns her misfortune and her persecution at the hands of Neoptolemos' new wife Hermione and her father Menelaus, King of Sparta. She reveals that Neoptolemos has left for the oracle at Delphi and that she has hidden the son she bore him for fear that Menelaus will try to kill him as well as her.

‘Captive Andromache’ by Frederic Leighton

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ANDROMACHE

(SCENE: Before the temple of Thetis in Thessaly. Andromache, dressed as a suppliant, is clinging to the altar in front of the temple. The palace of Achilles is nearby.)

Andromache O CITY of Thebes, glory of Asia, whence on a day I came to Priam's princely home with many a rich and costly thing in my dower, affianced unto Hector to be the mother of his children, I Andromache, envied name in days of yore, but now of all women that have been or yet shall be the most unfortunate; for I have lived to see my husband Hector slain by Achilles, and the babe Astyanax, whom I bore my lord, hurled from the towering battlements, when the Hellenes sacked our Trojan home; and I myself am come to Hellas as a slave, though I was esteemed a daughter of a race most free, given to Neoptolemus that island-prince, and set apart for him as his special prize from the spoils of Troy. And here I dwell upon the boundaries of Phthia and Pharsalia's town, where Thetis erst, the goddess of the sea, abode with Peleus apart from the world, avoiding the throng of men; wherefore the folk of Thessaly call it the sacred place of Thetis, in honour of the goddess's marriage. Here dwells the son of Achilles and suffers Peleus still to rule Pharsalia, not wishing to assume the sceptre while the old man lives. Within these halls have borne a boy to the son of Achilles, my master. Now aforetime for all my misery I ever had a hope to lead me on, that, if my child were safe, I might find some help and protection from my woes; but since my lord in scorn of his bondmaid's charms hath wedded that Spartan Hermione, I am tormented by her most cruelly; for she saith that I by secret enchantment am making her barren and distasteful to her husband, and that I design to take her place in this house, ousting her the rightful mistress by force; whereas I at first submitted against my will and now have resigned my place; be almighty Zeus my witness that it was not of my own free will I became her rival!

But I cannot convince her, and she longs to kill me, and her father Menelaus is an accomplice in this. E'en now is he within, arrived from Sparta for this very purpose, while I in terror am come to take up position here in the shrine of Thetis adjoining the house, if haply it may save me from death; for

Peleus and his descendants hold it in honour as symbol of his marriage with the Nereid. My only son am I secretly conveying to a neighbour's house in fear for his life. For his sire stands not by my side to lend his aid and cannot avail his child at all, being absent in the land of Delphi, where he is offering recompense to Loxias for the madness he committed, when on a day he went to Pytho and demanded of Phoebus satisfaction for his father's death, if haply his prayer might avert those past sins and win for him the god's goodwill hereafter.

(The Maid of Andromache enters.)

Maid Mistress mine, be sure I do not hesitate to call thee by that name, seeing that I thought it thy right in thine own house also, when we dwelt in Troy-land; as I was ever thy friend and thy husband's while yet he was alive, so now have I come with strange tidings, in terror lest any of our masters learn hereof but still out of pity for thee; for Menelaus and his daughter are forming dire plots against thee, whereof thou must beware.

Andromache Ah! kind companion of my bondage, for such thou art to her, who, erst thy queen, is now sunk in misery; what are they doing? What new schemes are they devising in their eagerness to take away my wretched life?

Maid Alas! poor lady, they intend to slay thy son, whom thou hast privily conveyed from out the house.

Andromache Ah me! Has she heard that my babe was put out of her reach? Who told her? Woe is me! how utterly undone!

Maid I know not, but thus much of their schemes I heard myself; and Menelaus has left the house to fetch him.

Andromache Then am I lost; ah, my child! those vultures twain will take and slay thee; while he who is called thy father lingers still in Delphi.

Maid True, for had he been here thou wouldst not have fared so hardly, am sure; but, as it is, thou art friendless.

Andromache Have no tidings come that Peleus may arrive?

Maid He is too old to help thee if he came.

Andromache And yet I sent for him more than once.

Maid Surely thou dost not suppose that any of thy messengers heed thee?

Andromache Why should they? Wilt thou then go for me?

Maid How shall I explain my long absence from the house?

Andromache Thou art a woman; thou canst invent a hundred ways.

Maid There is a risk, for Hermione keeps no careless guard.

Andromache Dost look to that? Thou art disowning thy friends in distress.

Maid Not so; never taunt me with that. I will go, for of a truth a woman and a slave is not of much account, e'en if aught befall me.

(The Maid withdraws.)

Andromache Go then, while I will tell to heaven the lengthy tale of lamentation, mourning, and weeping, that has ever been my hard lot; for 'tis woman's way to delight in present misfortunes even to keeping them always on her tongue and lips. But I have many reasons, not merely one for tears — my city's fall, my Hector's death, the hardness of the lot to which I am bound, since I fell on slavery's evil days undeservedly. 'Tis never right to call a son of man happy, till thou hast seen his end, to judge from the way he passes it how he will descend to that other world.

(She begins to chant.)

'Twas no bride Paris took with him to the towers of Ilium, but curse to his bed when he brought Helen to her bower. For her sake, Troy, did eager warriors, sailing from Hellas in a thousand ships, capture and make thee a prey to fire and sword; and the son of sea-born Thetis mounted on his chariot dragged my husband Hector round the walls, ah woe is me! while I was hurried from my chamber to the beach, with slavery's hateful pall upon me. And many tear I shed as I left my city, my bridal bower, and my

husband in the dust. Woe, woe is me! why should I prolong my life, to serve Hermione? Her cruelty it is that drives me hither to the image of the goddess to throw my suppliant arms about it, melting to tears as doth a spring that gushes from the rock.

(The Chorus of Phthian Women enters.)

Chorus (singing) Lady, thus keeping thy weary station without pause upon the floor of Thetis' shrine, Phthian though I am, to thee a daughter of Asia I come, to see if I can devise some remedy for these perplexing troubles, which have involved thee and Hermione in fell discord, because to thy sorrow thou sharest with her the love of Achilles' son.

Recognize thy position, weigh the present evil into the which thou art come. Thou art a Trojan captive; thy rival is thy mistress, a true-born daughter of Sparta. Leave then this home of sacrifice, the shrine of our sea-goddess. How can it avail thee to waste thy comeliness and disfigure it by weeping by reason of a mistress's harsh usage? Might will prevail against thee; why vainly toil in thy feebleness?

Come, quit the bright sanctuary of the Nereid divine. Recognize that thou art in bondage on a foreign soil, in a strange city, where thou seest none of all thy friends, luckless lady, cast on evil days.

Yea, I did pity thee most truly, Trojan dame, when thou camest to this house; but from fear of my mistress I hold my peace, albeit I sympathize with thee, lest she, whom Zeus's daughter bore, discover my good will toward thee.

(Hermione enters, in complete royal regalia.)

Hermione With a crown of golden workmanship upon my head and about my body this embroidered robe am I come hither; no presents these I wear from the palace of Achilles or Peleus, but gifts my father Menelaus gave me together with a sumptuous dower from Sparta in Laconia, to insure me freedom of speech. Such is my answer to you *(to the Chorus)*; but as for thee, slave and captive, thou wouldst fain oust me and secure this palace for thyself, and thanks to thy enchantment I am hated by my husband; thou it is

that hast made my womb barren and cheated my hopes; for Asia's daughters have clever heads for such villainy; yet will I check thee therefrom, nor shall this temple of the Nereid avail thee aught, no! neither its altar or shrine, but thou shalt die. But if or god or man should haply wish to save thee, thou must atone for thy proud thoughts of happier days now past by humbling thyself and crouching prostrate at my knees, by sweeping out my halls, and by learning, as thou sprinklest water from a golden ewer, where thou now art. Here is no Hector, no Priam with his gold, but a city of Hellas. Yet thou, miserable woman, hast gone so far in wantonness that thou canst lay thee down with the son of the very man that slew thy husband, and bear children to the murderer. Such is all the race of barbarians; father and daughter, mother and son, sister and brother mate together; the nearest and dearest stain their path with each other's blood, and no law restrains such horrors. Bring not these crimes amongst us, for here we count it shame that one man should have the control of two wives, and men are content to turn to one lawful love, that is, all who care to live an honourable life.

Leader of the Chorus Women are by nature somewhat jealous, and do ever show the keenest hate to rivals in their love.

Andromache Ah! well-a-day! Youth is a bane to mortals, in every case, that is, where a man embraces injustice in his early days. Now I am afraid that my being a slave will prevent thee listening to me in spite of many a just plea, or if I win my case, I fear I may be damaged on this very ground, for the high and mighty cannot brook refuting arguments from their inferiors; still I will not be convicted of betraying my own cause. Tell me, proud young wife, what assurance can make me confident of wresting from thee thy lawful lord? Is it that Laconia's capital yields to Phrygia? is it that my fortune outstrips thine? or that in me thou seest a free woman? Am I so elated by my youth, my full healthy figure, the extent of my city, the number of my friends that I wish to supplant thee in thy home? Is my purpose to take thy place and rear myself a race of slaves, mere appendages to my misery? or, supposing thou bear no children, will any one endure that sons of mine should rule o'er Phthia? Ah no! there is the love that Hellas bears me, both for Hector's sake and for my own humble rank forsooth, that never knew a queen's estate in Troy. 'Tis not my sorcery that makes thy husband hate thee, nay, but thy own failure to prove thyself his help-meet.

Herein lies love's only charm; 'tis not beauty, lady, but virtuous acts that win our husbands' hearts. And though it gall thee to be told so, albeit thy city in Laconia is no doubt mighty fact, yet thou findest no place for his Scyros, displaying wealth 'midst poverty and setting Menelaus above Achilles: and that is what alienates thy lord. Take heed; for a woman, though bestowed upon worthless husband, must be with him content, and ne'er advance presumptuous claims. Suppose thou hadst wedded a prince of Thrace, the land of flood and melting snow, where one lord shares his affections with a host of wives, wouldst thou have slain them? If so, thou wouldst have set a stigma of insatiate lust on all our sex. A shameful charge! And yet herein we suffer more than men, though we make a good stand against it. Ah! my dear lord Hector, for thy sake would I e'en brook a rival, if ever Cypris led thee astray, and oft in days gone by I held thy bastard babes to my own breast, to spare thee any cause for grief. By this course I bound my husband to me by virtue's chains, whereas thou wilt never so much as let the drops of dew from heaven above settle on thy lord, in thy jealous fear. Oh! seek not to surpass thy mother in hankering after men, for 'tis well that all wise children should avoid the habits of such evil mothers.

Leader Mistress mine, be persuaded to come to terms with her, as far as readily comes within thy power.

Hermione Why this haughty tone, this bandying of words, as if, forsooth, thou, not I, wert the virtuous wife?

Andromache Thy present claims at any rate give thee small title thereto.

Hermione Woman, may my bosom never harbour such ideas as thine!

Andromache Thou art young to speak on such a theme as this.

Hermione As for thee, thou dost not speak thereof, but, as thou canst, dost put it into action against me.

Andromache Canst thou not conceal thy pangs of jealousy?

Hermione What! doth not every woman put this first of all?

Andromache Yes, if her experiences are happy; otherwise, there is no honour in speaking of them.

Hermione Barbarians' laws are not a standard for our city.

Andromache Alike in Asia and in Hellas infamy attends base actions.

Hermione Clever, clever quibbler! yet die thou must and shalt.

Andromache Dost see the image of Thetis with her eye upon thee?

Hermione A bitter foe to thy country because of the death of Achilles.

Andromache 'Twas not I that slew him, but Helen that mother of thine.

Hermione Pray, is it thy intention to probe my wounds yet deeper?

Andromache Behold, I am dumb, my lips are closed.

Hermione Tell me that which was my only reason for coming hither.

Andromache No! all I tell thee is, thou hast less wisdom than thou needest.

Hermione Wilt thou leave these hallowed precincts of the sea-goddess?

Andromache Yes, if I am not to die for it; otherwise, I never will.

Hermione Since that is thy resolve, I shall not even wait my lord's return.

Andromache Nor yet will I, at any rate ere that, surrender to thee.

Hermione I will bring fire to bear on thee, and pay no heed to thy entreaties.

Andromache Kindle thy blaze then; the gods will witness it.

Hermione And make thy flesh to writhe by cruel wounds.

Andromache Begin thy butchery, stain the altar of the goddess with blood, for she will visit thy iniquity.

Hermione Barbarian creature, hardened in impudence, wilt thou brave death itself? Still will I find speedy means to make these quit this seat of thy free will; such a bait have I to lure thee with. But I will hide my meaning, which the event itself shall soon declare. Yes, keep thy seat, for I will make thee rise, though molten lead is holding thee there, before Achilles' son, thy trusted champion, arrive.

(Hermione departs.)

Andromache My trusted champion, yes! how strange it is, that though some god hath devised cures for mortals against the venom of reptiles, no man ever yet hath discovered aught to cure a woman's venom, which is far worse than viper's sting or scorching flame; so terrible a curse are we to mankind.

Chorus (singing) Ah! what sorrows did the son of Zeus and Maia herald, in the day he came to Ida's glen, guiding that fair young trio of goddesses, all girded for the fray in bitter rivalry about their beauty, to the shepherd's fold where dwelt the youthful herdsman all alone by the hearth of his lonely hut.

Soon as they reached the wooded glen, in gushing mountain springs they bathed their dazzling skin, then sought the son of Priam, comparing their rival charms in more than rancorous phrase. But Cypris won the day by her deceitful promises, sweet-sounding words, but fraught with ruthless overthrow to Phrygia's hapless town and Ilium's towers.

Would God his mother had smitten him a cruel death-blow on the head before he made his home on Ida's slopes, in the hour Cassandra, standing by the holy bay-tree, cried out, "Slay him, for he will bring most grievous bane on Priam's town." To every prince she went, to every elder sued for the babe's destruction.

Ah! had they listened, Ilium's daughters neer had felt the yoke of slavery, and thou, lady, hadst been established in the royal palace; and Hellas had been freed of all the anguish she suffered during those ten long years her sons went wandering, spear in hand, around the walls of Troy; brides had never been left desolate, nor hoary fathers childless.

(Menelaus and his retinue enter. He is leading Molossus by the hand.)

Menelaus Behold I bring thy son with me, whom thou didst steal away to a neighbour's house without my daughter's knowledge. Thou wert so sure this image of the goddess would protect thee and those who hid him, but thou hast not proved clever enough for Menelaus. And so if thou refuse to leave thy station here, he shall be slain instead of thee. Wherefore weigh it well: wilt die thyself, or see him slain for the sin whereof thou art guilty against me and my daughter?

Andromache O fame, fame! full many a man ere now of no account hast thou to high estate exalted. Those, indeed, who truly have a fair repute, I count blest; but those who get it by false pretences, I will never allow have aught but the accidental appearance of wisdom. Thou for instance, caitiff that thou art, didst thou ever wrest Troy from Priam with thy picked troops of Hellenes? thou that hast raised such a storm, at the word of thy daughter, a mere child, and hast entered the lists with a poor captive; unworthy I count thee of Troy's capture, and Troy still more disgraced by thy victory. Those who only in appearance are men of sense make an outward show, but inwardly resemble the common herd, save it be in wealth, which is their chiefest strength.

Come now, Menelaus, let us carry through this argument. Suppose I am slain by thy daughter, and she work her will on me, yet can she never escape the pollution of murder, and public opinion will make thee too an accomplice in this deed of blood, for thy share in the business must needs implicate thee. But even supposing I escape death myself, will ye kill my child? Even then, how will his father brook the murder of his child? Troy has no such coward's tale to tell of him; nay, he will follow duty's call; his actions will prove him a worthy scion of Peleus and Achilles. Thy daughter will be thrust forth from his house; and what wilt thou say when seeking to betroth her to another? wilt say her virtue made her leave a worthless lord? Nay, that will be false. Who then will wed her? wilt thou keep her without a husband in thy halls, grown grey in widowhood? Unhappy wretch! dost not see the flood-gates of trouble opening wide for thee? How many a wrong against a wife wouldst thou prefer thy daughter to have found to suffering what I now describe? We ought not on trifling grounds to promote great ills;

nor should men, if we women are so deadly a curse, bring their nature down to our level. No! if, as thy daughter asserts, I am practising sorcery against her and making her barren, right willingly will I, without any crouching at altars, submit in my own person to the penalty that lies in her husband's hands, seeing that I am no less chargeable with injuring him if I make him childless. This is my case; but for thee, there is one thing I fear in thy disposition; it was a quarrel for a woman that really induced thee to destroy poor Ilium's town.

Leader of the Chorus Thou hast said too much for a woman speaking to men; that discretion hath shot away its last shaft from thy soul's quiver.

Menelaus Women, these are petty matters, unworthy, as thou sayest, of my despotic sway, unworthy too of Hellas. Yet mark this well; his special fancy of the hour is of more moment to a man than Troy's capture. I then have set myself to help my daughter because I consider her loss of wife's rights most grave; for whatever else a woman suffers is second to this; if she loses her husband's love she loses her life therewith. Now, as it is right Neoptolemus should rule my slaves, so my friends and I should have control of his; for friends, if they be really friends, keep nothing to themselves, but have all in common. So if I wait for the absent instead of making the best arrangement I can at once of my affairs, I show weakness, not wisdom. Arise then, leave the goddess's shrine, for by thy death this child escapeth his, whereas, if thou refuse to die, I will slay him; for one of you twain must perish.

Andromache Ah me! 'tis a bitter lot thou art offering about my life; whether I take it or not I am equally unfortunate. Attend to me, thou who for a trifling cause art committing an awful crime. Why art thou bent on slaying me? What reason hast thou? What city have I betrayed? Which of thy children was ever slain by me? What house have I fired? I was forced to be my master's concubine; and spite of that wilt thou slay me, not him who is to blame, passing by the cause and hurrying to the inevitable result? Ah me! my sorrows! Woe for my hapless country! How cruel my fate! Why had I to be a mother too and take upon me a double load of suffering? Yet why do I mourn the past, and o'er the present never shed a tear or compute its griefs? I that saw Hector butchered and dragged behind the chariot, and Ilium, piteous sight! one sheet of flame, while I was baled away by the hair of my

head to the Argive ships in slavery, and on my arrival in Phthia was given to Hector's murderer as his mistress. What pleasure then has life for me? Whither am I to turn my gaze? to the present or the past? My babe alone was left me, the light of my life, and him these ministers of death would slay. No! they shall not, if my poor life can save him; for if he be saved, hope in him lives on, while to me 'twere shame to refuse to die for my son. Lo! here I leave the altar and give myself into your hands, to cut or stab, to bind or hang. Ah! my child, to Hades now thy mother passes to save thy dear life. Yet if thou escape thy doom, remember me, my sufferings and my death, and tell thy father how I fared, with fond caress and streaming eye and arms thrown round his neck. Ah! yes, his children are to every man as his own soul; and whoso sneers at this through inexperience, though he suffers less anguish, yet tastes the bitter in his cup of bliss.

Leader Thy tale with pity fills me; for every man alike, stranger though he be, feels pity for another's distress. Menelaus, 'tis thy duty to reconcile thy daughter and this captive, giving her a respite from sorrow.

Menelaus Ho! sirrahs, seize this woman *(His attendants swiftly carry out the order.)*; hold her fast; for 'tis no welcome story she will have to hear. It was to make thee leave the holy altar of the goddess that I held thy child's death before thy eyes, and so induced thee to give thyself up to me to die. So stands thy case, be well assured; but as for this child, my daughter shall decide whether she will slay him or no. Get thee hence into the house, and there learn to bridle thy insolence in speaking to the free, slave that thou art.

Andromache Alas! thou hast by treachery beguiled me; I was deceived.

Menelaus Proclaim it to the world; I do not deny it.

Andromache Is this counted cleverness amongst you who dwell by the Eurotas?

Menelaus Yes, and amongst Trojans too, that those who suffer should retaliate.

Andromache Thinkest thou God's hand is shortened, and that thou wilt not be punished?

Menelaus Whene'er that comes, I am ready to bear it. But thy life will I have.

Andromache Wilt likewise slay this tender chick, whom thou hast snatched from 'neath my wing?

Menelaus Not I, but I will give him to my daughter to slay if she will.

Andromache Ah me! why not begin my mourning then for thee, my child?

Menelaus Of a truth 'tis no very sure hope that he has left.

Andromache O citizens of Sparta, the bane of all the race of men, schemers of guile, and masters in lying, devisers of evil plots, with crooked minds and tortuous methods and ne'er one honest thought, 'tis wrong that ye should thrive in Hellas. What crime is wanting in your list? How rife is murder with you! How covetous ye are! One word upon your lips, another in your heart, this is what men always find with you. Perdition catch ye! Still death is not so grievous, as thou thinkest, to me. No! for my life ended in the day that hapless Troy was destroyed with my lord, that glorious warrior, whose spear oft made a coward like thee quit the field and seek thy ship. But now against a woman hast thou displayed the terrors of thy panoply, my would-be murderer. Strike then! for this my tongue shall never flatter thee or that daughter of thine. For though thou wert of great account in Sparta, why so was I in Troy. And if I am now in sorry plight, presume not thou on this; thou too mayst be so yet.

(Menelaus and his guards lead Andromache out.)

Chorus (singing) Never, oh! never will I commend rival wives or sons of different mothers, a cause of strife, of bitterness, and grief in every house. would have a husband content with one wife whose rights he shareth with no other.

Not even in states is dual monarchy better to bear than undivided rule; it only doubles burdens and causes faction amongst the citizens. Often too will the Muse sow strife 'twixt rivals in the art of minstrelsy.

Again, when strong winds are drifting mariners, the divided counsel of the wise does not best avail for steering, and their collective wisdom has less weight than the inferior mind of the single man who has sole authority; for this is the essence of power alike in house and state, whene'er men care to find the proper moment.

This Spartan, the daughter of the great chief Menelaus, proves this; for she hath kindled hot fury against a rival, and is bent on slaying the hapless Trojan maid and her child to further her bitter quarrel. 'Tis a murder gods and laws and kindness all forbid. Ah! lady, retribution for this deed will yet visit thee.

But lo! before the house I see those two united souls, condemned to die. Alas! for thee, poor lady, and for thee, unhappy child, who art dying on account of thy mother's marriage, though thou hast no share therein and canst not be blamed by the royal house.

(Andromache enters, her arms bound. Her son clings to her. Menelaus and the guards follow, intent on accomplishing the murder. The following lines are chanted responsively.)

Andromache Behold me journeying on the downward path, my hands so tightly bound with cords that they bleed.

Molossus O mother, mother mine! I too share thy downward path, nestling 'neath thy wing.

Andromache A cruel sacrifice! ye rulers of Phthia!

Molossus Come, father! succour those thou lovest.

Andromache Rest there, my babe, my darling! on thy mother's bosom, e'en in death and in the grave.

Molossus Ah, woe is me! what will become of me and thee too, mother mine?

Menelaus Away, to the world below! from hostile towers ye came, the pair of you; two different causes necessitate your deaths; my sentence takes away thy life, and my daughter Hermione's requires his; for it would be the height of folly to leave our foemen's sons, when we might kill them and remove the danger from our house.

Andromache O husband mine! I would I had thy strong arm and spear to aid me, son of Priam.

Molossus Ah, woe is me! what spell can I now find to turn death's stroke aside?

Andromache Embrace thy master's knees, my child, and pray to him.

Molossus Spare, O spare my life, kind master!

Andromache Mine eyes are wet with tears, which trickle down my cheeks, as doth a sunless spring from a smooth rock. Ah me!

Molossus What remedy, alas! can I provide me 'gainst my ills?

Menelaus Why fall at my knees in supplication? hard as the rock and deaf as the wave am I. My own friends have I helped, but for thee have no tie of affection; for verily it cost me a great part of my life to capture Troy and thy mother; so thou shalt reap the fruit thereof and into Hades' halls descend.

Leader of the Chorus Behold! I see Peleus drawing nigh; with aged step he hasteth hither.

(Peleus enters with an attendant.)

Peleus (calling out as he comes in sight) What means this? I ask you and your executioner; why is the palace in an uproar? give a reason; what mean your lawless machinations? Menelaus, hold thy hand. Seek not to outrun justice. *(To his attendant)* Forward! faster, faster! for this matter, methinks, admits of no delay; now if ever would I fain resume the vigour of my youth. First however will breathe new life into this captive, being to her as the breeze that blows a ship before the wind. Tell me, by what right have they

pinioned thine arms and are dragging thee and thy child away? Like a ewe with her lamb art thou led to the slaughter, while I and thy lord were far away.

Andromache Behold them that are haling me and my child to death, e'en as thou seest, aged prince. Why should I tell thee? For not by one urgent summons alone but by countless messengers have I sent for thee. No doubt thou knowest by hearsay of the strife in this house with this man's daughter, and the reason of my ruin. So now they have torn and are dragging me from the altar of Thetis, the goddess of thy chiefest adoration and the mother of thy gallant son, without any proper trial, yea, and without waiting for my absent master; because, forsooth, they knew my defencelessness and my child's, whom they mean to slay with me his hapless mother, though he has done no harm. But to thee, O sire, I make my supplication, prostrate at thy knees, though my hand cannot touch thy friendly beard; save me, I adjure thee, reverend sir, or to thy shame and my sorrow shall we be slain.

Peleus Loose her bonds, I say, ere some one rue it; untie her folded hands.

Menelaus I forbid it, for besides being a match for thee, I have a far better right to her.

Peleus What! art thou come hither to set my house in order? Art not content with ruling thy Spartans?

Menelaus She is my captive; I took her from Troy.

Peleus Aye, but my son's son received her as his prize.

Menelaus Is not all I have his, and all his mine?

Peleus For good, but not evil ends; and surely not for murderous violence.

Menelaus Never shalt thou wrest her from my grasp.

Peleus With this good staff I'll stain thy head with blood!

Menelaus Just touch me and see! Approach one step!

Peleus What! shalt thou rank with men? chief of cowards, son of cowards! What right hast thou to any place ‘mongst men? Thou who didst let Phrygian rob thee of thy wife, leaving thy home without bolt or guard, as if forsooth the cursed woman thou hadst there was a model of virtue. No! a Spartan maid could not be chaste, e’en if she would, who leaves her home and bares her limbs and lets her robe float free, to share with youths their races and their sports — customs I cannot away with. Is it any wonder then that ye fail to educate your women in virtue? Helen might have asked thee this, seeing that she said goodbye to thy affection and tripped off with her young gallant to a foreign land. And yet for her sake thou didst marshal all the hosts of Hellas and lead them to Ilium, whereas thou shouldst have shown thy loathing for her by refusing to stir a spear, once thou hadst found her false; yea, thou shouldst have let her stay there, and even paid a price to save ever having her back again. But that was not at all the way thy thoughts were turned; wherefore many a brave life hast thou ended, and many an aged mother hast thou left childless in her home, and grey-haired sires of gallant sons hast reft. Of that sad band am I member, seeing in thee Achilles’ murderer like a malignant fiend; for thou and thou alone hast returned from Troy without a scratch, bringing back thy splendid weapons in their splendid cases just as they went. As for me, I ever told that amorous boy to form no alliance with thee nor take unto his home an evil mother’s child; for daughters bear the marks of their mothers’ ill-repute into their new homes. Wherefore, ye wooers, take heed to this my warning: “Choose the daughter of a good mother.” And more than this, with what wanton insult didst thou treat thy brother, bidding him sacrifice his daughter in his simpleness! So fearful wast thou of losing thy worthless wife. Then after capturing Troy — for thither too will I accompany thee — thou didst not slay that woman, when she was in thy power; but as soon as thine eyes caught sight of her breast, thy sword was dropped and thou didst take her kisses, fondling the shameless traitress, too weak to stem thy hot desire, thou caitiff wretch! Yet spite of all thou art the man to come and work havoc in my grandson’s halls when he is absent, seeking to slay with all indignity a poor weak woman and her babe: but that babe shall one day make thee and thy daughter in thy home rue it, e’en though his birth be trebly base. Yea, for oft ere now hath seed, sown on barren soil, prevailed o’er rich deep tilth, and many bastard has proved a better man than children better born. Take thy daughter hence with thee! Far better is it for mortals to

have a poor honest man either as married kin or friend than a wealthy knave; but as for thee, thou art a thing of naught.

Leader The tongue from trifling causes contrives to breed great strife ‘mongst men; wherefore are the wise most careful not to bring about a quarrel with their friends.

Menelaus Why, pray, should one call these old men wise, or those who once had a reputation in Hellas for being so? when thou, the great Peleus, son of famous father, kin to me through marriage, employest language disgraceful to thyself and abusive of me because of a barbarian woman, though thou shouldst have banished her far beyond the streams of Nile or Phasis, and ever encouraged me; seeing that she comes from Asia’s continent where fell so many of the sons of Hellas, victims to the spear; and likewise because she shared in the spilling of thy son’s blood; for Paris who slew thy son Achilles, was brother to Hector, whose wife she was. And dost thou enter the same abode with her, and deign to let her share thy board, and suffer her to rear her brood of vipers in thy house? But I, after all this foresight for thee, old man, and myself, am to have her torn from my clutches for wishing to slay her. Yet come now, for ’tis no disgrace to argue; suppose my daughter has no child, while this woman’s sons grow up, wilt thou set them up to rule the land of Phthia, barbarians born and bred to lord it over Hellenes? Am I then so void of sense because I hate injustice, and thou so full of cleverness? Consider yet another point; say thou hadst given a daughter of thine to some citizen, and hadst then seen her thus treated, wouldst thou have sat looking on in silence? I trow not. Dost thou then for a foreigner rail thus at thy nearest friends? Again, thou mayst say, husband and wife have an equally strong case if she is wronged by him, and similarly if he find her guilty of indiscretion in his house; yet while he has ample powers in his own hands, she depends on parents and friends for her case. Surely then I am right in helping my own kin! Thou art in thy dotage; for thou wilt do me more good by speaking of my generalship than by concealing it. Helen’s trouble was not of her own choosing, but sent by heaven, and it proved a great benefit to Hellas; her sons, till then untried in war or arms, turned to deeds of prowess, and it is experience which teaches man all he knows. I showed my wisdom in refraining from slaying my wife, directly I caught sight of her. Would that thou too hadst ne’er slain Phocus!

All this I bring before thee in pure good-will, not from anger. But if thou resent it, thy tongue may wag till it ache, yet shall I gain by prudent forethought.

Leader Cease now from idle words, ‘twere better far, for fear ye both alike go wrong.

Peleus Alas! what evil customs now prevail in Hellas! Whene’er the host sets up a trophy o’er the foe, men no more consider this the work of those who really toiled, but the general gets the credit for it. Now he was but one among ten thousand others to brandish his spear; he only did the work of one; but yet he wins more praise than they. Again, as magistrates in all the grandeur of office they scorn the common folk, though they are naught themselves; whereas those others are ten thousand times more wise than they, if daring combine with judgment. Even so thou and thy brother, exalted by the toilsome efforts of others, now take your seats in all the swollen pride of Trojan fame and Trojan generalship. But I will teach thee henceforth to consider Idaean Paris a foe less terrible than Peleus, unless forthwith thou pack from this roof, thou and thy childless daughter too, whom my own true son will hale through his halls by the hair of her head; for her barrenness will not let her endure fruitfulness in others, because she has no children herself. Still if misfortune prevents her bearing offspring, is that a reason why we should be left childless? Begone! ye varlets, let her go! I will soon see if anyone will hinder me from loosing her hands. *(to Andromache)* Arise; these trembling hands of mine will untie the twisted thongs that bind thee. Out on thee, coward! is this how thou hast galled her wrists? Didst think thou wert lashing up a lion or bull? or wert afraid she would snatch a sword and defend herself against thee? Come, child, nestle to thy mother’s arms; help me loose her bonds; I will yet rear thee in Phthia to be their bitter foe. If your reputation for prowess and the battles ye have fought were taken from you Spartans, in all else, be very sure, you have not your inferiors.

Leader The race of old men practises no restraint; and their testiness makes it hard to check them.

Menelaus Thou art only too ready to rush into abuse; while, as for me, I came to Phthia by constraint and have therefore no intention either of doing

or suffering anything mean. Now must I return home, for I have no time to waste; for there is a city not so very far from Sparta, which aforetime was friendly but now is hostile; against her will I march with my army and bring her into subjection. And when I have arranged that matter as I wish, I will return; and face to face with my son-in-law I will give my version of the story and hear his. And if he punish her, and for the future she exercise self-control, she shall find me do the like; but if he storm, I'll storm as well; and every act of mine shall be a reflex of his own. As for thy babbling, I can bear it easily; for, like to a shadow as thou art, thy voice is all thou hast, and thou art powerless to do aught but talk.

(Menelaus and his retinue withdraw.)

Peleus Lead on, my child, safe beneath my sheltering wing, and thou too, poor lady; for thou art come into a quiet haven after the rude storm.

Andromache Heaven reward thee and all thy race, old sire, for having saved my child and me his hapless mother! Only beware lest they fall upon us twain in some lonely spot upon the road and force me from thee, when they see thy age, my weakness, and this child's tender years; take heed to this, that we be not a second time made captive, after escaping now.

Peleus Forbear such words, prompted by a woman's cowardice. Go on thy way; who will lay a finger on you? Methinks he will do it to his cost, For by heaven's grace I rule o'er many a knight and spearman bold in my kingdom of Phthia; yea, and myself can still stand straight, no bent old man as thou dost think; such a fellow as that a mere look from me will put to flight in spite of my years. For e'en an old man, be he brave, is worth a host of raw youths; for what avails a fine figure if a man is coward?

(Peleus, Andromache, and Molossus go out.)

Chorus (singing) Oh! to have never been born, or sprung from noble sires, the heir to mansions richly stored; for if aught untoward e'er befall, there is no lack of champions for sons of noble parents, and there is honour and glory for them when they are proclaimed scions of illustrious lines; time detracts not from the legacy these good men leave, but the light of their goodness still burns on when they are dead.

Better is it not to win a discreditable victory, than to make justice miscarry by an invidious exercise of power; for such a victory, though men think it sweet for the moment, grows barren in time and comes near being a stain on a house. This is the life I commend, this the life I set before me as my ideal, to exercise no authority beyond what is right either in the marriage-chamber or in the state. epode

O aged son of Aeacus! now am I sure that thou wert with the Lapithae, wielding thy famous spear, when they fought the Centaurs; and on Argo's deck didst pass the cheerless strait beyond the sea-beat Symplegades on her voyage famed; and when in days long gone the son of Zeus spread slaughter round Troy's famous town, thou too didst share his triumphant return to Europe.

(The Nurse of Hermione enters.)

Nurse Alas! good friends, what a succession of troubles is to-day provided us! My mistress Hermione within the house, deserted by her father and in remorse for her monstrous deed in plotting the death of Andromache and her child, is bent on dying; for she is afraid her husband will in requital for this expel her with dishonour from his house or put her to death, because she tried to slay the innocent. And the servants that watch her can scarce restrain her efforts to hang herself, scarce catch the sword and wrest it from her hand. So bitter is her anguish, and she hath recognized the villainy of her former deeds. As for me, friends, I am weary of keeping my mistress from the fatal noose; do ye go in and try to save her life; for if strangers come, they prove more persuasive than the friends of every day.

Leader of the Chorus Ah yes! I hear an outcry in the house amongst the servants, confirming the news thou hast brought. Poor sufferer! she seems about to show lively grief for her grave crimes; for she has escaped her servants' hands and is rushing from the house, eager to end her life.

(Hermione enters, in agitation. She is carrying a sword which the Nurse wrests from her.)

Hermione (chanting) Woe, woe is me! I will rend my hair and tear cruel furrows in my cheeks.

Nurse My child, what wilt thou do? Wilt thou disfigure thyself?

Hermione (chanting) Ah me! ah me! Begone, thou fine-spun veil! float from my head away!

Nurse Daughter, cover up thy bosom, fasten thy robe.

Hermione (chanting) Why should I cover it? My crimes against my lord are manifest and clear, they cannot be hidden.

Nurse Art so grieved at having devised thy rival's death?

Hermione (chanting) Yea, I deeply mourn my fatal deeds of daring; alas! I am now accursed in all men's eyes!

Nurse Thy husband will pardon thee this error.

Hermione (chanting) Oh! why didst thou hunt me to snatch away my sword? Give, oh! give it back, dear nurse, that I may thrust it through my heart Why dost thou prevent me hanging myself?

Nurse What! was I to let thy madness lead thee on to death?

Hermione (chanting) Ah me, my destiny! Where can I find some friendly fire? To what rocky height can I climb above the sea or 'mid some wooded mountain glen, there to die and trouble but the dead?

Nurse Why vex thyself thus? on all of us sooner or later heaven's visitation comes.

Hermione (chanting) Thou hast left me, O my father, left me like a stranded bark, all alone, without an oar. My lord will surely slay me; no home is mine henceforth beneath my husband's roof. What god is there to whose statue I can as a suppliant haste? or shall I throw myself in slavish wise at slavish knees? Would I could speed away from Phthia's land on bird's dark pinion, or like that pine-built ship, the first that ever sailed betwixt the rocks Cyanean!

Nurse My child, I can as little praise thy previous sinful excesses, committed against the Trojan captive, as thy present exaggerated terror. Thy husband will never listen to a barbarian's weak pleading and reject his marriage with thee for this. For thou wast no captive from Troy whom he wedded, but the daughter of a gallant sire, with a rich dower, from a city too of no mean prosperity. Nor will thy father forsake thee, as thou dreadest, and allow thee to be cast out from this house. Nay, enter now, nor show thyself before the palace, lest the sight of thee there bring reproach upon thee, my daughter.

(The Nurse departs as Orestes and his attendants enter.)

Leader Lo! a stranger of foreign appearance from some other land comes hurrying towards us.

Orestes Women of this foreign land! is this the home, the palace of Achilles' son?

Leader Thou hast it; but who art thou to ask such a question?

Orestes The son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, by name Orestes, on ply way to the oracle of Zeus at Dodona. But now that I am come to Phthia, I am resolved to inquire about my kinswoman, Hermione of Sparta; is she alive and well? for though she dwells in a land far from my own, I love her none the less.

Hermione Son of Agamemnon, thy appearing is as a haven from the storm to sailors; by thy knees I pray, have pity on me in my distress, on me of whose fortunes thou art inquiring. About thy knees I twine my arms with all the force of sacred fillets.

Orestes Ha! what is this? Am I mistaken or do I really see before me the queen of this palace, the daughter of Menelaus?

Hermione The same, that only child whom Helen, daughter of Tyndareus, bore my father in his halls; never doubt that.

Orestes O saviour Phoebus, grant us respite from our woe! But what is the matter? art thou afflicted by gods or men?

Hermione Partly by myself, partly by the man who wedded me, and partly by some god. On every side I see ruin.

Orestes Why, what misfortune could happen to a woman as yet childless, unless her honour is concerned?

Hermione My very ill! Thou hast hit my case exactly.

Orestes On whom has thy husband set his affections in thy stead?

Hermione On his captive, Hector's wife.

Orestes An evil case indeed, for a man to have two wives!

Hermione 'Tis even thus. So I resented it.

Orestes Didst thou with woman's craft devise a plot against thy rival?

Hermione Yes, to slay her and her bastard child.

Orestes And didst thou slay them, or did something happen to rescue them from thee?

Hermione It was old Peleus, who showed regard to the weaker side.

Orestes Hadst thou any accomplice in this attempted murder?

Hermione My father came from Sparta for this very purpose.

Orestes And was he after all defeated by that old man's prowess?

Hermione Oh no! but by shame; and he hath gone and left me all alone.

Orestes I understand; thou art afraid of thy husband for what thou hast done.

Hermione Thou hast guessed it; for he will have a right to slay me. What can say for myself? Yet I beseech thee by Zeus the god of our family, send me to a land as far as possible from this, or to my father's house; for these very walls seem to cry out "Begone!" and all the land of Phthia hates me. But if my lord return ere that from the oracle of Phoebus, he will put me to death on a shameful charge, or enslave me to his mistress, whom ruled before. Maybe some one will say, "How was it thou didst go thus astray?" I was ruined by evil women who came to me and puffed me up with words like these: "Wait! wilt thou suffer that vile captive, a mere bondmaid, to dwell within thy house and share thy wedded rights? By Heaven's queen! if it were my house she should not live to reap my marriage-harvest!" And I listened to the words of these Sirens, the cunning, knavish, subtle praters, and was filled with silly thoughts. What need had I to care about my lord? I had all I wanted, wealth in plenty, a house in which I was mistress, and as for children, mine would be born in wedlock, while hers would be bastards, half-slaves to mine. Oh! never, never — this truth will I repeat — should men of sense, who have wives, allow women-folk to visit them in their homes, for they teach them evil; one, to gain some private end, helps to corrupt their honour; another, having made a slip herself, wants a companion in misfortune, while many are wantons; and hence it is men's houses are tainted. Wherefore keep strict guard upon the portals of your houses with bolts and bars; for these visits of strange women lead to no good result, but a world of ill.

Leader Thou hast given thy tongue too free a rein regarding thy own sex. I can pardon thee in this case, but still women ought to smooth over their sisters' weaknesses.

Orestes 'Twas sage counsel he gave who taught men to hear the arguments on both sides. I, for instance, though aware of the confusion in this house, the quarrel between thee and Hector's wife, waited awhile and watched to see whether thou wouldst stay here or from fear of that captive art minded to quit these halls. Now it was not so much regard for thy message that brought me thither, as the intention of carrying thee away from this house, if, as now, thou shouldst grant me a chance of saying so. For thou wert mine formerly, but art now living with thy present husband through thy father's baseness; since he, before invading Troy's domains, betrothed thee to me,

and then afterwards promised thee to thy present lord, provided he captured the city of Troy.

So, as soon as Achilles' son returned hither, I forgave thy father, but entreated the bridegroom to forego his marriage with thee, telling him all I had endured and my present misfortune; I might get a wife, I said, from amongst friends, but outside their circle 'twas no easy task for one exiled like myself from home. Thereat he grew abusive, taunting me with my mother's murder and those blood-boltered fiends. And I was humbled by the fortunes of my house, and though 'tis true, I grieved, yet did I bear my sorrow, and reluctantly departed, robbed of thy promised hand. Now therefore, since thou findest thy fortune so abruptly changed and art fallen thus on evil days and hast no help, I will take thee hence and place thee in thy father's hands. For kinship hath strong claims, and in adversity there is naught better than a kinsman's kindly aid.

Hermione As for my marriage, my father must look to it; 'tis not for me to decide. Yes, take me hence as soon as may be, lest my husband come back to his house before I am gone, or Peleus hear that I am deserting his son's abode and pursue me with his swift steeds.

Orestes Rest easy about the old man's power; and, as for Achilles' son with all his insolence to me, never fear him; such a crafty net this hand hath woven and set for his death with knots that none can loose; whereof I will not speak before the time, but, when my plot begins to work, Delphi's rock will witness it. If but my allies in the Pythian land abide by their oaths, this same murderer of his mother will show that no one else shall marry thee my rightful bride. To his cost will he demand satisfaction of King Phoebus for his father's blood; nor shall his repentance avail him though he is now submitting to the god. No! he shall perish miserably by Apollo's hand and my false accusations; so shall he find out my enmity. For the deity upsets the fortune of them that hate him, and suffers them not to be high-minded.

(Orestes and Hermione depart.)

Chorus (singing) O Phoebus! who didst fence the hill of Ilium with a fair coronal of towers, and thou, ocean-god! coursing o'er the main with thy

dark steeds, wherefore did ye hand over in dishonour your own handiwork to the war-god, master of the spear, abandoning Troy to wretchedness?

Many a well-horsed car ye yoked on the banks of Simois, and many a bloody tournament did ye ordain with never a prize to win; and Ilium's princes are dead and gone; no longer in Troy is seen the blaze of fire on altars of the gods with the smoke of incense.

The son of Atreus is no more, slain by the hand of his wife, and she herself hath paid the debt of blood by death, and from her children's hands received her doom. The god's own bidding from his oracle was levelled against her, in the day that Agamemnon's son set forth from Argos and visited his shrine; so he slew her, aye, spilt his own mother's blood. O Phoebus, O thou power divine, how can I believe the story?

Anon wherever Hellenes gather, was heard the voice of lamentation, mothers weeping o'er their children's fate, as they left their homes to mate with strangers. Ah! thou art not the only one, nor thy dear ones either, on whom the cloud of grief hath fallen. Hellas had to bear the visitation, and thence the scourge crossed to Phrygia's fruitful fields, raining the bloody drops the death-god loves.

(Peleus enters in haste.)

Peleus Ye dames of Phthia, answer my questions. I heard a vague rumour that the daughter of Menelaus had left these halls and fled; so now I am come in hot haste to learn if this be true; for it is the duty of those who are at home to labour in the interests of their absent friends.

Leader of the Chorus Thou hast heard aright, O Peleus; ill would it become me to hide the evil case in which I now find myself; our queen has fled and left these halls.

Peleus What did she fear? explain that to me.

Leader She was afraid her lord would cast her out.

Peleus In return for plotting his child's death? surely not?

Leader Yea, and she was afraid of yon captive.

Peleus With whom did she leave the house? with her father?

Leader The son of Agamemnon came and took her hence.

Peleus What view hath he to further thereby? Will he marry her?

Leader Yes, and he is plotting thy grandson's death.

Peleus From an ambuscade, or meeting him fairly face to face?

Leader In the holy place of Loxias, leagued with Delphians.

Peleus God help us. This is a present danger. Hasten one of you with all speed to the Pythian altar and tell our friends there what has happened here, ere Achilles' son be slain by his enemies.

(A Messenger enters.)

Messenger Woe worth the day! what evil tidings have I brought for thee, old sire, and for all who love my master! woe is me!

Peleus Alas! my prophetic soul hath a presentiment.

Messenger Aged Peleus, hearken! Thy grandson is no more; so grievously is he smitten by the men of Delphi and the stranger from Mycenae.

Leader Ah! what wilt thou do, old man? Fall not; uplift thyself.

Peleus I am a thing of naught; death is come upon me. My voice is choked, my limbs droop beneath me.

Messenger Hearken; if thou art eager also to avenge thy friends, lift up thyself and hear what happened.

Peleus Ah, destiny! how tightly hast thou caught me in thy toils, a poor old man at life's extremest verge! But tell me how he was taken from me, my one son's only child; unwelcome as such news is, I fain would hear it.

Messenger As soon as we reached the famous soil of Phoebus, for three whole days were we feasting our eyes with the sight. And this, it seems, caused suspicion; for the folk, who dwell near the god's shrine, began to collect in groups, while Agamemnon's son, going to and fro through the town, would whisper in each man's ear malignant hints: "Do ye see yon fellow, going in and out of the god's treasure-chambers, which are full of the gold stored there by all mankind? He is come hither a second time on the same mission as before, eager to sack the temple of Phoebus." Thereon there ran an angry murmur through the city, and the magistrates flocked to their council-chamber, while those, who have charge of the god's treasures, had a guard privately placed amongst the colonnades. But we, knowing naught as yet of this, took sheep fed in the pastures of Parnassus, and went our way and stationed ourselves at the altars with vouchers and Pythian seers. And one said: "What prayer, young warrior, wouldst thou have us offer to the god? Wherefore art thou come?" And he answered: "I wish to make atonement to Phoebus for my past transgression; for once I claimed from him satisfaction for my father's blood." Thereupon the rumour, spread by Orestes, proved to have great weight, suggesting that my master was lying and had come on a shameful errand. But he crosses the threshold of the temple to pray to Phoebus before his oracle, and was busy with his burnt-offering; when a body of men armed with swords set themselves in ambush against him in the cover of the bay-trees, and Clytemnestra's son, that had contrived the whole plot was one of them. There stood the young man praying to the god in sight of all, when lo! with their sharp swords they stabbed Achilles' unprotected son from behind. But he stepped back, for it was not a mortal wound he had received, and drew his sword, and snatching armour from the pegs where it hung on a pillar, took his stand upon the altar-steps, the picture of a warrior grim; then cried he to the sons of Delphi, and asked them: "Why seek to slay me when I am come on a holy mission? What cause is there why I should die? But of all that throng of bystanders, no man answered him a word, but they set to hurling stones. Then he, though bruised and battered by the showers of missiles from all sides, covered himself behind his mail and tried to ward off the attack, holding his shield first here, then there, at arm's length, but all of no avail; for a storm of darts, arrows and javelins, hurtling spits with double points, and butchers' knives for slaying steers, came flying at his feet; and terrible was the war-dance thou hadst then seen thy grandson dance to avoid their

marksmanship. At last, when they were hemming him in on all sides, allowing him no breathing space, he left the shelter of the altar, the hearth where victims are placed, and with one bound was on them as on the Trojans of yore; and they turned and fled like doves when they see the hawk. Many fell in the confusion: some wounded, and others trodden down by one another along the narrow passages; and in that hushed holy house uprose unholy din and echoed back from the rocks. Calm and still my master stood there in his gleaming harness like a flash of light, till from the inmost shrine there came a voice of thrilling horror, stirring the crowd to make a stand. Then fell Achilles' son, smitten through the flank by some Delphian's biting blade, some fellow that slew him with a host to help; and as he fell, there was not one that did not stab him, or cast a rock and batter his corpse. So his whole body, once so fair, was marred with savage wounds. At last they cast the lifeless clay, Iying near the altar, forth from the fragrant fane. And we gathered up his remains forthwith and are bringing them to thee, old prince, to mourn and weep and honour with a deep-dug tomb.

This is how that prince who vouchsafeth oracles to others, that judge of what is right for all the world, hath revenged himself on Achilles' son, remembering his ancient quarrel as a wicked man would. How then can he be wise?

(The Messenger withdraws as the body of Neoptolemus is carried in on a bier. The following lines between Peleus and the Chorus are chanted responsively.)

Chorus Lo! e'en now our prince is being carried on a bier from Delphi's land unto his home. Woe for him and his sad fate, and woe for thee, old sire! for this is not the welcome thou wouldst give Achilles' son, the lion's whelp; thyself too by this sad mischance dost share his evil lot.

Peleus Ah! woe is me! here is a sad sight for me to see and take unto my halls! Ah me! ah me! I am undone, thou city of Thessaly! My line now ends; I have no children left me in my home. Oh! the sorrows seem born to endure! What friend can I look to for relief? Ah, dear lips, and cheeks, and hands! Would thy destiny had slain the 'neath Ilium's walls beside the banks of Simois!

Chorus Had he so died, my aged lord, he had won him honour thereby, and thine had been the happier lot.

Peleus O marriage, marriage, woe to thee! thou bane of my home, thou destroyer of my city! Ah my child, my boy, would that the honour of wedding thee, fraught with evil as it was to my children and house, had not thrown o'er thee, my son, Hermione's deadly net! that the thunderbolt had slain her sooner! and that thou, rash mortal, hadst never charged the great god Phoebus with aiming that murderous shaft that spilt thy hero-father's blood!

Chorus Woe! woe! alas! With due observance of funeral rites will I begin the mourning for my dead master.

Peleus Alack and well-a-day! I take up the tearful dirge, ah me! old and wretched as I am.

Chorus 'Tis Heaven's decree; God willed this heavy stroke.

Peleus O darling child, thou hast left me all alone in my halls, old and childless by thy loss.

Chorus Thou shouldst have died, old sire, before thy children.

Peleus Shall I not tear my hair, and smite upon my head with grievous blows? O city! of both my children hath Phoebus robbed me.

Chorus What evils thou hast suffered, what sorrows thou hast seen, thou poor old man! what shall be thy life hereafter?

Peleus Childless, desolate, with no limit to my grief, I must drain the cup of woe, until I die.

Chorus 'Twas all in vain the gods wished thee joy on thy wedding day.

Peleus All my hopes have flown away, fallen short of my high boasts.

Chorus A lonely dweller in a lonely home art thou.

Peleus I have no city any longer; there! on the ground my sceptre do cast; and thou, daughter of Nereus, ‘neath thy dim grotto, shalt see me grovelling in the dust, a ruined king.

Chorus Look, look! *(A dim form of divine appearance is seen hovering mid air.)* What is that moving? what influence divine am I conscious of? Look, maidens, mark it well; see, yonder is some deity, wafted through the lustrous air and alighting on the plains of Phthia, home of steeds.

Thetis (from above) O Peleus! because of my wedded days with thee now long agone, I Thetis am come from the halls of Nereus. And first I counsel thee not to grieve to excess in thy present distress, for I too who need ne’er have borne children to my sorrow, have lost the child of our love, Achilles swift of foot, foremost of the sons of Hellas. Next will I declare why I am come, and do thou give ear. Carry yonder corpse, Achilles’ son, to the Pythian altar and there bury it, a reproach to Delphi, that his tomb may proclaim the violent death he met at the hand of Orestes. And for his captive wife Andromache — she must dwell in the Molossian land, united in honourable wedlock with Helenus, and with her this babe, the sole survivor as he is of all the line of Aeacus, for from him a succession of prosperous kings of Molossia is to go on unbroken; for the race that springs from thee and me, my aged lord, must not thus be brought to naught; no! nor Troy’s line either; for her fate too is cared for by the gods, albeit her fall was due to the eager wish of Pallas. Thee too, that thou mayst know the saving grace of wedding me, will I, a goddess born and daughter of a god, release from all the ills that flesh is heir to and make a deity to know not death nor decay. From henceforth in the halls of Nereus shalt thou dwell with me, god and goddess together; thence shalt thou rise dry-shod from out the main and see Achilles, our dear son, settled in his island-home by the strand of Leuce, that is girdled by the Euxine sea. But get thee to Delphi’s god-built town, carrying this corpse with thee, and, after thou hast buried him, return and settle in the cave which time hath hollowed in the Sepian rock and there abide, till from the sea I come with choir of fifty Nereids to be thy escort thence; for fate’s decree thou must fulfil; such is the pleasure of Zeus. Cease then to mourn the dead; this is the lot which heaven assigns to all, and all must pay their debt to death.

Peleus Great queen, my honoured wife, from Nereus sprung, all hail! thou art acting herein as befits thyself and thy children. So I will stay my grief at thy bidding, goddess, and, when I have buried the dead, will seek the glens of Pelion, even the place where I took thy beauteous form to my embrace. Surely after this every prudent man will seek to marry a wife of noble stock and give his daughter to a husband good and true, never setting his heart on a worthless woman, not even though she bring a sumptuous dowry to his house. So would men ne'er suffer ill at heaven's hand.

(Thetis vanishes.)

Chorus (chanting) Many are the shapes of Heaven's denizens, and many a thing they bring to pass contrary to our expectation; that which we thought would be is not accomplished, while for the unexpected God finds out a way. E'en such hath been the issue of this matter.

HECUBA

Translated by Theodore Alois Buckley

Composed in c. 424 BC, this tragedy takes place after the Trojan War, before the Greeks have departed from Troy. The play is a detailed study of Hecuba, wife of King Priam and formerly Queen of the now-fallen city, exploring her grief over the death of her daughter Polyxena and the revenge she takes for the murder of her youngest son, Polydorus. The play boasts an unconventional opening, with the ghost of Polydorus explaining how when the war threatened Troy, he was sent to King Polymestor of Thrace for safekeeping, with gifts of gold and jewellery. But when Troy lost the war, Polymestor treacherously murdered Polydorus, and seized the treasure. Polydorus has foreknowledge of many of the play's events, haunting his mother's dreams the night before.

At dawn, Hecuba mourns her great losses and is agitated by the portents of her nightmare. The Chorus of young slave women enters, bearing fateful news. One of Hecuba's last remaining daughters, Polyxena, is to be killed on the tomb of Achilles as a blood sacrifice in his honour. When Odysseus enters, escorting Polyxena to an altar where Neoptolemus will shed her blood, the Ithacan ignores Hecuba's impassioned pleas to spare her daughter and Polyxena herself admits she would rather die than live as a slave. In the first Choral interlude, the Chorus lament their own doomed fate, cursing the sea breeze that will carry them on ships to the foreign lands where they will live in slavery. The plot then falls into two clearly distinguished parts: the Greeks' sacrifice of Hecuba's daughter, Polyxena, to the shade of Achilles, and the vengeance of Hecuba on Polymestor, the Thracian king.

'Hecuba Blinding Polymestor' by Giuseppe Maria Crespi

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The Scene lies before the Grecian tents, on the coast of the Thracian Chersonese.

THE ARGUMENT.

After the capture of Troy, the Greeks put into the Chersonese over against Troas, But Achilles, having appeared by night, demanded one of the daughters of Priam to be slain. The Greeks therefore, in honor to their hero, tore Polyxena from Hecuba, and offered her up in sacrifice. Polymestor moreover, the king of the Thracians, murdered Polydore, a son of Priam's. Now Polymestor had received him from the hands of Priam as a charge to take care of, together with some money. But when the city was taken, wishing to seize upon his wealth, he determined to dispatch him, and disregarded the ill-fated friendship that subsisted between them; but his body being cast out into the sea, the wave threw him up on the shore before the tents of the captive women. Hecuba, on seeing the corse, recognized it; and having imparted her design to Agamemnon, sent for Polymestor to come to her with his sons, concealing what had happened, under pretense that she might discover to him some treasures hidden in Ilium. But on his arrival she slew his sons, and put out his eyes; but pleading her cause before the Greeks, she gained it over her accuser *(Polymestor)*. For it was decided that she did not begin the cruelty, but only avenged herself on him who did begin it.

HECUBA.

GHOST OF POLYDORE.

I am present, having left the secret dwellings of the dead and the gates of darkness, where Pluto has his abode apart from the other Gods, Polydore the son of Hecuba the daughter of Cisseus, and Priam my sire, who when the danger of falling by the spear of Greece was threatening the city of the Phrygians, in fear, privately sent me from the Trojan land to the house of Polymestor, his Thracian friend, who cultivates the most fruitful soil of the Chersonese, ruling a warlike people with his spear. But my father sends privately with me a large quantity of gold, in order that, if at any time the walls of Troy should fall, there might not be a lack of sustenance for his surviving children. But I was the youngest of the sons of Priam; on which account also he sent me privately from the land, for I was able neither to bear arms nor the spear with my youthful arm. As long then indeed as the landmarks of the country remained erect, and the towers of Troy were unshaken, and Hector my brother prevailed with his spear, I miserable increased vigorously as some young branch, by the nurture I received at the hands of the Thracian, my father's friend. But after that both Troy and the life of Hector were put an end to, and my father's mansions razed to the ground, and himself falls at the altar built by the God, slain by the blood-polluted son of Achilles, the friend of my father slays me, wretched man, for the sake of my gold, and having slain me threw me into the surf of the sea, that he might possess the gold himself in his palace. But I am exposed on the shore, at another time on the ocean's surge, borne about by many ebbings and flowings of the waves, unwept, unburied; but at present I am hastening on my dear mother's account, having left my body, borne aloft this day already the third, for so long has my wretched mother been present in this territory of the Chersonese from Troy. But all the Grecians, holding their ships at anchor, are sitting quiet on the shores of this land of Thrace. For Achilles the son of Peleus, appearing above his tomb, stayed all the army of the Grecians as they were directing homeward their sea dipped oars; and asks to receive my sister Polyxena as a dear victim, and a tribute of honor to his tomb. And this he will obtain, nor will he be without this gift from his friends; and fate this day leads forth my sister to death. But my

mother will see the two corses of her two children, both mine and the unhappy virgin's; for I shall appear on a breaker before the feet of a female slave, that I wretched may obtain sepulture; for I have successfully entreated those who have power beneath to find a tomb, and to fall into my mother's hands. As much then as I wish to have shall be mine; but I will withdraw myself out of the way of the aged Hecuba, for she is advancing her step beyond the tent of Agamemnon, dreading my phantom. Alas! O my mother, who, from kingly palaces, hast beheld the day of slavery, how unfortunate art thou now, in the degree that thou wert once fortunate! but some one of the Gods counterpoising your state, destroys you on account of your ancient prosperity.

HECUBA. CHORUS.

HEC. Lead onward, ye Trojan dames, the old woman before the tent; lead onward, raising up one now your fellow-slave, but once your queen; take me, bear me, conduct me, support my body, holding my aged hand; and I, leaning on the bending staff of my hand, will hasten to put forward the slow motion of my joints. O lightning of Jove! O thou gloomy night! why, I pray, am I thus disquieted in the night with terrors, with phantoms? O thou venerable Earth, the mother of black-winged dreams, I renounce the nightly vision, which regarding my son who is preserved in Thrace, and regarding Polyxena my dear daughter, in my dreams have I beheld, a fearful sight, I have learned, I have understood. Gods of this land, preserve my son, who, my only son, and, [as it were,] the anchor of my house, inhabits the snowy Thrace under the protection of his father's friend. Some strange event will take place, some strain will come mournful to the mournful. Never did my mind so incessantly shudder and tremble. Where, I pray, ye Trojan dames, can I behold the divine spirit of Helenus, or Cassandra, that they may interpret my dreams? For I beheld a dappled hind torn by the blood-stained fang of the wolf, forcibly dragged from my bosom, a miserable sight. And dreadful this vision also; the spectre of Achilles came above the summit of his tomb, and demanded as a tribute of honor one of the wretched Trojan women. From my daughter then, from my daughter avert this fate, ye Gods, I implore you.

CHOR. Hecuba, with haste to thee I flew, leaving the tents of our lords, where I was allotted and ordained a slave, driven from the city of Troy, led captive of the Greeks by the point of the spear, not to alleviate aught of your sufferings, but bringing a heavy weight of tidings, and to thee, O lady, a herald of woe. For it is said that it has been decreed in the full council of the Greeks to make thy daughter a sacrifice to Achilles: for you know how that having ascended o'er his tomb, he appeared in his golden arms and restrained the fleet ships, as they were setting their sails with their halliards, exclaiming in these words; "Where speed ye, Grecians, leaving my tomb unhonored!" Then the waves of great contention clashed together, and a divided opinion went forth through the army of the Greeks; to some it appeared advisable to give a victim to his tomb, and to others it appeared not. But Agamemnon was studious to advance your good, cherishing the love of the infuriated prophetess. But the two sons of Theseus, scions of Athens, were the proposers of different arguments, but in this one opinion they coincided, to crown the tomb of Achilles with fresh blood; and declared they would never prefer the bed of Cassandra before the spear of Achilles. And the strength of the arguments urged on either side was in a manner equal, till that subtle adviser, that babbling knave, honeyed in speech, pleasing to the populace, that son of Laertes, persuades the army, not to reject the suit of the noblest of all the Greeks on account of a captive victim, and not to put it in the power of any of the dead standing near Proserpine to say that the Grecians departed from the plains of Troy ungrateful to the heroes who died for the state of Greece. And Ulysses will come only not now, to tear your child from your bosom, and to take her from your aged arms. But go to the temples, speed to the altars, sit a suppliant at the knees of Agamemnon, invoke the Gods, both those of heaven, and those under the earth; for either thy prayers will prevent thy being deprived of thy wretched daughter, or thou must behold the virgin falling before the tomb, dyed in blood gushing forth in a dark stream from her neck adorned with gold.

HEC. Alas! wretched me! what shall I exclaim? what shriek shall I utter? what lamentation? miserable through miserable age, and slavery not to be endured, insupportable. Alas! who is there to defend me? what offspring, what city! The old man is gone. My children are gone. Whither shall I turn me? and whither shall I go? Where is any god or deity to succor me? O

Trojan dames, bearers of evil tidings, bearers of woe, you have destroyed me utterly, you have destroyed me. Life in the light is no more desirable! O wretched foot, lead, lead an aged woman to this tent! O child, daughter of the most afflicted mother, come forth, come forth from the tent, hear thy mother's voice, that thou mayest know what a report I hear that concerns thy life.

HECUBA, POLYXENA, CHORUS.

POLYX. O mother, why dost thou call! proclaiming what new affliction hast thou frighted me from the tent, as some bird from its nest, with this alarm?

HEC. Alas! my child!

POLYX. Why address me in words of ill omen? This is an evil prelude.

HEC. Alas! for thy life.

POLYX. Speak, conceal it no longer from me. I fear, I fear, my mother; why I pray dost thou groan?

HEC. O child, child of an unhappy mother!

POLYX. Why sayest thou this?

HEC. My child, the common decree of the Greeks unites to slay thee at the tomb of the son of Peleus.

POLYX. Alas, my mother! how are you relating unenviable ills? Tell me, tell me, my mother.

HEC. I declare, my child, the ill-omened report, they bring word that a decree has passed by the vote of the Greeks regarding thy life.

POLYX. O thou that hast borne affliction! O thou wretched on every side! O mother unhappy in your life, what most hated and most unutterable calamity has some destiny again sent against thee! This child is no longer thine; no longer indeed shall I miserable share slavery with miserable age.

For as a mountain whelp or heifer shalt thou wretched behold me wretched torn from thine arms, and sent down beneath the darkness of the earth a victim to Pluto, where I shall lie bound in misery with the dead. But it is for thee indeed, my afflicted mother, that I lament in these mournful strains, but for my life, my wrongs, my fate, I mourn not; but death, a better lot, has befallen me.

CHOR. But see Ulysses advances with hasty step, to declare to thee, Hecuba, some new determination.

ULYSSES, HECUBA, POLYXENA, CHORUS.

ULYSS. Lady, I imagine that you are acquainted with the decree of the army, and the vote which has prevailed; nevertheless, I will declare it. It has been decreed by the Greeks to offer on the lofty mound of Achilles's tomb thy daughter Polyxena. But they order me to conduct and convey the damsel; but the son of Achilles is appointed to be the priest, and to preside over the rites. Do you know then what to do? Be not dragged away by violence, nor enter into a contest of strength with me, but acknowledge superior force and the presence of thy ills; it is wise to have proper sentiments even in adversity.

HEC. Alas! alas! the great trial is at hand, as it seems, of lamentations full, nor without tears; for I have not died in the state in which I ought to have died, nor hath Jove destroyed me, but preserves me, that I wretched may behold other misfortunes greater than [past] misfortunes. But if it be allowed slaves to put questions to the free, not offensive nor grating to the feelings, it will be your part to be questioned, and ours who are asking to attend.

ULYSS. You have permission, ask freely, I grudge not the time.

HEC. Dost thou remember when thou camest a spy on Troy, disfigured by a vile dress, and from thine eyes drops caused by the fear of death bedewed thy beard?

ULYSS. I remember well; for it made no slight impression on my heart.

HEC. But Helen knew thee, and told me alone.

ULYSS. I remember the great danger I encountered.

HEC. And didst thou embrace my knees in thy humility?

ULYSS. So that my hand was numbered through fear on thy garments.

HEC. What then didst thou say, being then my slave?

ULYSS. Many arguments that I invented to save me from death.

HEC. Did I preserve thee then, and conduct thee safe from the land?

ULYSS. Yes, so that I now behold the light of the sun.

HEC. Art thou not then convicted of baseness by this conduct, who hast received benefits from me such as thou acknowledgest thou hast, and doest us no good in return, but evil, as far as in thee lies? Thankless is your race, as many of you as court honor from oratory before the populace; be ye not known to me, who care not to injure your friends, provided you say what is gratifying to the people. But plotting what dark design have they determined upon a decree of death against my child? Did fate impel them to offer human sacrifices at the tomb, where it were rather right to sacrifice cattle? Or does Achilles, desirous of devoting in his turn to death those that wrought his death, with a color of justice meditate her destruction? But she has done him no ill: he should demand Helen as a sacrifice on his tomb; for she destroyed him, and brought him to Troy. But if some captive selected from the rest, and excelling in beauty, ought to die, this is not ours. For the daughter of Tyndarus is most preeminent in beauty, and has been found to be no less injurious than us. On the score of justice then I urge this argument; but with respect to what you ought to repay at my demand, hear: thou hast touched my hand, as thou ownest, and this aged cheek also, falling at my knees. Thy hand and knees I in return grasp, and re-demand the favor I granted you then, and beseech you, do not tear my child from my arms, nor kill her; enough have died already. In her I rejoice, and forget my misfortunes; she serves as my consolation in the stead of many things, she is my city, my nurse, my staff, the guide of my way. It becomes not those

who have power to exercise their power in things wherein they ought not, nor should the fortunate imagine their fortune will last forever. For I too have had my time of prosperity, but now have I ceased to be: one day wrenched from me all my happiness. But by thy beard which I supplicate, reverence me, pity me; go to the Grecian army, and remind them that it is a shameful thing to slay women whom ye have once spared, and that too dragging them from the altar. But show mercy. But the laws of blood among you are laid down alike for the free and the slave. But your worth will carry with it persuasion, although your arguments be bad; for the same words from those of little character, have not the same force as when they proceed from those of high reputation.

CHOR. There is no nature of man so obdurate, which on hearing thy groans, and thy long plaints of misery, would not let fall the tear.

ULYSS. Hecuba, be advised, nor through passion deem him thine enemy who gives thee good advice. I indeed am ready to preserve thy person through the means of which I was fortunate; and I say no other. But what I declared before all I will not deny, that, Troy being captured, we should give thy daughter as a victim to the noblest man of the army, who demands her; for in this many cities fail, when any man who is brave and zealous receives no more honor than those who are less valiant. But Achilles, O lady, is worthy of honor from us, a man who died most gloriously in behalf of the Grecian country. Were not then this disgraceful, if when living we treat him as a friend, but after he is gone we no longer treat him so? Well! what then will any one say, if there again should be an assembling of the army, and a contest with the enemy: “Shall we fight or preserve our lives, seeing that he who falls lies unhonored?” But for me at least, living from day to day, although I have but little, that little is sufficient; but I would wish that my monument should be beheld crowned with honor, for the gratification is for a long time. But if thou sayest thou sufferest affliction, hear this in return from me. There are with us aged matrons, and hoary sires, not less wretched than thou art, and brides bereft of the noblest husbands, whose ashes this land of Troy conceals. Endure this. But we, if we injudiciously determine to honor the brave man, shall incur the charge of folly. But you barbarians neither consider your friends as friends, nor do you hold up to admiration those who have died honorably; thus shall Greece

be prosperous, but you shall experience fortune corresponding to your counsels.

CHOR. Alas! alas! how wretched is the state of slavery, and to endure indignities compelled by superior force! *(Note [B].)*

HEC. O daughter, my words respecting thy death are vanished in the air, set forth in vain; but thou, if thou hast greater powers [of persuasion] than thy mother, use all thy influence, uttering every note as the throat of the nightingale, that thou mayest not be deprived of life. But fall before the knees of Ulysses in all the eloquence of grief, and persuade him; thou hast a pretext, for he also hath children; so that he may be inclined to pity thy fortune.

POLYX. I see, Ulysses, that thou art hiding thy hand beneath thy robe, and turnest thy face away, that I may not touch thy beard. Be not afraid; thou hast avoided my suppliant Jove; for I will follow thee both on account of fate, and even wishing to die; but if I were not willing, I should appear base, and too fond of life. For wherefore should I live, whose father was monarch of all the Trojans; this my dawn of life. Then was I nurtured under fair hope, a bride for princes, having no small competition for my hand, to whose palace and hearth I should come. But I, wretched now, was mistress among the Trojan women, and conspicuous in the train of virgins, equal to goddesses, death only excepted. But now I am a slave; first of all the very name, not being familiar, persuades me to love death. Then perhaps I might meet with masters cruel in disposition, who will buy me for silver, the sister both of Hector and many other [heroes.] And imposing the task of making bread in his palace, will compel me, passing the day in misery, both to sweep the house, and stand at the loom. And some slave somewhere purchased will defile my bed, before wooed by princes. This never shall be. I will quit this light from mine eyes free, offering my body to Pluto. Lead on then, Ulysses, conduct me to death; for I see neither confidence of hope, nor of expectation, present to me that I can ever enjoy good fortune. But do thou, my mother, in no wise hinder me by your words or by your actions; but assent to my death before I meet with indignities unsuited to my rank. For one who has not been accustomed to taste misfortunes bears indeed, but

grieves, to put his neck under the yoke. But he would be far more blessed in death than in life; for to live otherwise than honorably is a great burden.

CHOR. It is a great and distinguishing feature among men to be born of generous parents, and the name of nobility of birth among the illustrious, proceeds from great to greater still.

HEC. You have spoken honorably, my daughter, but in that honorable dwells grief. But if the son of Peleus must be gratified, and you must escape blame, Ulysses, kill not her; but leading me to the pyre of Achilles, strike me, spare me not; I brought forth Paris, who destroyed the son of Thetis, having pierced him with his arrows.

ULYSS. The phantom of Achilles did not demand that thou, O aged lady, but that thy daughter here should die.

HEC. Do thou then at least slay me with my daughter, and there will be twice the libation of blood for the earth, and the dead who makes this request.

ULYSS. Thy daughter's death suffices; one must not be heaped on another; would that we required not even this one.

HEC. There is a strong necessity for me to die with my daughter.

ULYSS. How so? for I am not aware of any master that I have.

HEC. As the ivy the oak, so will I clasp her.

ULYSS. Not so; if you will take the advice of your superiors in knowledge.

HEC. Never will I willingly quit my child here.

ULYSS. Nor will I leave this place without the virgin.

POLYX. Mother, be persuaded; and thou, son of Laertes, be gentle to a parent with reason moved to anger. But thou, O wretched mother, contend not with conquerors. Dost thou wish to fall on the earth and to wound thy aged flesh dragged by violence, and to suffer the indignity of being torn by

a youthful arm? which things you will suffer. Do not, I pray thee, for it is not seemly. But, my dear mother, give me thy beloved hand, and grant me to join cheek to cheek; since never hereafter, but now for the last time shall I behold the rays of the sun and his bright orb. Receive my last address, O mother! O thou that bearedst me, I am going below.

HEC. And I, O daughter, shall be a slave in the light of day.

POLYX. Without the bridegroom, without the bridal song, which I ought to have obtained.

HEC. Mournful thou, my child; but I am a wretched woman.

POLYX. There shall I lie in darkness far from thee.

HEC. Alas me, what shall I do? where end my life?

POLYX. I shall die a slave, born of a free father.

HEC. But I bereft indeed of fifty children.

POLYX. What message shall I bear to Hector, and to thy aged husband?

HEC. Tell them that I am most miserable of all women.

POLYX. O ye breasts that tenderly nursed me.

HEC. O daughter of an untimely and unhappy fate.

POLYX. Farewell, O mother, farewell Cassandra too.

HEC. Others farewell, but this is not for thy mother.

POLYX. Farewell, my brother Polydore, among the warlike Thracians.

HEC. If he lives at least: but I doubt, so unfortunate am I in every thing.

POLTX. He lives, and shall close thy dying eye.

HEC. I am dead, before my death, beneath my ills.

POLYX. Lead me, Ulysses, having covered my face with a veil, since, before I am sacrificed indeed, I am melted in heart at my mother's plaints, her also I melt by my lamentations. O light, for yet it is allowed me to express thy name, but I have no share in thee, except during the time that I am going between the sword and the pyre of Achilles.

HEC. Ah me! I faint; and my limbs fail me. — O daughter, touch thy mother, stretch forth thy hand — give it me — leave me not childless — I am lost, my friends. Would that I might see the Spartan Helen, the sister of the twin sons of Jove, thus, for through her bright eyes that most vile woman destroyed the happy Troy.

CHOR. Gale, gale of the sea, which waftest the swift barks bounding through the waves through the surge of the ocean, whither wilt thou bear me hapless? To whose mansion shall I come, a purchased slave? Or to the port of the Doric or Phthian shore, where they report that Apidanus, the most beautiful father of floods, enriches the plains? or wilt thou bear me hapless urged by the maritime oar, passing a life of misery in my prison-house, to that island where both the first-born palm tree and the laurel shot forth their hallowed branches to their beloved Latona, emblem of the divine parturition? And with the Delian nymphs shall I celebrate in song the golden chaplet and bow of Diana? Or, in the Athenian city, shall I upon the saffron robe harness the steeds to the car of Minerva splendid in her chariot, representing them in embroidery upon the splendid looms of brilliant threads, or the race of Titans, which Jove the son of Saturn sends to eternal rest with his flaming lightning? Alas, my children! Alas, my ancestors, and my paternal land, which is overthrown, buried in smoke, captured by the Argive sword! but I indeed am a slave in a foreign country, having left Asia the slave of Europe, having changed my bridal chamber for the grave.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TAL. Tell me, ye Trojan dames, where can I find Hecuba, late the queen of Troy?

CHOR. Not far from thee, O Talthybius, she is lying stretched on the ground, muffled in her robes.

TAL. O Jupiter, what shall I say? Shall I say that thou beholdest mortals? or that they have to no end or purpose entertained false notions, who suppose the existence of a race of Deities, and that fortune has the sovereign control over men? Was not this the queen of the opulent Phrygians? was not this the wife of the all-blest Priam? And now all her city is overthrown by the spear, but she a captive, aged, childless, lies on the ground defiling her ill-fated head with the dust. Alas! alas! I too am old, but rather may death be my portion before I am involved in any such debasing fortune; stand up, oh unhappy, raise thy side, and lift up thy hoary head.

HEC. Let me alone: who art thou that sufferest not my body to rest? why dost thou, whoever thou art, disturb me from my sadness?

TAL. I am here, Talthybius, the herald of the Greeks, Agamemnon having sent me for thee, O lady.

HEC. Hast thou come then, thou dearest of men, it having been decreed by the Greeks to slay me too upon the tomb? Thou wouldest bring dear news indeed. Then haste we, let us speed with all our might: lead on, old man.

TAL. I am here and come to thee, O lady, that thou mayest entomb thy dead daughter. Both the two sons of Atreus and the Grecian host send me.

HEC. Alas! what wilt thou say? Art thou not come for me as doomed to death, but to bring this cruel message? Thou art dead, my child, torn from thy mother; and I am childless as far as regards thee; oh! wretch that I am. But how did ye slay her? was it with becoming reverence? Or did ye proceed in your butchery as with an enemy, O old man? Tell me, though you will relate no pleasing tale.

TAL. Twice, O lady, thou desirest me to indulge in tears through pity for thy daughter; for both now while relating the mournful circumstance shall I bedew this eye, as did I then at the tomb when she perished. The whole host of the Grecian army was present before the tomb, at the sacrifice of thy daughter. But the son of Achilles taking Polyxena by the hand, placed her

on the summit of the mound; but I stood near him: and there followed a chosen band of illustrious youths in readiness to restrain with their hands thy daughter's struggles; then the son of Achilles took a full-crowned goblet of entire gold, and poured forth libations to his deceased father; and makes signal to me to proclaim silence through all the Grecian host. And I standing forth in the midst, thus spoke: "Be silent, O ye Greeks, let all the people remain silent; silence, be still:" and I made the people perfectly still. But he said, "O son of Peleus, O my father, accept these libations which have the power of soothing, and which speed the dead on their way; and come, that thou mayest drink the pure purple blood of this virgin, which both the army and myself offer unto thee; but be propitious to us, and grant us to weigh anchor, and to loose the cables of our ships, and to return each to his country, having met with a prosperous return from Troy." Thus much he said, and all the army joined in the prayer. Then taking by the hilt his sword decked with gold, he drew it from its scabbard, and made signs to the chosen youths of the Greeks to hold the virgin. But she, when she perceived it, uttered this speech: "O Argives, ye that destroyed my city, I die willingly; let none touch my body; for I will offer my neck to the sword with a good heart. But, by the Gods, let me go free while ye kill me, that I may die free, for to be classed as a slave among the dead, when a queen, is what I am ashamed of." But the people murmured assent, and king Agamemnon ordered the young men to quit the virgin; [but they, soon as they heard the last words of him who had the seat of chief authority among them, let go their hold,] and she, on hearing this speech of her lords, took her robe, and rent it, beginning from the top of her shoulder down to her waist: and showed her breasts and bosom beauteous, as a statue's, and bending her knee on the ground, spoke words the most piteous ever heard, "Lo! strike, if this bosom thou desirest, O youth; or wouldest thou rather under the neck, here is this throat prepared." But he at once resolved and unresolved through pity of the virgin, cuts with the sword the passage of her breath; and fountains of blood burst forth. But she, e'en in death, showed much care to fall decently, and to veil from the eyes of men what ought to be concealed. But after that she breathed forth her spirit under the fatal blow, not one of the Greeks exercised the same offices; but some scattered leaves from their hands on the dead; some heap the funeral pile, bringing whole trunks of pines: but he that would not bring, heard rebukes of this sort from him that was thus employed: "Standest thou idle, thou man of

most mean spirit? Hast in thy hand no robe, no ornament for the maiden? Hast thou naught to give to her so exceeding brave in heart and most noble in soul?" These things I tell thee of the death of thy daughter, but I behold thee at once the most happy, at once the most unhappy of all women in thine offspring.

CHOR. Dreadful calamities have risen fierce against the house of Priam; such the hard fate of the Gods.

HEC. O daughter! which of my ills I shall first attend to, amidst such a multitude, I know not: for if I touch on any, another does not suffer me; and thence again some fresh grief draws me aside, succeeding miseries upon miseries. And now I can not obliterate from my mind thy sufferings, so as not to bewail them: but excess of grief hast thou taken away, having been reported to me as noble. Is it then no paradox, if land indeed naturally bad, when blest with a favorable season from heaven, bears well the ear; but good land, robbed of the advantages it ought to have, brings forth bad fruit: but ever among men, the bad by nature is nothing else but bad; the good always good, nor under misfortune does he degenerate from his nature, but is the same good man? Is it, that the parents cause this difference, or the education? The being brought up nobly hath indeed in it the knowledge and principles of goodness; but if one is acquainted well with this, he knows what is vicious, having already learned it by the rule of virtue. And this indeed has my mind been ejaculating in vain. But do thou go, and signify these things to the Greeks, that no one be suffered to touch my daughter, but bid them keep off the multitude. In so vast an army the rabble are riotous, and the sailors' uncontrolled insolence is fiercer than fire; and he is evil, who does not evil. But do thou, my old attendant, taking an urn, fill it with sea water, and bring it hither, that I may wash my girl in her last bath, the bride no bride now, and the virgin no longer a virgin, wash her, and lay her out; according to her merits — whence can I? This I can not; but as I can, I will, for what can I do! And collecting ornaments from among the captured women, who dwell beside me in these tents, if any one, unobserved by our new lords, has by her any stolen memorial of her home. O state of my house, O mansions once happy! O Priam, of vast wealth possessed, and supremely blest in thine offspring, and I too, this aged woman, the mother of such children! How have we come to nothing, bereft of our former

grandeur! And yet still forsooth we are elated, one of us in his gorgeous palaces; another, when honored among his citizens. These are nothing. In vain the counsels of the mind, and the tongue's boast. He is most blest, to whom from day to day no evil happens.

CHORUS.

Against me was it fated that calamity, against me was it fated that woe should spring, when Paris first hewed the pine in Ida's forest, preparing to cut his way over the ocean surge to the bed of Helen, the fairest that the sun's golden beams shine upon. For toils, and fate more stern than toils, close us round: and from the folly of one came a public calamity fatal to the land of Simois, and woes springing from other woes: and when the dispute was decided, which the shepherd decided between the three daughters of the blessed Gods on Ida's top, for war, and slaughter, and the desolation of my palaces. And many a Spartan virgin at her home on the banks of the fair-flowing Eurotas sighs while bathed in tears: and many an aged matron strikes her hand against her hoary head, for her children who have perished, and tears her cheek making her nails all blood-stained with her wounds.

FEMALE ATTENDANT, CHORUS, HECUBA.

ATT. O attendants, where, I pray, is the all-wretched Hecuba, who surpasses the whole race of man and woman kind in calamities? no one shall wrest from her the crown.

CHOR. But what dost thou want, O wretch, in thy words of ill omen? for thy messages of woe never rest.

ATT. I bring this grief to Hecuba; but in calamity 'tis no easy thing for men to speak words of good import.

CHOR. And see, she is coming out of the house, and appears in the right time for thy words.

ATT. O all-wretched mistress, and yet still more wretched than I can express in words, thou art undone, and no longer beholdest the light, childless, husbandless, cityless, entirely destroyed.

HEC. Thou has said nothing new, but hast reproached me who already know it: but why dost thou bring this corse of my Polyxena, whose sepulture was reported to me as in a state of active progress through the labors of all the Grecians?

ATT. She nothing knows, but, woe's me! laments Polyxena, nor does she apprehend her new misfortunes.

HEC. O wretched me! dost bring hither the body of the frantic and inspired Cassandra?

ATT. She whom thou mentionedst, lives; but thou dost not weep for him who is dead; but behold this corse cast naked [on the shore,] and look if it will appear to thee a wonder, and what thou little expectest.

HEC. Alas me! I do indeed see my son Polydore a corse, whom *(I fondly hoped)* the man of Thrace was preserving in his palace. Now am I lost indeed, I no longer exist. Oh my child, my child! Alas! I begin the Bacchic strain, having lately learned my woes from my evil genius.

ATT. Thou knowest then the calamity of thy son, O most unfortunate.

HEC. I see incredible evils, still fresh, still fresh: and my immeasurable woes follow one upon the other. No longer will a day without a tear, without a groan, have part with me.

CHOR. Dreadful, oh! dreadful are the miseries that we endure!

HEC. O child, child of a wretched mother, by what fate art thou dead, by what hap liest thou here? by the hand of what man?

ATT. I know not: on the wave-washed shore I found him.

HEC. Cast up from the sea, or fallen by the blood-stained spear? *(Note [C].)*

ATT. The ocean's billow cast him up from the deep on the smooth sand.

HEC. Woe is me! Now understand I the dream, the vision of mine eyes; the black-winged phantom has not flitted by me in vain, which I saw concerning thee, my child, as being no longer in the light of day.

CHOR. But who slew him? canst thou, O skilled in dreams, declare him?

HEC. My friend, my friend, who curbs the steed in Thrace, where his aged father placed him for concealment.

CHOR. Ah me! what wilt thou say? Was it to possess his gold that he slew him!

HEC. Unutterable deeds, unworthy of a name, surpassing miracles, unhallowed, insufferable! Where are the laws of hospitality? O most accurst of men, how didst thou mar that skin, how sever with the cruel sword the poor limbs of this boy, nor didst feel pity?

CHOR. O hapless woman, how has the deity made thee by far the most wretched of mortals, whoever he be that presses heavy on thee! But, my friends, let us henceforward be silent, for I see our lord Agamemnon advancing.

AGAMEMNON, CHORUS, HECUBA.

AGA. Why, Hecuba, delayest thou to come, and bury thy girl in her tomb, agreeably to what Talthybius told me, that no one of the Argives should be suffered to touch thy daughter. For our part we leave her alone, and touch her not; but thou art slow, whereat I am astonished. I am come therefore to fetch thee, for every thing there has been well and duly performed, if aught of well there be in this. Ah! what corse is this I see before the tent? some Trojan's too? for that it is no Grecian's, the robes that vest his limbs inform me.

HEC. *(aside)* Thou ill-starr'd wretch! myself I mean, when I say "thou." O Hecuba, what shall I do? Shall I fall at the knees of Agamemnon here, or bear my ills in silence?

AGA. Why dost lament turning thy back upon me, and sayest not what has happened? Who is this?

HEC. *(aside)* But should he, thinking me a slave, an enemy, spurn me from his knees, I should be adding to my present sufferings.

AGA. No prophet I, so as to trace, unless by hearing, the path of thy counsels.

HEC. *(aside)* Am I not rather then putting an evil construction on this man's thoughts, whereas he has no evil intention toward me?

AGA. If thou art willing that I should nothing of this affair, thou art of a mind with me, for neither do I wish to hear.

HEC. *(aside)* I can not without him take vengeance for my children. Why do I thus hesitate? I must be bold, whether I succeed, or fail. Agamemnon, by these knees, and by thy beard I implore thee, and by thy blessed hand —

AGA. What thy request? Is it to pass thy life in freedom? for this is easy for thee to obtain.

HEC. Not this indeed; but so that I avenge myself on the bad, I am willing to pass my whole life in slavery.

AGA. And for what assistance dost thou call on me?

HEC. In none of those things which thou imaginest, O king. Seest thou this corse, o'er which I drop the tear?

AGA. I see it; thy meaning however I can not learn from this.

HEC. Him did I once bring forth, him bore I in my bosom.

AGA. Is this indeed one of thy children, O unhappy woman?

HEC. It is, but not of the sons of Priam who fell under the walls of Troy.

AGA. Didst thou then bear any other besides those, O lady?

HEC. In vain, as it appears, this whom you see.

AGA. But where did he chance to be, when the city fell?

HEC. His father sent him out of the country, dreading his death.

AGA. Whither, having removed him alone of his children then alive?

HEC. To this country, where he was found a corse.

AGA. To him who is king over this state, to Polymestor?

HEC. Hither was he sent, the guardian of gold, which proved most destructive to him.

AGA. By whose hand then he is dead, and having met with what fate?

HEC. By whom else should he? The Thracian host slew him.

AGA. O wretch! was he so inflamed with the desire of obtaining the gold?

HEC. Even so, after he had heard of Troy's disasters.

AGA. And where didst thou find him, or who brought the body?

HEC. She, meeting with it on the sea-shore.

AGA. In quest of it, or occupied in some other employment?

HEC. She was going to bring from the sea wherewith to bathe Polyxena.

AGA. This friend then, as it seems, murdered him, and after that cast him out.

HEC. To toss upon the waves thus gashing his body.

AGA. O thou unhappy from thy unmeasured ills!

HEC. I perish, no woe is left, O Agamemnon.

AGA. Alas! alas! What woman was ever so unfortunate?

HEC. There is none, except you reckon Misfortune herself. But for what cause I fall at thy knees, now hear: if I appear to you to suffer these ills justly, I would be reconciled to them; but if otherwise, be thou my avenger on this man, this most impious of false friends; who revering neither the Gods beneath the earth, nor the Gods above, hath done this most unholy deed, having often partaken of the same table with me, [and in the list of hospitality the first of my friends; and having met with whatever was due, and having received a full consideration for his services,] slew him, and deigned not to give him a tomb, *which he might have given*, although he purposed to slay him, but cast him forth at the mercy of the waves. We indeed are slaves, and perhaps weak; but the Gods are strong, and strong the law, which governs them; for by the law we judge that there are Gods, and we live having justice and injustice strictly defined; which if when referred to thee it be disregarded, and they shall suffer no punishment who slay their guests, or dare to pollute the hallowed statutes of the Gods, there is nothing equitable in the dealings of men. Beholding these things then in a base and proper light, reverence me; pity me, and, as the artist stands aside *to view a picture*, do thou view my living portrait, and see what woes I am enduring. Once was I a queen, but now I am thy slave; once was I blest in my children, but now aged, and at the same time childless, cityless, destitute, the most miserable of mortals. Alas me wretched! whither withdrawest from me thy foot? It seems I shall make no impression, wretch that I am. Why then do we mortals toil after all other sciences, as a matter of duty, and dive into them, but least of all strive to learn thoroughly Persuasion, the sole mistress o'er the minds of men, giving a price for her knowledge, that at some time we may have it in our power at once to persuade and obtain what we wish? — How then can any one hereafter hope that he shall be fortunate? So many children that I had, and now not one is left to me. But I am perishing a captive in base servitude, and yet see the smoke there leaping aloft from the city. And however this part of my argument may perchance be vain, the bringing forward love; still nevertheless it shall be urged. My daughter is wont to sleep by thy side, that prophetess, whom the Trojans call Cassandra. Where wilt thou show that thy nights were nights of love, O king, or will my daughter receive any recompense for her most fond embraces, and I through her? [For from the secret shade, and from night's

joys, the greatest delight is wont to spring to mortals.] Now then attend. Thou seest this corse? Him assisting, thou wilt assist one joined to thee in affinity. One thing my speech wants yet. I would fain I had a voice in my arms, and hands, and in my hair, and in my footsteps, or by the skill of Dædalus, or some God, that each at once might hold thy knees, weeping, and imploring in all the strains of eloquence. O my lord. O greatest light of the Greeks, be persuaded; lend thy hand to avenge this aged woman, although she is of no consequence, yet avenge her. For it belongs to a good man to minister justice, and always and in every case to punish the bad.

CHOR. It is strange, how every thing happens to mortals, and laws determine even the fates, making the greatest enemies friends, and enemies of those who before were on good terms.

AGA. I, O Hecuba, have pity both on thee and thy son, thy misfortunes, and thy suppliant touch, and I am willing in regard both to the Gods and to justice, that this impious host should give thee full revenge, provided a way could be found, that both you might be gratified, and I might in the eyes of the army not seem to meditate this destruction against the king of Thrace for Cassandra's sake. For there is a point in which apprehension hath reached me. This man the army deems a friend, the dead an enemy; but if he is dear to thee, this is a private feeling and does not affect the army. Wherefore consider, that thou hast me willing to labor with thee, and ready to assist thee, but backward, should I be murmured against among the Greeks.

HEC. Alas! no mortal is there who is free. For either he is the slave of money or of fortune; or the populace of the city or the dictates of the law constrain him to adopt manners not accordant with his natural inclinations. But since thou fearest, and payest too much regard to the multitude, I will liberate thee from this fear. For consent with me, if I meditate vengeance against the murderer of this youth, but do not act with me. But should any tumult or offer of assistance arise from out of the Greeks, when the Thracian feels the punishment he shall feel, suppress it, not appearing to do it for my sake: but of the rest be confident: I will dispose all things well.

AGA. How then? What wilt thou do? Wilt thou grasp the sword in thine aged hand, and strike the barbarian? or with poison wilt thou work, or with

what assistance? What hand will conspire with thee? whence wilt thou procure friends?

HEC. These tents inclose a host of Trojan dames.

AGA. Meanest thou the captives, the booty of the Greeks?

HEC. With these will I avenge me of my murderer.

AGA. And how shall the victory over men be to women?

HEC. Numbers are powerful, with stratagem invincible.

AGA. Powerful, I grant; I mistrust however the race of women.

HEC. And why? Did not women slay the sons of Ægyptus, and utterly extirpated the race of men from Lemnos? But thus let it be. Give up this discussion. But grant this woman to pass in safety through the army. And do thou go to the Thracian host and tell him, "Hecuba, once queen of Troy, sends for you on business of no less importance to yourself than to her, and your sons likewise, since it is of consequence that your children also should hear her words." — And do thou, O Agamemnon, as yet forbear to raise the tomb over the newly-sacrificed Polyxena, that these two, the brother and the sister, the divided care of their mother, may, when reduced to ashes by one and the same flame, be interred side by side.

AGA. Thus shall it be. And yet, if the army could sail, I should not have it in my power to grant thy request: but now, for the deity breathes not prosperous gales, we must wait, watching for a calm voyage. But may things turn out well some way or other: for this is a general principle among all, both individuals in private and states, That the wicked man should feel vengeance, but the good man enjoy prosperity.

CHORUS.

O thou, my country of Troy, no longer shall thou be called the city of the invincible, such a cloud of Grecians envelops thee, with the spear, with the spear having destroyed thee. And thou hast been shorn of thy crown of

turrets, and thou hast been discolored by the dismal blackness of smoke; hapless city, no longer shall I tread my steps in thee.

In the midnight hour I perished, when after the feast sweet sleep is scattered over the eyes. And my husband, from the song and cheerful sacrifice retired, was sleeping peacefully in my bed, his spear on its peg, no more dreaming to behold the naval host of the Greeks treading the streets of Troy. But I was binding my braided hair with fillets fastened on the top of mine head, looking into the round polished surface of the golden mirror, that I might get into my bed prepared for me. On a sudden a tumultuous cry penetrated the city; and this shout of exhortation was heard in the streets of Troy, "When indeed, ye sons of Grecians, when, *if not now*, will ye return to your homes having overthrown the proud citadel of Ilium!" And having left my dear bed, in a single robe, like a Spartan virgin, flying for aid to the venerable shrine of Diana, I hapless fled in vain. And I am dragged, after having seen my husband slain, to the ocean waves; and casting a distant look back upon my city, after the vessel had begun her way in her return to Greece, and divided me from the land of Troy, I wretched fainted through anguish. And consigning to curses Helen, the sister of the Twin Brothers, and the Idean shepherd, the ruthless Paris, since his marriage, no marriage, but some Fury's hate hath utterly destroyed me far from my native land, and hath driven me from my home. Whom may the ocean refuse ever to bear back again; and may she never reach again her paternal home.

POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS.

POLY. O Priam, thou dearest of men, and thou most dear Hecuba, at thy sight I weep for thee, and thy city, and thy daughter who has lately died. Alas! there is nothing secure, neither glory, nor when one is faring well is there a certainty that he will not fare ill. But the Gods mingle these things promiscuously to and fro, making all confusion, so that we through ignorance may worship them. But wherefore should I utter these plaints, which in no way tend to free thee from thy former calamities. But thou, if thou hast aught to blame for my absence, forbear; for I chanced to be afar off in the middle of my Thracian territories, when thou camest hither; but soon as I returned, as I was already setting out from my house, this maid of

thine met me for the self-same purpose, and delivered thy message, which when I had heard, I came.

HEC. O Polymestor, I am ashamed to look thee in the face, sunk as I am in such miseries; for before one who has seen me in prosperity, shame overwhelms me, being in the state in which I now am, nor can I look upon thee with unmoved eyes. But impute not this to any enmity I bear thee; but there are other causes, and in some degree this law; “that women ought not to gaze at men.”

POLY. And ’tis indeed no wonder; but what need hast thou of me? for what purpose didst thou send for me to come from home?

HEC. I am desirous of communicating a private affair of my own to thee and thy children; but order thy attendants to retire from these tents.

POLY. Depart, for here to be alone is safe. Friendly thou art, this Grecian army too is friendly toward me, but it is for thee to signify, in what manner I, who am in good circumstances, ought to succor my friends in distress; since, on my part, I am ready.

HEC. First then tell me of my son Polydore, whom thou retainest, receiving him from mine, and from his father’s hand, if he live; but the rest I shall inquire of thee afterward.

POLY. He lives, and in good health; as far as regards him indeed thou art happy.

HEC. O my best friend, how well thou speakest, and how worthily of thyself!

POLY. What dost thou wish then to inquire of me in the next place?

HEC. Whether he remembers at all me, his mother?

POLY. Yes: and he even sought to come to thee by stealth.

HEC. And is the gold safe, which he brought with him from Troy?

POLY. It is safe, at least it is guarded in my house.

HEC. Preserve it therefore, nor covet the goods of others.

POLY. Certainly not. May I enjoy what is mine own, O lady.

HEC. Knowest thou then, what I wish to say to thee and thy children?

POLY. I do not: this shalt thou signify by thy speech.

HEC. Be my son loved by thee, as thou art now loved of me.

POLY. What is it, that I and my sons must know?

HEC. The ancient buried treasures of the family of Priam.

POLY. Is it this thou wishest me to inform thy son of?

HEC. Yes, certainly; through thee at least, for thou art a pious man.

POLY. What necessity then is there for the presence of these children?

HEC. 'Tis better in case of thy death, that these should know.

POLY. Well hast thou thus said, and 'tis the wiser plan.

HEC. Thou knowest then where the temple of Minerva in Troy is —

POLY. Is the gold there! but what is the mark?

HEC. A black rock rising above the earth.

POLY. Hast any thing further to tell me of what is there?

HEC. No, but I wish thee to take care of some treasures, with which I came out of the city.

POLY. Where are they then? Hast thou them hidden beneath thy robes?

HEC. Amidst a heap of spoils they are preserved in this tent.

POLY. But where? These are the naval encampments of the Grecians.

HEC. The habitations of the captive women are private.

POLY. And is all secure within, and untenanted by men?

HEC. Not one of the Greeks is within, but we women only. But come into the tent, for the Greeks are desirous of loosing the sheets of their vessels homeward from Troy; so that, having done every thing that thou oughtest, thou mayest go with thy children to that place where thou hast given my son to dwell.

CHOR. Not yet hast thou suffered, but peradventure thou wilt suffer vengeance; as a man falling headlong into the gulf where no harbor is, shalt thou be hurled from thy dear heart, having lost thy life; for where the rites of hospitality coincide with justice, and with the Gods, *on the villain who dares to violate these* destructive, destructive indeed impends the evil. But thy hopes will deceive thee, which thou entertainedst from this journey, which has brought thee, thou wretched man, to the deadly mansions of Pluto; but thou shalt quit thy life by no warrior's hand.

POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, SEMICHORUS.

POLY. Oh me! I wretch am deprived of the sight of mine eyes.

SEMI. Heard ye the shriek of the man of Thrace, my friends?

POLY. Oh me; there again — Oh my children, thy miserable butchery!

SEMI. My friends, some strange ills have been perpetrated within the tents.

POLY. But for all your nimble feet, ye never can escape me, for by my blows will I burst open the recesses of these tents.

SEMI. Behold, he uses violently the weapon of his heavy hand. Will ye that we fall on; since the instant calls on us to be present with assistance to Hecuba and the Trojan dames?

HEC. Dash on, spare nothing, break down the gates, for thou never shalt replace the clear sight in those pupils, nor shalt thou behold alive those children which I have slain.

SEMI. What! hast thou vanquished the Thracian? and hast thou got the mastery over this host, my mistress? and hast thou done such deeds, as thou sayest?

HEC. Thou wilt see him quickly before the house, blind, with blind wandering steps approaching, and the bodies of his two children, whom I have slain with these most valiant Trojan women; but he has felt my vengeance; but he is coming as thou seest from the tent. But I will retire out of his way, and make good my retreat from the boiling rage of this most desperate Thracian.

POLY. Alas me! whither can I go? where stand? whither shall I direct my way, advancing my steps like the four-footed mountain beast on my hands and on my feet in pursuit? What new path shall I take in this direction or in that, desirous of seizing these murderous Trojan dames, who have utterly destroyed me; O ye impious, impious Phrygian daughters! Ah the accursed, in what corner do they shrink from me in flight? Would that thou, O sun, could'st heal, could'st heal these bleeding lids of my eyes, and remove this gloomy-darkness. Ah, hush, hush! I hear the carefully-concealed step of these women. Whither shall I direct my course in order that I may glut myself on the flesh and bones of these, making the wild beasts' banquet, inflicting vengeance on them, in return for the injuries done me. Wretch that I am! Whither, whither am I borne, having left my children deserted, for these fiends of hell to tear piecemeal, a mangled, bleeding, savage prey to dogs, and a thing to cast out on the mountains? Where shall I stand? Whither turn? Whither go, as a ship setting her yellow canvas sails with her sea-washed palsers, rushing to this lair of death, the protector of my children?

CHOR. O miserable man, what intolerable evils have been perpetrated by thee! but on thee having done base deeds the God hath sent dreadful punishment, whoever he be that presses heavy on thee.

POLY. Alas! alas! O Thracian nation, brandishing the spear, warlike, bestriding the steed, nation ruled by Mars; O ye Greeks, sons of Atreus; I raise the cry, the cry, the cry; Come, come, hasten, I entreat you by the Gods. Does any hear, or will no one assist me? Why do ye delay? The women have destroyed me, the captive women. Horrible, horrible treatment have I suffered. Alas me for my ruin! Whither can I turn? Whither can I go? Shall I soar through the ethereal skies to the lofty mansions where Orion or Sirius dart from their eyes the flaming rays of fire: or shall I hapless rush to the gloomy shore of Pluto?

CHOR. It is pardonable, when any one suffers greater misfortunes than he can bear, for him to be desirous to quit a miserable life.

AGAMEMNON, POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS.

AGA. I came having heard the clamor: for Echo, the mountain's daughter, did not sound in gentle strains through the army, causing a disturbance. But did we not know that the Phrygian towers are fallen beneath the Grecian spear, this tumult might have caused no little terror.

POLY. O my dearest friend *(for I know thee, Agamemnon, having heard thy voice)*, seest thou what I am suffering?

AGA. Ah! wretched Polymestor, who hath destroyed thee? who made thine eyes sightless, having drowned their orbs in blood? And who hath slain these thy children? Sure, whoe'er it was, felt the greatest rage against thee and thy sons.

POLY. Hecuba with the female captives hath destroyed me — nay, not destroyed me, but more than destroyed me.

AGA. What sayest thou? Hast thou done this deed, as he affirms? Hast thou, Hecuba, dared this inconceivable act of boldness?

POLY. Ah me! what wilt thou say? Is she any where near me? Show me, tell me where she is, that I may seize her in my hands, and tear piecemeal and mangle her body.

AGA. What ho! what are you doing?

POLY. By the Gods I entreat thee, suffer me to lay my raging hand upon her.

AGA. Forbear. And having banished this barbarous deed from thy thoughts, speak; that having heard both thee and her in your respective turns, I may decide justly, in return for what thou art suffering these ills.

POLY. I will speak then. There was a certain youth, the youngest of Priam's children, by name Polydore, the son of Hecuba; him his father Priam sent to me from Troy to bring up in my palace, already presaging the capture of Troy. Him I put to death. But for what cause I put him to death, with what policy and prudent forethought, now hear. I feared, lest the boy being left an enemy to thee, should collect the scattered remnants of Troy, and again people the city. And lest the Greeks, having discovered that one of the sons of Priam was alive, should again direct an expedition against the Phrygian land, and after that should harass and lay waste the plains of Thrace; and it might fare ill with the neighbors of the Trojans, under which misfortune, O king, we are now laboring. But Hecuba, when she had discovered her son's death, by such treachery as this lured me hither, as about to tell me of treasure belonging to Priam's family concealed in Troy, and introduces me alone with my sons into the tent, that no one else might know it. And I sat, having reclined on the centre of the couch; but many Trojan damsels, some from the left hand, and others from the right, sat round me, as by an intimate friend, holding in their hands the Edonian looms, and praised these robes, looking at them in the light; but others, beholding with admiration my Thracian spear, deprived me of my double ornament. But as many as were mothers caressed my children in their arms in seeming admiration, that they might be farther removed from their father, successively handing them from one to another: and then, amidst their kind blandishments, what think you? in an instant, snatching from somewhere beneath their garments their daggers, they stab my children. But they having seized me in an hostile manner held my hands and feet; and if, wishing to succor my children, I raised my head, they held me by the hair: but if I attempted to move my hands, I wretched could effect nothing through the host of women. But at last, cruelty and worse than cruelty, they perpetrated

dreadful things; for having taken their clasps they pierce and gore the wretched pupils of my eyes, then vanish in flight through the tent. But I, having leaped out, like some exasperated beast, pursue the blood-stained wretches, searching every wall, as the hunter, casting down, rending. This have I suffered, while studious to advance thy interest, Agamemnon, and having killed thine enemy. But that I may not extend my speech to a greater length, if any one of those of ancient times hath reviled women, or if any one doth now, or shall hereafter revile them, I will comprise the whole when I say, that such a race neither doth the sea nor the earth produce, but he who is always with them knows it best.

CHOR. Be not at all insolent, nor, in thy calamities, thus comprehending the female sex, abuse them all. For of us there are many, some indeed are envied *for their virtues*, but some are by nature in the catalogue of bad things.

HEC. Agamemnon, it never were fitting among men that the tongue should have greater force than actions. But if a man has acted well, well should he speak; if on the other hand basely, his words likewise should be unsound, and never ought he to be capable of speaking unjust things well. Perhaps indeed they who have brought these things to a pitch of accuracy are accounted wise, but they can not endure wise unto the end, but perish vilely, nor has any one yet escaped this. And this in my prelude is what I have to say to thee. Now am I going to direct my discourse to this man, and I will answer his arguments. Thou, that assertest, that in order to rid the Greeks of their redoubled toil, and for Agamemnon's sake that thou didst slay my son? But, in the first place, monstrous villain, never can the race of barbarians be friendly to the Grecians, never can this take place. But what favor wert thou so eagerly currying? wert thou about to contract an alliance, or was it that thou wert of kindred birth, or what pretext hadst thou? or were they about to ravage the crops of thy country, having sailed thither again? Whom, thinkest thou, wilt thou persuade of these things? The gold, if thou wert willing to speak truth, the gold destroyed my son, and thy base gains. For come, tell me this; how when Troy was prosperous, and a tower yet girt around the city, and Priam lived, and the spear of Hector was in its glory, why didst thou not then, if thou wert willing to lay him under this obligation, bringing up my child, and retaining him in thy palace, why didst

thou not then slay him, or go and take him alive to the Greeks? But when we were no longer in the light of prosperity, and the city by its smoke showed that it was in the power of the enemy, thou slewest thy guest who had come to thy hearth. Now hear besides how thou wilt appear vile: thou oughtest, if thou wert the friend of the Greeks, to have given the gold, which thou confessedst thou hast, not thine, but his, distributing to those who were in need, and had long been strangers to their native land. But thou, even now, hast not courage to part with it from thy hand, but having it, thou still art keeping it close in thine house. And yet, in bringing up my child, as it was thy duty to bring him up, and in preserving him, thou hadst had fair honor. For in adversity friends are most clearly proved good. But good circumstances have in every case their friends. But if thou wert in want of money, and he in a flourishing condition, my son had been to thee a vast treasure; but now, thou neither hast him for thy friend, and the benefit from the gold is gone, and thy sons are gone, and thou art — as thou art. But to thee, Agamemnon, I say; if thou aidest this man, thou wilt appear to be doing wrong. For thou wilt be conferring a benefit on a host, who is neither pious, nor faithful to those to whom he ought, not holy, not just. But we shall say that thou delightest in the bad, if thus thou actest: but I speak no offense to my lords.

CHOR. Ah! Ah! How do good deeds ever supply to men the source of good words!

AGA. Thankless my office to decide on others' grievances; but still I must, for it brings disgrace on a man, having taken a thing in hand, to give it up. But to me, be assured, thou neither appearest for my sake, nor for the sake of the Grecians, to have killed this man thy guest, but that thou mightest possess the gold in thy palace. But thou talkest of thy advantage, when thou art in calamities. Perhaps with you it is a slight thing to kill your guests; but with us Grecians this thing is abhorred. How then, in giving my decision that thou hast not injured, can I escape blame? I can not; but as thou hast dared to do things dishonorable, endure now things unpleasant.

POLY. Alas me! worsted, as it seems, by a woman who is a slave, I shall submit to the vengeance of my inferiors.

AGA. Will it not then be justly, seeing thou hast acted wrong?

POLY. Alas me! wretched on account of these children and on account of my eyes.

HEC. Thou sufferest? but what do I? Thinkest thou I suffer not for my child?

POLY. Thou rejoicest in insulting me, O thou malicious woman.

HEC. For ought not I to rejoice on having avenged myself on thee?

POLY. But thou wilt not soon, when the liquid wave —

HEC. Shall bear me, *dost thou mean*, to the confines of the Grecian land?

POLY. — shall cover thee, having fallen from the shrouds.

HEC. From whom meeting with this violent leap?

POLY. Thyself shalt climb with thy feet up the ship's mast.

HEC. Having wings on my back, or in what way?

POLY. Thou shalt become a dog with a fiery aspect.

HEC. But how dost thou know of this my metamorphose?

POLY. Dionysius the Thracian prophet told it me.

HEC. But did he not declare to thee any of the evils which thou sufferest?

POLY. No: for, *if he had*, thou never wouldst thus treacherously have taken me.

HEC. Thence shall I conclude my life in death, or still live on?

POLY. Thou shalt die. But the name of thy tomb shall be —

HEC. Dost thou speak of it as in any way correspondent to my shape?

POLY. The tomb of the wretched dog, a mark to mariners.

HEC. I heed it not, since thou at least hast felt my vengeance.

POLY. And it is fated too for thy daughter Cassandra to die.

HEC. I renounce these prophecies; I give them for thyself to bear.

POLY. Him shall his wife slay, a cruel guardian of his house.

HEC. Never yet may the daughter of Tyndarus have arrived at such madness.

POLY. Even this man himself, having lifted up the axe.

AGA. What ho! thou art mad, and art desirous of obtaining greater ills.

POLY. Kill me, for the murderous bath at Argos awaits thee.

AGA. Will ye not, slaves, forcibly drag him from my presence?

POLY. Thou art galled at what thou hearest.

AGA. Will ye not stop his mouth?

POLY. Stop it: for the word is spoken.

AGA. Will ye not as quick as possible cast him out on some desert island, since he is thus, and past endurance insolent? But do thou, wretched Hecuba, go and bury thy two dead: and you, O Trojan dames, must approach your masters' tents, for I perceive that the gales are favorable for wafting us to our homes. And may we sail in safety to our native country, and behold our household and families in prosperity, having found rest from these toils.

CHOR. Come, my friends, to the harbor, and the tents, to undergo the tasks imposed by our masters. For necessity is relentless.

THE SUPPLIANTS

Translated by Edward P. Coleridge

First performed in 423 BC, *The Suppliants* concerns the disputes over the burial rites of the dead invaders, following the unsuccessful Seven Against Thebes campaign, when Creon had taken power in Thebes and decreed that they should not be buried. As the play opens, Aethra, the mother of the Athenian king Theseus, prays before the altar of Demeter and Persephone in Eleusis. She is surrounded by women from Argos whose sons also died in battle outside the gates of Thebes. Due to Creon's decree, their corpses remain unburied. Adrastus, the king of Argos who authorised the failed expedition, lies weeping on the floor surrounded by the sons of the slain warriors. Aethra has sent a messenger to Theseus asking him to come to Eleusis. The old women beg Aethra for help, evoking images of their sons' unburied bodies and appealing to her sympathy as a mother. Theseus arrives and as he asks his mother what is going on, she directs him to Adrastus, who begs him to reclaim the bodies. Adrastus explains that he supported the attack on Thebes, against the advice of the seer Amphiaraus, in deference to his sons-in-law, Tydeus and Polyneices. Theseus observes that he favoured courage over discretion. Admitting his mistakes, Adrastus appeals to Theseus as the ruler of the only city with the integrity and the power to stand up to Thebes.

Although to modern readers the theme of the play may not seem as important as it would have to Euripides' contemporaries, the adherence to strict funeral rites was very important to people in the ancient world. Relatives were anxious to ensure their loved ones had a 'safe crossing' to the underworld. *The Iliad* contains scenes of people fighting over corpses, such as that of Patroclus. People are willing to fight and risk dying to obtain the bodies of the dead. *The Suppliants* takes this concept even farther, depicting a whole city willing to wage war to retrieve the bodies of these strangers. The theme of not allowing the bodies of the dead to be buried occurs many times throughout ancient Greek literature. Examples include

the body of Hector as portrayed in *The Iliad*, the body of Ajax as portrayed in the play *Ajax* by Sophocles, and the myth of the children of Niobe.

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THE SUPPLIANTS

(SCENE:-Before the temple of Demeter at Eleusis. On the steps of the great altar is seated AETHRA. Around her, in the garb of suppliants, is the CHORUS OF ARGIVE MOTHERS. ADRASTUS lies on the ground before the altar, crushed in abject grief. The CHILDREN of the slain chieftains stand nearby. Around the altar are the attendants of the goddess.)

AETHRA O DEMETER, guardian of this Eleusinian land, and ye servants of the goddess who attend her fane, grant happiness to me and my son Theseus, to the city of Athens and the country of Pittheus, wherein my father reared me, Aethra, in a happy home, and gave me in marriage to Aegeus, Pandion's son, according to the oracle of Loxias. This prayer I make, when I behold these aged dames, who, leaving their homes in Argos, now throw themselves with suppliant branches at my knees in their awful trouble; for around the gates of Cadmus have they lost their seven noble sons, whom on a day Adrastus, king of Argos, led thither, eager to secure for exiled Polyneices, his son-in-law, a share in the heritage of Oedipus; so now their mothers would bury in the grave the dead, whom the spear hath slain, but the victors prevent them and will not allow them to take up the corpses, spurning Heaven's laws. Here lies Adrastus on the ground with streaming eye, sharing with them the burden of their prayer to me, and bemoaning the havoc of the sword and the sorry fate of the warriors whom he led from their homes. And he doth urge me use entreaty, to persuade my son to take up the dead and help to bury them, either by winning words or force of arms, laying on my son and on Athens this task alone. Now it chanced, that I had left my house and come to offer sacrifice on behalf of the earth's crop at this shrine, where first the fruitful corn showed its bristling shocks above the soil. And here at the holy altars of the twain goddesses, Demeter and her daughter, I wait, holding these sprays of foliage, a bond that bindeth not, in compassion for these childless mothers, hoary with age, and from reverence for the sacred fillets. To call Theseus hither is my herald to the city gone, that he may rid the land of that which grieveth them, or loose these my suppliant bonds, with pious observance of the gods' will; for such as are discreet amongst women should in all cases invoke the aid of men.

CHORUS *(chanting)* At thy knees I fall, aged dame, and my old lips beseech thee; arise, rescue from the slain my children's bodies, whose limbs, by death relaxed, are left a prey to savage mountain beasts,

Beholding the bitter tears which spring to my eyes and my old wrinkled skin torn by my hands; for what can I do else? who never laid out my children dead within my halls, nor now behold their tombs heaped up with earth.

Thou too, honoured lady, once a son didst bear, crowning thy lord's marriage with fond joy; then share, O share with me thy mother's feelings, in such measure as my sad heart grieves for my own dead sons; and persuade thy son, whose aid we implore, to go unto the river Ismenus, there to place within my hapless arms the bodies of my children, slain in their prime and left without a tomb.

Though not as piety enjoins, yet from sheer necessity I have come to the fire-crowned altars of the gods, falling on my knees with instant supplication, for my cause is just, and 'tis in thy power, blest as thou art in thy children, to remove from me my woe; so in my sore distress I do beseech thee of my misery place in my hands my son's dead body, that I may throw my arms about his hapless limbs.

(The attendants of the goddess take up the lament.)

Behold a rivalry in sorrow! woe takes up the tale of woe; hark! thy servants beat their breasts. Come ye who join the mourners' wail, come, O sympathetic band, to join the dance, which Hades honours; let the pearly nail be stained red, as it rends your cheeks, let your skin be streaked with gore; for honours rendered to the dead are credit to the living.

Sorrow's charm doth drive me wild, insatiate, painful, endless, even as the trickling stream that gushes from some steep rock's face; for 'tis woman's way to fall a-weeping o'er the cruel calamity of children dead. Ah me! would I could die and forget my anguish

(THESEUS and his retinue enter.)

THESEUS What is this lamentation that I hear, this beating of the breast, these dirges for the dead, with cries that echo from this shrine? How fluttering fear disquiets me, lest haply my mother have gotted some mischance, in quest of whom I come, for she hath been long absent from home. Ha! what now? A strange sight challenges my speech; I see my aged mother sitting at the altar and stranger dames are with her, who in various note proclaim their woe; from aged eyes the piteous tear is starting to the ground, their hair is shorn, their robes are not the robes of joy. What means it, mother? 'Tis thine to make it plain to me, mine to listen; yea, for I expect some tidings strange.

AETHRA My son, these are the mothers of those chieftains seven, who fell around the gates of Cadmus' town. With suppliant boughs they keep me prisoner, as thou seest, in their midst.

THESEUS And who is yonder man, that moaneth piteously in the gateway?

AETHRA Adrastus, they inform me, king of Argos.

THESEUS Are those his children, those boys who stand round him?

AETHRA Not his, but the sons of the fallen slain.

THESEUS Why are they come to us, with suppliant hand outstretched?

AETHRA I know; but 'tis for them to tell their story, my son.

THESEUS To thee, in thy mantle muffled, I address my inquiries; thy head, let lamentation be, and speak; for naught can be achieved save through the utterance of thy tongue.

ADRASTUS *(rising)* Victorious prince of the Athenian realm, Theseus, to thee and to thy city I, a suppliant, come.

THESEUS What seekest thou? What need is thine?

ADRASTUS Dost know how I did lead an expedition to its ruin?

THESEUS Assuredly; thou didst not pass through Hellas, all in silence.

ADRASTUS There I lost the pick of Argos' sons.

THESEUS These are the results of that unhappy war.

ADRASTUS I went and craved their bodies from Thebes.

THESEUS Didst thou rely on heralds, Hermes' servants, in order to bury them?

ADRASTUS I did; and even then their slayers said me nay.

THESEUS Why, what say they to thy just request?

ADRASTUS Say! Success makes them forget how to bear their fortune.

THESEUS Art come to me then for counsel? or wherefore?

ADRASTUS With the wish that thou, O Theseus, shouldst recover the sons of the Argives.

THESEUS Where is your Argos now? were its vauntings all in vain?

ADRASTUS Defeat and ruin are our lot. To thee for aid we come.

THESEUS Is this thy own private resolve, or the wish of all the city?

ADRASTUS The sons of Danaus, one and all, implore thee to bury the dead.

THESEUS Why didst lead thy seven armies against Thebes?

ADRASTUS To confer that favour on the husbands of my daughters twain.

THESEUS To which of the Argives didst thou give thy daughters in marriage?

ADRASTUS I made no match for them with kinsmen of my family.

THESEUS What! didst give Argive maids to foreign lords?

ADRASTUS Yea, to Tydeus, and to Polyneices, who was Theban-born

THESEUS What induced thee to select this alliance?

ADRASTUS Dark riddles of Phoebus stole away my judgment.

THESEUS What said Apollo to determine the maidens' marriage?

ADRASTUS That I should give my daughters twain to a wild boar and a lion.

THESEUS How dost thou explain the message of the god?

ADRASTUS One night came to my door two exiles.

THESEUS The name of each declare: thou art speaking of both together.

ADRASTUS They fought together, Tydeus with Polyneices.

THESEUS Didst thou give thy daughters to them as to wild beasts?

ADRASTUS Yea, for, as they fought, I likened them to those monsters twain.

THESEUS Why had they left the borders of their native land and come to thee?

ADRASTUS Tydeus was exiled for the murder of a kinsman.

THESEUS Wherefore had the son of Oedipus left Thebes?

ADRASTUS By reason of his father's curse, not to spill his brother's blood.

THESEUS Wise no doubt that voluntary exile.

ADRASTUS But those who stayed at home were for injuring the absent.

THESEUS What! did brother rob brother of his inheritance?

ADRASTUS To avenge this I set out; hence my ruin.

THESEUS Didst consult seers, and gaze into the flame of burnt-offerings?

ADRASTUS Ah me! thou pressest on the very point wherein I most did fail.

THESEUS It seems thy going was not favoured by heaven.

ADRASTUS Worse; I went in spite even of Amphiaraus.

THESEUS And so heaven lightly turned its face from thee.

ADRASTUS I was carried away by the clamour of younger men.

THESEUS Thou didst favour courage instead of discretion.

ADRASTUS True; and many a general owes defeat to that. O king of Athens, bravest of the sons of Hellas, I blush to throw myself upon the ground and clasp thy knees, I a grey-haired king, blest in days gone by; yet needs must yield to my misfortunes. I pray thee save the dead; have pity on my sorrows and on these, the mothers of the slain, whom hoary eld finds reft of their sons; yet they endured to journey hither and tread a foreign soil with aged tottering steps, bearing no embassy to Demeter's mysteries; only seeking burial for their dead, which lot should have been theirs, e'en burial by the hands of sons still in their prime. And 'tis wise in the rich to see the poor man's poverty, and in the poor man to turn ambitious eyes toward the rich, that so he may himself indulge a longing for possessions; and they, whom fortune frowns not on, should gaze on misery's presentment; likewise, who maketh songs should take a pleasure in their making; for if it be not so with him, he will in no wise avail to gladden others, if himself have sorrow in his home; nay, 'tis not even right to expect it. Mayhap thou'lt say, "Why pass the land of Pelops o'er, and lay this toil on Athens?" This am I bound to declare. Sparta is cruel, her customs variable; the other states are small and weak. Thy city alone would be able to undertake this labour; for it turns an eye on suffering, and hath in thee a young and gallant king, for want whereof to lead their hosts states ere now have often perished.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS I too, Theseus, urge the same plea to thee; have pity on my hard fate.

THESEUS Full oft have I argued out this subject with others. For there are who say, there is more bad than good in human nature, to the which I hold contrary view, that good o'er bad predominates in man, for if it were not so, we should not exist. He hath my praise, whoe'er of gods brought us to live by rule from chaos and from brutishness, first by implanting reason, and next by giving us a tongue to declare our thoughts, so as to know the meaning of what is said, bestowing fruitful crops, and drops of rain from heaven to make them grow, wherewith to nourish earth's fruits and to water her lap; and more than this, protection from the wintry storm, and means to ward from us the sun-god's scorching heat; the art of sailing o'er the sea, so that we might exchange with one another whatso our countries lack. And where sight fails us and our knowledge is not sure, the seer foretells by gazing on the flame, by reading signs in folds of entrails, or by divination from the flight of birds. Are we not then to proud, when heaven hath made such preparation for our life, not to be content therewith? But our presumption seeks to lord it over heaven, and in the pride of our hearts we think we are wiser than the gods. Methinks thou art even of this number, a son of folly, seeing that thou, though obedient to Apollo's oracle in giving thy daughters to strangers, as if gods really existed, yet hast hurt thy house by mingling the stream of its pure line with muddy waters; no! never should the wise man have joined the stock of just and unjust in one, but should have gotten prosperous friends for his family. For the deity, confusing their destinies, doth oft destroy by the sinner's fate him who never sinned nor committed injustice. Thou didst lead all Argos forth to battle, though seers proclaimed the will of heaven, and then in scorn of them and in violent disregard of the gods hast ruined thy city, led away by younger men, such as court distinction, and add war to war unrighteously, destroying their fellow-citizens; one aspires to lead an army; another fain would seize the reins of power and work his wanton will; a third is bent on gain, careless of any ill the people thereby suffer. For there are three ranks of citizens; the rich, a useless set, that ever crave for more; the poor and destitute, fearful folk, that cherish envy more than is right, and shoot out grievous stings against the men who have aught, beguiled as they are by the eloquence of vicious leaders; while the class that is midmost of the three preserveth cities,

observing such order as the state ordains. Shall I then become thy ally? What fair pretext should I urge before my countrymen? Depart in peace! For why shouldst thou, having been ill-advised thyself, seek to drag our fortune down?

LEADER He erred; but with the young men rests this error, while he may well be pardoned.

ADRASTUS I did not choose thee, king, to judge my affliction, but came to thee to cure it; no! nor if in aught my fortunes prove me wrong, came I to the to punish or correct them, but to seek thy help. But if thou wilt not, must be content with thy decision; for how can I help it? Come, aged dames, away! Yet leave behind you here the woven leaves of pale green foliage, calling to witness heaven and earth, Demeter, that fire-bearing goddess, and the sun-god's light, that our prayers to heaven availed us naught.

CHORUS *(singing)* . . . who was Pelops' son, and we are of the land of Pelops and share with thee the blood of ancestors. What art thou doing? wilt thou betray these suppliant symbols, and banish from thy land these aged women without the boon they should obtain? Do not so; e'en the wild beast finds a refuge in the rock, the slave in the altars of the gods, and a state when tempest-tossed cowers to its neighbour's shelter; for naught in this life of man is blest unto its end.

Rise, hapless one, from the sacred floor of Persephone; rise, clasp him by the knees and implore him, "O recover the bodies of our dead sons, the children that I lost-ah, woe is me!-beneath the walls of Cadmus' town." Ah me! ah me! Take me by the hand, poor aged sufferer that I am, support and guide and raise me up. By thy beard, kind friend, glory of Hellas, I do beseech thee, as I clasp thy knees and hands in my misery; O pity me as I entreat for my sons with my tale of wretched woe, like some beggar; nor let my sons lie there unburied in the land of Cadmus, glad prey for beasts, whilst thou art in thy prime, I implore thee. See the teardrop tremble in my eye, as thus I throw me at thy knees to win my children burial.

THESEUS Mother mine, why weepest thou, drawing o'er thine eyes thy veil? Is it because thou didst hear their piteous lamentations? To my own

heart it goes. Raise thy silvered head, weep not where thou sittest at the holy altar of Demeter.

AETHRA Ah woe!

THESEUS 'Tis not for thee their sorrows to lament.

AETHRA Ye hapless dames!

THESEUS Thou art not of their company.

AETHRA May I a scheme declare, my son, that shall add to thy glory and the state's?

THESEUS Yea, for oft even from women's lips issue wise counsels.

AETHRA Yet the word, that lurks within my heart, makes me hesitate.

THESEUS Shame! to hide from friends good counsel.

AETHRA Nay then, I will not hold my peace to blame myself hereafter for having now kept silence to my shame, nor will I forego my honourable proposal, from the common fear that it is useless for women to give good advice. First, my son, I exhort thee give good heed to heaven's will, lest from slighting it thou suffer shipwreck; for in this one single point thou failest, though well-advised in all else. Further, I would have patiently endured, had it not been my duty to venture somewhat for injured folk; and this, my son, it is that brings thee now thy honour, and causes me no fear to urge that thou shouldst use thy power to make men of violence, who prevent the dead from receiving their meed of burial and funeral rites, perform this bounden duty, and check those who would confound the customs of all Hellas; for this it is that holds men's states together,-strict observance of the laws. And some, no doubt, will say, 'twas cowardice made thee stand aloof in terror, when thou mightest have won for thy city a crown of glory, and, though thou didst encounter a savage swine, labouring for a sorry task, yet when the time came for thee to face the helmet and pointed spear, and do thy best, thou wert found to be coward. Nay! do not so if thou be son of mine. Dost see how fiercely thy country looks on its

revilers when they mock her for want of counsel? Yea, for in her toils she groweth greater. But states, whose policy is dark and cautious, have their sight darkened by their carefulness. My son, wilt thou not go succour the dead and these poor women in their need? have no fears for thee, starting as thou dost with right upon thy side; and although I see the prosperity of Cadmus' folk, still am I confident they will throw a different die; for the deity reverses all things again.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Ah! best of friends, right well hast thou pleaded for me and for Adrastus, and hence my joy is doubled.

THESEUS Mother, the words that I have spoken are his fair deserts, and I have declared my opinion of the counsels that ruined him; yet do I perceive the truth of thy warning to me, that it ill suits my character to shun dangers. For by a long and glorious career have I displayed this my habit among Hellenes, of ever punishing the wicked. Wherefore I cannot refuse toil. For what will spiteful tongues say of me, when thou, my mother, who more than all others fearest for my safety, bidst me undertake this enterprise? Yea, I will go about this business and rescue the dead by words persuasive; or, failing that, the spear forthwith shall decide this issue, nor will heaven grudge me this. But I require the whole city's sanction also, which my mere wish will ensure; still by communicating the proposal to them I shall find the people better disposed. For them I made supreme, when I set this city free, by giving all an equal vote. So I will take Adrastus as a text for what I have to say and go to their assembly, and when have won them to these views, I will return hither, after collecting a picked band of young Athenians; and then remaining under arms I will send a message to Creon, begging the bodies of the dead. But do ye, aged ladies, remove from my mother your holy wreaths, that I may take her by the hand and conduct her to the house of Aegeus; for a wretched son is he who rewards not his parents by service; for, when he hath conferred on them the best he hath, he in his turn from his own sons receives all such service as he gave to them.

(AETHRA leaves the altar and departs.)

CHORUS *(singing)* O Argos, home of steeds, my native land! ye have heard with your ears these words, the king's pious will toward the gods in the sight of great Pelasgia and throughout Argos.

May he reach the goal! yea, and triumph o'er my sorrows, rescuing the gory corpse, the mother's idol and making the land of Inachus his friend by helping her.

For pious toil is a fair ornament to cities, and carries with it grace that never wastes away. What will the city decide, I wonder? Will it conclude a friendly truce with me, and shall we obtain burial for our sons?

Help, O help, city of Pallas, the mother's cause, that so they may not pollute the laws of all mankind. Thou, I know, dost reverence right, and to injustice dealest out defeat, a protection at all times to the afflicted.

(THESEUS addresses one of his own heralds. As he speaks, the HERALD from King Creon of Thebes enters.)

THESEUS Forasmuch as with this thy art thou hast ever served the state and me by carrying my proclamations far and wide, so now cross Asopus and the waters of Ismenus, and declare this message to the haughty king of the Cadmeans: "Theseus, thy neighbour, one who well may win the boon he craves, begs as a favour thy permission to bury the dead, winning to thyself thereby the love of all the Erechtheidae." And if they will acquiesce, come back again, but if they hearken not, thy second message runneth thus, they may expect my warrior host; for at the sacred fount of Callichorus my army camps in readiness and is being reviewed. Moreover, the city gladly of its own accord undertook this enterprise, when it perceived my wish. Ha! who comes hither to interrupt my speech? A Theban herald, so it seems, though I am not sure thereof. Stay; haply he may save the thy trouble. For by his coming he meets my purpose half-way.

THEBAN HERALD Who is the despot of this land? To whom must I announce the message of Creon, who rules o'er the land of Cadmus, since Eteocles was slain by the hand of his brother Polyneices, at the sevenfold gates of Thebes?

THESEUS Sir stranger, thou hast made a false beginning to thy speech, in seeking here a despot. For this city is not ruled by one man, but is free. The people rule in succession year by year, allowing no preference to wealth, but the poor man shares equally with the rich.

THEBAN HERALD Thou givest me here an advantage, as it might be in a game of draughts; for the city, whence I come, is ruled by one man only, not by the mob; none there puffs up the citizens with specious words, and for his own advantage twists them this way or that,-one moment dear to them and lavish of his favours, the next a bane to all; and yet by fresh calumnies of others he hides his former failures and escapes punishment. Besides, how shall the people, if it cannot form true judgments, be able rightly to direct the state? Nay, 'tis time, not haste, that affords a better understanding. A poor hind, granted be he not all unschooled, would still be unable from his toil to give his mind to politics. Verily the better sort count it no healthy sign when the worthless man obtains a reputation by beguiling with words the populace, though aforetime he was naught.

THESEUS This herald is a clever fellow, a dabbler in the art of talk. But since thou hast thus entered the lists with me, listen awhile, for 'twas thou didst challenge a discussion. Naught is more hostile to a city than a despot; where he is, there are first no laws common to all, but one man is tyrant, in whose keeping and in his alone the law resides, and in that case equality is at an end. But when the laws are written down, rich and poor alike have equal justice, and it is open to the weaker to use the same language to the prosperous when he is reviled by him, and the weaker prevails over the stronger if he have justice on his side. Freedom's mark is also seen in this: "Who hath wholesome counsel to declare unto the state?" And he who chooses to do so gains renown, while he, who hath no wish, remains silent. What greater equality can there be in a city? Again, where the people are absolute rulers of the land, they rejoice in having reserve of youthful citizens, while a king counts this a hostile element, and strives to slay the leading men, all such as he deems discreet, for he feareth for his power. How then can a city remain stable, where one cuts short all enterprise and mows down the young like meadow-flowers in spring-time? What boots it to acquire wealth and livelihood for children, merely to add to the tyrant's substance by one's toil? Why train up virgin daughters virtuously in our homes to gratify a tyrant's whim, whenso he will, and cause tears to those who rear them? May my life end if ever my children are to be wedded by violence! This bolt I launch in answer to thy words. Now say, why art thou come? what needest thou of this land? Had not thy city sent thee, to thy cost hadst thou come with thy outrageous utterances; for it is the herald's duty to

tell the message he is bidden and hie him back in haste. Henceforth let Creon send to my city some other messenger less talkative than thee.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Look you! how insolent the villains are, when Fortune is kind to them, just as if it would be well with them for ever.

THEBAN HERALD Now will I speak. On these disputed points hold thou this view, but the contrary. So I and all the people of Cadmus forbid thee to admit Adrastus to this land, but if he is here, drive him forth in disregard of the holy suppliant bough he bears, ere sinks yon blazing sun, and attempt not violently to take up the dead, seeing thou hast naught to do with the city of Argos. And if thou wilt hearken to me, thou shalt bring thy barque of state into port unharmed by the billows; but if not, fierce shall the surge of battle be, that we and our allies shall raise. Take good thought, nor, angered at my words, because forsooth thou rulest thy city with freedom, return a vaunting answer from thy feebler means. Hope is man's curse; many a state hath it involved in strife, by leading them into excessive rage. For whenso the city has to vote on the question of war, no man ever takes his own death into account, but shifts this misfortune on to his neighbour; but if death had been before their eyes when they were giving their votes, Hellas would ne'er have rushed to her doom in mad desire for battle. And yet each man amongst us knows which of the two to prefer, the good or ill, and how much better peace is for mankind than war,-peace, the Muses' chiefest friend, the foe of sorrow, whose joy is in glad throngs of children, and its delight in prosperity. These are the blessings we cast away and wickedly embark on war, man enslaving his weaker brother, and cities following suit. Now thou art helping our foes even after death, trying to rescue and bury those whom their own acts of insolence have ruined. Verily then it would seem Capaneus was unjustly blasted by the thunderbolt and charred upon the ladder he had raised against our gates, swearing he would sack our town, whether the god would or no; nor should the yawning earth have snatched away the seer, opening wide her mouth to take his chariot and its horses in, nor should the other chieftains be stretched at our gates, their skeletons to atoms crushed 'neath boulders. Either boast thy wit transcendeth that of Zeus, or else allow that gods are right to slay the ungodly. The wise should love their children first, next their parents and country, whose fortunes it behoves them to increase rather than break down. Rashness in a leader, as in

a pilot, causeth shipwreck; who knoweth when to be quiet is a wise man. Yea and this too is bravery, even forethought.

LEADER The punishment Zeus hath inflicted was surely enough; there was no need to heap this wanton insult on us.

ADRASTUS Abandoned wretch!

THESEUS Peace, Adrastus! say no more; set not thy words before mine, for 'tis not to thee this fellow is come with his message, but to me, and I must answer him. Thy first assertion will I answer first: I am not aware that Creon is my lord and master, or that his power outweigheth mine, that so he should compel Athens to act on this wise; nay! for then would the tide of time have to flow backward, if we are to be ordered, as he thinks. 'Tis not I who choose this war, seeing that I did not even join these warriors to go unto the land of Cadmus; but still I claim to bury the fallen dead, not injuring any state nor yet introducing murderous strife, but preserving the law of all Hellas. What is not well in this? If ye suffered aught from the Argives-lo! they are dead; ye took a splendid vengeance on your foes and covered them with shame, and now your right is at an end. Let the dead now be buried in the earth, and each element return to the place from whence it came to the body, the breath to the air, the body to the ground; for in no wise did we get it for our own, but to live our life in, and after that its mother earth must take it back again. Dost think 'tis Argos thou art injuring in refusing burial to the dead? Nay! all Hellas shares herein, if a man rob the dead of their due and keep them from the tomb; for, if this law be enacted, it will strike dismay into the stoutest hearts. And art thou come to cast dire threats at me while thy own folk are afraid of giving burial to the dead? What is your fear? Think you they will undermine your land in their graves, or that they will beget children in the womb of earth, from whom shall rise an avenger? A silly waste of words, in truth it was, to show your fear of paltry groundless terrors. Go, triflers, learn the lesson of human misery; our life is made up of struggles; some men there be that find their fortune soon, others have to wait, while some at once are blest. Fortune lives a dainty life; to her the wretched pays his court and homage to win her smile; her likewise doth the prosperous man extol, for fear the favouring gale may leave him. These lessons should we take to heart, to bear with

moderation, free from wrath, our wrongs, and do naught to hurt a whole city. What then? Let us, who will the pious deed perform, bury the corpses of the slain. Else is the issue clear; I will go and bury them by force. For never shall it be proclaimed through Hellas that heaven's ancient law was set at naught, when it devolved on me and the city of Pandion.

LEADER Be of good cheer; for if thou preserve the light of justice, thou shalt escape many a charge that men might urge.

THEBAN HERALD Wilt thou that I sum up in brief all thou wouldst say?

THESEUS Say what thou wilt; for thou art not silent as it is.

THEBAN HERALD Thou shalt never take the sons of Argos from our land.

THESEUS Hear, then, my answer too to that, if so thou wilt.

THEBAN HERALD I will hear thee; not that I wish it, but I must give thee thy turn.

THESEUS I will bury the dead, when from Asopus' land I have removed them.

THEBAN HERALD First must thou adventure somewhat in the front of war.

THESEUS Many an enterprise and of a different kind have I ere this endured.

THEBAN HERALD Wert thou then begotten of thy sire to cope with every foe?

THESEUS Ay, with all wanton villains; virtue I punish not.

THEBAN HERALD To meddle is aye thy wont and thy city's too.

THESEUS Hence her enterprise on many a field hath won her many blessings.

THEBAN HERALD Come then, that the warriors of the dragon-crop may catch thee in our city.

THESEUS What furious warrior-host could spring from dragon's seed?

THEBAN HERALD Thou shalt learn that to thy cost. As yet thou art young and rash.

THESEUS Thy boastful speech stirs not my heart at all to rage. Yet get thee gone from my land, taking with thee the idle words thou broughtest; for we are making no advance. *(The THEBAN HERALD withdraws.)* 'Tis time for all to start, each stout footman, and whoso mounts the car; 'tis time the bit, dripping with foam, should urge the charger on toward the land of Cadmus. For I will march in person to the seven gates thereof with the sharp sword in my hand, and be myself my herald. But thee, Adrastus, I bid stay, nor blend with mine thy fortunes, for I will take my own good star to lead my host, a chieftain famed in famous deeds of arms. One thing alone I need, the favour of all gods that reverence right, for the presence of these things insures victory. For their valour availeth men naught, unless they have the god's goodwill.

(THESEUS and his retinue depart. The following

lines between the SEMI-CHORUSES are chanted responsively.)

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS Unhappy mothers of those hapless chiefs! How wildly in my heart pale fear stirs up alarm!

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS What is this new cry thou utterest?

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS I fear the issue of the strife, whereto the hosts of Pallas march.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS Dost speak of issues of the sword, or interchange of words?

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS That last were gain indeed; but if the carnage of battle, fighting, and the noise of beaten breasts again be heard in the land,

what, alas! will be said of me, who am the cause thereof?

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS Yet may fate again bring low the brilliant victor; 'tis this brave thought that twines about my heart.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS Thou speak'st of the gods as if they were just.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS For who but they allot whate'er betides?

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS I see much at variance in their dealings with men.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS The former fear hath warped thy judgment. Vengeance calls vengeance forth; slaughter calls for slaughter, but the gods give respite from affliction, holding in their own hands each thing's allotted end.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS Would I could reach yon plains with turrets crowned, leaving Callichorus, fountain of the goddess!

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS O that some god would give me wings to fly to the city of rivers twain!

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS So might'st thou see and know the fortunes of thy friends.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS What fate, what issue there awaits the valiant monarch of this land?

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS Once more do we invoke the gods we called upon before; yea, in our fear this is our first and chiefest trust.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS O Zeus, father to the child the heifer-mother bore in days long past, that daughter of Inachus!

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS O be gracious, I pray, and champion this city!

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS 'Tis thy own darling, thy own settler in the city of Argos that I am striving from outrage to rescue for the funeral pyre.

(A MESSENGER enters.)

MESSENGER Ladies, I bring you tidings of great joy, myself escaped-for I was taken prisoner in the battle which cost those chieftains seven their lives near Dirce's fount-to bear the news of Theseus' victory. But I will save thee tedious questioning; I was the servant of Capaneus, whom Zeus with scorching bolt to ashes burnt.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Friend of friends, fair thy news of thy own return, nor less the news about Theseus; and if the host of Athens, too, is safe, welcome will all thy message be.

MESSENGER 'Tis safe, and all hath happened as I would it had befallen Adrastus and his Argives, whom from Inachus he led, to march against the city of the Cadmeans.

LEADER How did the son of Aegeus and his fellow-warriors raise their trophy to Zeus? Tell us, for thou wert there and canst gladden us who were not.

MESSENGER Bright shone the sun, one levelled line of light, upon the world, as by Electra's gate I stood to watch, from a turret with a far outlook. And lo! I saw the host in three divisions, deploying its mail-clad warriors on the high ground by the banks of Ismenus; this last I heard; and with them was the king himself, famous son of Aegeus; his own men, natives of old Cecropia, were ranged upon the right; while on the left, hard by the fountain of Ares, were the dwellers by the sea, harnessed spearmen they; on either wing were posted cavalry, in equal numbers, and chariots were stationed in the shelter of Amphion's holy tomb. Meantime, the folk of Cadmus set themselves before the walls, placing in the rear the bodies for which they fought. Horse to horse, and car to car stood ranged. Then did the herald of Theseus cry aloud to all: "Be still, ye folk! hush, ye ranks of Cadmus, hearken! we are come to fetch the bodies of the slain, wishing to bury them in observance of the universal law of Hellas; no wish have we to lengthen out the slaughter." Not a word would Creon let his herald answer back, but there he stood in silence under arms. Then did the drivers of the four-horse cars begin the fray; on, past each other they drave their chariots, bringing the warriors at their sides up into line. Some fought with swords, some

wheeled the horses back to the fray again for those they drove. Now when Phorbas, who captained the cavalry of the Erechtheidae, saw the thronging chariots, he and they who had the charge of the Theban horse met hand to hand, and by turns were victors and vanquished. The many horrors happening there I saw, not merely heard about, for I was at the spot where the chariots and their riders met and fought, but which to tell of first I know not,-the clouds of dust that mounted to the sky, the warriors tangled in the reins and dragged this way and that, the streams of crimson gore, when men fell dead, or when, from shattered chariot-seats, they tumbled headlong to the ground, and, amid the splinters of their cars, gave up the ghost. But Creon, when he marked our cavalry's success on one wing, caught up a shield and rushed into the fray, ere that despondency should seize his men; but not for that did Theseus recoil in fear; no! snatching up at once his glittering harnes he hied him on. And the twain, clashing their shields together as they met in the midst of the assembled host, were dealing death and courting it, shouting loudly each to his fellow the battle-cry: "Slay, and with thy spear strike home against the sons of Erechtheus." Fierce foes to cope with were the warriors whom the dragon's teeth to manhood reared; so fierce, they broke our left wing, albeit theirs was routed by our right and put to flight, so that the struggle was evenly balanced. Here again our chief deserved all praise, for this success was not the only one he gained; no! next he sought that part of his army which was wavering; and loud he called to them, that the earth rang again, "My sons, if ye cannot restrain the earth-born warriors' stubborn spear, the cause of Pallas is lost." His word inspired new courage in all the Danaid host. Therewith himself did seize a fearsome mace, weapon of Epidaurian warfare, and swung it to and fro, and with that club, as with a sickle, he shore off necks and heads and helmets thereupon. Scarce even then they turned themselves to fly. I cried aloud for joy, and danced and clapped my hands; while to the gates they ran. Throughout the town echoed the shrieks of young and old, as they crowded the temples in terror. But Theseus, when he might have come inside the walls, held back his men, for he had not come, said he, to sack the town, but to ask for the bodies of the dead. Such the general men should choose, one who shows his bravery in danger, yet hates the pride of those that in their hour of fortune lose the bliss they might have enjoyed, through seeking to scale the ladder's topmost step.

LEADER Now do I believe in the gods after seeing this unexpected day, and feel my woes are lighter now that these have paid their penalty.

ADRASTUS O Zeus, why do men assert the wisdom of the wretched human race? On thee we all depend, and all we do is only what thou listest. We thought our Argos irresistible, ourselves a young and lusty host, and so when Eteocles was for making terms, in spite of his fair offer we would not accept them, and so we perished. Then in their turn those foolish folk of Cadmus, to fortune raised, like some beggar with his newly-gotten wealth, waxed wanton, and, waxing so, were ruined in their turn. Ye foolish sons of men! who strain your bow like men who shoot beyond their mark, and only by suffering many evils as ye deserve, though deaf to friends, yet yield to circumstances; ye cities likewise, though ye might by parley end your ills, yet ye choose the sword instead of reason to settle all disputes. But wherefore these reflections? This I fain would learn, the way thou didst escape; and after that I will ask thee of the rest.

MESSENGER During the uproar which prevailed in the city owing to the battle, I passed the gates, just as the host had entered them.

ADRASTUS Are ye bringing the bodies, for the which the strife arose?

MESSENGER Ay, each of the seven chiefs who led their famous hosts.

ADRASTUS What sayest thou? the rest who fell-say, where are they?

MESSENGER They have found burial in the dells of Cithaeron.

ADRASTUS On this or that side of the mount? And who did bury them?

MESSENGER Theseus buried them ‘neath the shadow of Eleutherae’s cliff.

ADRASTUS Where didst thou leave the dead he hath not buried?

MESSENGER Not far away; earnest haste makes every goal look close.

ADRASTUS No doubt in sorrow slaves would gather them from the carnage.

MESSENGER Slaves! not one of them was set to do this toil. [A speech belonging to ADRASTUS has been lost.]

MESSENGER Thou wouldst say so, hadst thou been there to see his loving tendance of the dead.

ADRASTUS Did he himself wash the bloody wounds of the hapless youths?

MESSENGER Ay, and strewed their biers and wrapped them in their shrouds.

ADRASTUS An awful burden this, involving some disgrace.

MESSENGER Why, what disgrace to men are their fellows' sorrows?

ADRASTUS Ah me! how much rather had I died with them!

MESSENGER 'Tis vain to weep and move to tears these women.

ADRASTUS Methinks 'tis they who give the lesson. Enough of that! My hands lift at meeting of the dead, and pour forth a tearful dirge to Hades, calling on my friends, whose loss I mourn in wretched solitude; for this one thing, when once 'tis spent, man cannot recover, the breath of life, though he knoweth ways to get his wealth again.

CHORUS *(singing)* Joy is here and sorrow too,-for the state fair fame, and for our captains double meed of honour. Bitter for me it is to see the limbs of my dead sons, and yet a welcome sight withal, because I shall behold the unexpected day after sorrow's cup was full.

Would that Father Time had kept me unwed from my youth up e'en till now when I am old! What need had I of children? Methinks I should not have suffered overmuch, had I never borne the marriage-yoke; but now I have my sorrow full in view, the loss of children dear.

Lo! I see the bodies of the fallen youths. Woe is me! would I could join these children in their death and descend to Hades with them!

(THESEUS and his soldiers enter, carrying the corpses of the slain chieftains. ADRASTUS and the CHORUS chant the lament responsively.)

ADRASTUS Mothers, raise the wail for the dead departed; cry in answer when ye hear my note of woe.

CHORUS My sons, my sons! O bitter words for loving mothers to address to you! To thee, my lifeless child, I call.

ADRASTUS Woe! woe!

CHORUS Ah me, my sufferings!

ADRASTUS Alas! We have endured, alas!-

CHORUS Sorrows most grievous.

ADRASTUS O citizens of Argos! do ye not behold my fate?

CHORUS They see thee, and me the hapless mother, reft of her children.

ADRASTUS Bring near the blood-boltered corpses of those hapless chiefs, foully slain by foes unworthy, with whom lay the decision of the contest.

CHORUS Let me embrace and hold my children to my bosom in my enfolding arms.

ADRASTUS There, there! thou hast-

CHORUS Sorrows heavy enough to bear.

ADRASTUS Ah me!

CHORUS Thy groans mingle with those of their parents.

ADRASTUS Hear me.

CHORUS O’er both of us thou dost lament.

ADRASTUS Would God the Theban ranks had laid me dead in the dust!

CHORUS Oh that I had ne'er been wedded to a husband!

ADRASTUS Ah! hapless mothers, behold this sea of troubles!

CHORUS Our nails have ploughed our cheeks in furrows, and o'er our heads have we strewn ashes.

ADRASTUS Ah me! ah me! Oh that earth's floor would swallow me, or the whirlwind snatch me away, or Zeus's flaming bolt descend upon my head!

CHORUS Bitter the marriages thou didst witness, bitter the oracle of Phoebus! The curse of Oedipus, fraught with sorrow, after desolating his house, is come on thee.

THESEUS I meant to question thee when thou wert venting thy lamentations to the host, but I will let it pass; yet, though I dropped the matter then and left it alone, I now do ask Adrastus, "Of what lineage sprang those youths, to shine so bright in chivalry?" Tell it to our younger citizens of thy fuller wisdom, for thou art skilled to know. Myself beheld their daring deeds, too high for words to tell, whereby they thought to capture Thebes. One question will I spare thee, lest I provoke thy laughter; the foe that each of them encountered in the fray, the spear from which each received his death-wound. These be idle tales alike for those who hear or him who speaks, that any man amid the fray, when clouds of darts are hurtling before his eyes, should declare for certain who each champion is. I could not ask such questions, nor yet believe those who dare assert the like; for when a man is face to face with the foe, he scarce can see even that which 'tis his bounden duty to observe.

ADRASTUS Hearken then. For in giving this task to me thou findest a willing eulogist of friends, whose praise I would declare in all truth and sincerity. Dost see yon corpse by Zeus's bolt transfixed? That is Capaneus; though he had ample wealth, yet was he the last to boast of his prosperity; nor would he ever vaunt himself above a poorer neighbour, but shunned the man whose sumptuous board had puffed him up too high and made him scorn mere competence, for he held that virtue lies not in greedy gluttony,

but that moderate means suffice. True friend was he, alike to present or to absent friends the same; of such the number is not great. His was guileless character, a courteous address, that left no promise unperformed either towards his own household or his fellow-citizens. The next I name is Eteoclus; a master he of other kinds of excellence; young, nor richly dowered with store, yet high in honour in the Argive land. And though his friends oft offered gifts of gold, he would not have it in his house, to make his character its slave by taking wealth's yoke upon him. Not his city, but those that sinned against her did he hate, for a city is no wise to be blamed if it get an evil name by reason of an evil governor. Such another was Hippomedon, third of all this band; from his very boyhood he refrained from turning towards the allurements of the Muses, to lead life of ease; his home was in the fields, and gladly would he school his nature to hardships with a view to manliness, aye hasting to the chase, rejoicing in his steeds or straining of his bow, because he would make himself of use unto his state. Next behold the huntress Atalanta's son, Parthenopaeus, a youth of peerless beauty; from Arcady he came even to the streams of Inachus, and in Argos spent his boyhood. There, when he grew to man's estate, first, as is the duty of strangers settled in another land, he showed no pique or jealousy against the state, became no quibbler, chiefest source of annoyance citizen or stranger can give, but took his stand amid the host, and fought for Argos as he were her own son, glad at heart whenso the city prospered, deeply grieved if e'er reverses came; many a lover though he had midst men and maids, yet was he careful to avoid offence. Of Tydeus next the lofty praise I will express in brief; no brilliant spokesman he, but a clever craftsman in the art of war, with many a shrewd device; inferior in judgment to his brother Meleager, yet through his warrior skill lending his name to equal praise, for he had found in arms a perfect science; his was an ambitious nature, a spirit rich in store of deeds, with words less fully dowered. From this account then wonder not, Theseus, that they dared to die before the towers; for noble nurture carries honour with it, and every man, when once he hath practised virtue, scorns the name of villain. Courage may be learnt, for even a babe doth learn to speak and hear things it cannot comprehend; and whatso'er a child hath learnt, this it is his wont to treasure up till he is old. So train up your children in a virtuous way.

CHORUS *(chanting)* Alas! my son, to sorrow I bare thee and carried thee within my womb, enduring the pangs of travail; but now Hades takes the fruit of all my hapless toil, and I that had a son am left, ah me! with none to nurse my age.

THESEUS As for the noble son of Oecleus, him, while yet he lived, the gods snatched hence to the bowels of the earth, and his chariot too, manifestly blessing him; while I myself may truthfully tell the praises of the son of Oedipus, that is, Polyneices, for he was my guest-friend ere he left the town of Cadmus and crossed to Argos in voluntary exile. But dost thou know what I would have thee do in this?

ADRASTUS I know naught save this,-to yield obedience to thy hests.

THESEUS As for yon Capaneus, stricken by the bolt of Zeus-

ADRASTUS Wilt bury him apart as a consecrated corpse?

THESEUS Even so; but all the rest on one funeral pyre.

ADRASTUS Where wilt thou set the tomb apart for him?

THESEUS Here near this temple have I builded him a sepulchre.

ADRASTUS Thy thralls forthwith must undertake this toil.

THESEUS Myself will look to those others; let the biers advance.

ADRASTUS Approach your sons, unhappy mothers.

THESEUS This thy proposal, Adrastus, is anything but good.

ADRASTUS Must not the mothers touch their sons?

THESEUS It would kill them to see how they are altered.

ADRASTUS 'Tis bitter, truly, to see the dead even at the moment of death.

THESEUS Why then wilt thou add fresh grief to them?

ADRASTUS Thou art right. Ye needs must patiently abide, for the words of Theseus are good. But when we have committed them unto the flames, ye shall collect their bones. O wretched sons of men! Why do ye get you weapons and bring slaughter on one another? Cease therefrom, give o'er your toiling, and in mutual peace keep safe your cities. Short is the span of life, so 'twere best to run its course as lightly as we may, from trouble free.

(The corpses, followed by the CHILDREN of the slain chieftains, are carried off to the pyre which is kindled within the sight of the persons on the stage.)

CHORUS *(singing)* No more a happy mother I, with children blest; no more I share, among Argive women, who have sons, their happy lot; nor any more will Artemis in the hour of travail kindly greet these childless mothers. Most dreary is my life, and like some wandering cloud drift before the howling blast.

The seven noblest sons in Argos once we had, we seven hapless mothers; but now my sons are dead, I have no child, and on me steals old age in piteous wise, nor 'mongst the dead nor 'mongst the living do I count myself, having as it were a lot apart from these.

Tears alone are left me; in my house sad memories of my son are stored; mournful tresses shorn from his head, chaplets that he wore, libations for the dead departed, and songs, but not such as golden-haired Apollo welcometh; and when I wake to weep, my tears will ever drench the folds of my robe upon my bosom. Ah! there I see the sepulchre ready e'en now for Capaneus, his consecrated tomb, and the votive offerings Theseus gives unto the dead outside the shrine, and nigh yon lightning-smitten chief I see his noble bride, Evadne, daughter of King Iphis. Wherefore stands she on the towering rock, which o'ertops this temple, advancing along yon path?

(EVADNE is seen on a rock which overhangs the burning pyre. She is dressed as though for a festival.)

EVADNE *(chanting)* What light, what radiancy did the sun-god's car dart forth, and the moon athwart the firmament, while round her in the gloom swift stars careered, in the day that the city of Argos raised the stately chant

of joy at my wedding, in honour of my marriage with mail-clad Capaneus? Now from my home in frantic haste with frenzied mind rush to join thee, seeking to share with thee the fire's bright flame and the self-same tomb, to rid me of my weary life in Hades' halls, and of the pains of life; yea, for 'tis the sweetest end to share the death of those we love, if only fate will sanction it.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Behold yon pyre, which thou art overlooking, nigh thereto, set apart for Zeus! There is thy husband's body, vanquished by the blazing bolt.

EVADNE *(chanting)* Life's goal I now behold from my station here; may fortune aid me in my headlong leap from this rock in honour's cause, down into the fire below. to mix my ashes in the ruddy blaze with my husband's, to lay me side by side with him, there in the couch of Persephone; for ne'er will to save my life, prove untrue to thee where thou liest in thy grave. Away with life and marriage too! Oh! may my children live to see the dawn of a fairer, happier wedding-day in Argos! May loyalty inspire the husband's heart, his nature fusing with his wife's!

LEADER Lo! the aged Iphis, thy father, draweth nigh to hear thy startling speech, which yet he knows not and will grieve to learn.

(IPHIS enters.)

IPHIS Unhappy child! lo! I am come, a poor old man, with twofold sorrow in my house to mourn, that I may carry to his native land the corpse of my son Eteoclus, slain by the Theban spear, and further in quest of my daughter who rushed headlong from the house, for she was the wife of Capaneus and longed with him to die. Ere this she was well guarded in my house, but, when I took the watch away in the present troubles, she escaped. But I feel sure that she is here; tell me if ye have seen her.

EVADNE Why question them? Lo, here upon the rock, father, o'er the pyre of Capaneus, like some bird I hover lightly, in my wretchedness.

IPHIS What wind hath blown thee hither, child? Whither thy journey? Why didst thou pass the threshold of my house and seek this land?

EVADNE It would but anger thee to hear what I intend, and so I fain would keep thee ignorant, my father.

IPHIS What hath not thy own father a right to know?

EVADNE Thou wouldst not wisely judge my purpose.

IPHIS Why dost thou deck thyself in that apparel?

EVADNE A purport strange this robe conveys, father.

IPHIS Thou hast no look of mourning for thy lord.

EVADNE No, the reason why I thus am decked is strange, maybe.

IPHIS Dost thou in such garb appear before a funeral-pyre?

EVADNE Yea, for hither it is I come to take the meed of victory.

IPHIS “Victory!” What victory? This would I learn of thee.

EVADNE A victory o’er all women on whom the sun looks down.

IPHIS In Athena’s handiwork or in prudent counsel?

EVADNE In bravery; for I will lay me down and die with my lord.

IPHIS What dost thou say? What is this silly riddle thou propoundest?

EVADNE To yonder pyre where lies dead Capaneus, I will leap down.

IPHIS My daughter, speak not thus before the multitude!

EVADNE The very thing I wish, that every Argive should learn it.

IPHIS Nay, I will ne’er consent to let thee do this deed.

EVADNE ’Tis all one; thou shalt never catch me in thy grasp. Lo! I cast me down, no joy to thee, but to myself and to my husband blazing on the pyre

with me.

(She leaps into the pyre.)

CHORUS *(chanting)* O lady, thou hast done a fearful deed!

IPHIS Ah me! I am undone, ye dames of Argos!

CHORUS *(chanting)* Alack, alack! a cruel blow is this to thee, but thou must yet witness, poor wretch, the full horror of this deed.

IPHIS A more unhappy wretch than me ye could not find.

CHORUS *(chanting)* Woe for thee, unhappy man! Thou, old sir, hast been made partaker in the fortune of Oedipus, thou and my poor city too.

IPHIS Ah, why are mortal men denied this boon, to live their youth twice o'er, and twice in turn to reach old age? If aught goes wrong within our homes, we set it right by judgment more maturely formed, but our life we may not so correct. Now if we had a second spell of youth and age, this double term of life would let us then correct each previous slip. For I, seeing others blest with children, longed to have them too, and found my ruin in that wish. Whereas if I had had present experience, and by a father's light had learnt how cruel a thing it is to be bereft of children, never should have fallen on such evil days as these,-I who did beget a brave young son, proud parent that I was, and after all am now bereft of him. Enough of this. What remains for such a hapless wretch as me? Shall I to my home, there to see its utter desolation and the blank within my life? or shall to the halls of that dead Capaneus?-halls I smiled to see in days gone by, when yet my daughter was alive. But she is lost and gone, she that would ever draw down my cheek to her lips, and take my head between her hands; for naught is there more sweet unto an aged sire than a daughter's love; our sons are made of sterner stuff, but less winning are their caresses. Oh! take me to my house at once, in darkness hide me there, to waste and fret this aged frame with fasting! What shall it avail me to touch my daughter's bones? Old age, resistless foe, how do I loathe thy presence! Them too I hate, whoso desire to lengthen out the span of life, seeking to turn the tide of death aside by

philtres, drugs, and magic spells,-folk that death should take away to leave the young their place, when they no more can benefit the world.

(IPHIS departs. A procession enters from the direction of the pyre, led by the CHILDREN of the slain chieftains, who carry the ashes of their fathers in funeral urns. The following lines between the CHORUS and the CHILDREN are chanted responsively.)

CHORUS Woe, woe! Behold your dead sons' bones are brought hither; take them, servants of your weak old mistress, for in me is no strength left by reason of my mourning for my sons; time's comrade long have I been, and many a tear for many a sorrow have I shed. For what sharper pang wilt thou ever find for mortals than the sight of children dead?

CHILDREN Poor mother mine, behold I bring my father's bones gathered from the fire, a burden grief has rendered heavy, though this tiny urn contains my all.

CHORUS Ah me! ah me! Why bear thy tearful load to the fond mother of the dead, a handful of ashes in the stead of those who erst were men of mark in Mycenae?

CHILDREN Woe worth the hour! woe worth the day! Reft of my hapless sire, a wretched orphan shall I inherit a desolate house, torn from my father's arms.

CHORUS Woe is thee! Where is now the toil I spent upon my sons? what thank have I for nightly watch? Where the mother's nursing care? the sleepless vigils mine eyes have kept? the loving kiss upon my children's brow?

CHILDREN Thy sons are dead and gone. Poor mother! dead and gone; the boundless air now wraps them round.

CHORUS Turned to ashes by the flame, they have winged their flight to, Hades.

CHILDREN Father, thou hearest thy children's lamentation; say, shall I e'er, as warrior dight, avenge thy slaughter?

CHORUS God grant it, O my child

CHILDREN Some day, if god so will, shall the avenging of my father be my task; not yet this sorrow sleeps.

CHORUS Alas! Fortune's sorrows are enough for me, I have enough of troubles now.

CHILDREN Shall Asopus' laughing tide ever reflect my brazen arms as I lead on my Argive troops?

CHORUS To avenge thy fallen sire.

CHILDREN Methinks I see thee still before my eye, my father-

CHORUS Printing a loving kiss upon thy cheek.

CHILDREN But thy words of exhortation are borne on the winds away.

CHORUS Two mourners hath he left behind, thy mother and thee, bequeathing to thee an endless legacy of grief for thy father.

CHILDREN The weight of grief I have to bear hath crushed me utterly.

CHORUS Come, let me clasp the ashes of my son to my bosom.

CHILDREN I weep to hear that piteous word; 'it stabs me to the heart,

CHORUS My child, thou art undone; no more shall I behold thee, thy own fond mother's treasure.

THESEUS Adrastus, and ye dames from Argos sprung, ye see these children bearing in their hands the bodies of their valiant sires whom I redeemed; to thee I give these gifts, I and Athens. And ye must bear in mind the memory of this favour, marking well the treatment ye have had of me. And to these children I repeat the self-same words, that they may honour

this city, to children's children ever handing on the kindness ye received from us. Be Zeus the witness, with the gods in heaven, of the treatment we vouchsafed you ere you left us.

ADRASTUS Theseus, well we know all the kindness thou hast conferred upon the land of Argos in her need, and ours shall be a gratitude that never waxeth old, for your generous treatment makes us debtors for a like return.

THESEUS What yet remains, wherein I can serve you?

ADRASTUS Fare thee well, for such is thy desert and such thy city's too.

THESEUS Even so. Mayst thou too have the self-same fortune!

(ATHENA appears from above.)

ATHENA Hearken, Theseus, to the words that I Athena utter, telling thee thy duty, which, if thou perform it, will serve thy city. Give not these bones to the children to carry to the land of Argos, letting them go so lightly; nay, take first an oath of them that they will requite thee and thy city for your efforts. This oath must Adrastus swear, for as their king it is his right to take the oath for the whole realm of Argos. And this shall be the form thereof: "We Argives swear we never will against this land lead on our mail-clad troops to war, and, if others come, we will repel them." But if they violate their oath and come against the city, pray that the land of Argos may be miserably destroyed. Now hearken while I tell thee where thou must slay the victims. Thou hast within thy halls a tripod with brazen feet, which Heracles, in days gone by, after he had o'erthrown the foundations of Ilium and was starting on another enterprise, enjoined the to set up at the Pythian shrine. O'er it cut the throats of three sheep; then grave within the tripod's hollow belly the oath; this done, deliver it to the god who watches over Delphi to keep, a witness and memorial unto Hellas of the oath. And bury the sharp-edged knife, wherewith thou shalt have laid the victims open and shed their blood, deep in the bowels of the earth, hard by the pyres where the seven chieftains burn; for its appearance shall strike them with dismay, if e'er against thy town they come, and shall cause them to return with sorrow. When thou hast done all this, dismiss the dead from thy land. And to the god resign as sacred land the spot where their bodies were purified by

fire, there by the meeting of the triple roads that lead unto the Isthmus. Thus much to thee, Theseus, address; next to the sons of Argos I speak; when ye are grown to men's estate, the town beside Ismenus shall ye sack, avenging the slaughter of your dead sires; thou too, Aegialeus, shalt take thy father's place and in thy youth command the host, and with thee Tydeus' son marching from Aetolia,-him whom his father named Diomedes. Soon as the beards your cheeks o'ershadow must ye lead an armed Danaid host against the battlements of Thebes with sevenfold gates. For to their sorrow shall ye come like lion's whelps in full-grown might to sack their city. No otherwise is it to be; and ye shall be a theme for minstrels' songs in days to come, known through Hellas as "the After-born"; so famous shall your expedition be, thanks to Heaven.

THESEUS Queen Athena, I will hearken to thy bidding; for thou it is dost set me up, so that I go not astray. And I will bind this monarch by an oath; do thou but guide my steps aright. For if thou art friendly to our state, we shall henceforth live secure.

(ATHENA vanishes.)

CHORUS *(chanting)* Let us go, Adrastus, and take the oath to this monarch and his state; for the service they have already done us claims our reverence.

ELECTRA

Translated by Gilbert Murray

Composed between 413-419 BC, it is unclear whether Euripides' play was produced before or after Sophocles' version of the Electra story. The tragedy concerns Electra and Orestes, the children of King Agamemnon of Mycenae, and their vengeful killing of their mother Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus for the murder of Agamemnon.

The play begins by introducing Electra as the wife of a humble, but honest farmer. Her mother Clytemnestra, fearing that if Electra remained in the royal household and married a nobleman, her children would be more likely to try to avenge Agamemnon's death, had opted to give her daughter a farmer for a husband. The man Electra is married to, however, is kind to her and has taken advantage of neither her family name nor her virginity. In return, Electra helps the peasant with household chores. Despite her appreciation for her peasant husband, Electra resents being cast out of her house and her mother's loyalty to Aegisthus.

Previously, her brother Orestes was taken out of the country and put under the care of the king of Phocis, where he became friends with the king's son Pylades. Now grown into manhood, Orestes and his companion Pylades travel to Argos, seeking revenge and they arrive at the house of Electra and her husband. Concealing their identities in order to obtain information, they claim that they are messengers from Orestes, but the aged servant who smuggled Orestes off to Phocis years before recognises him by a scar and the siblings are reunited. Electra is eager to help her brother in bringing down Clytemnestra and Aegisthus and they conspire together, planning a bloodthirsty act of matricide.

‘Orestes, Electra and Hermes at Agamemnon’s tomb’ as depicted on a Lucanian red-figure pelike, c. 380–370 BC

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‘Electra at the Tomb of Agamemnon’ by Frederic Leighton, c. 1869

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

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ORESTES, *son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, now in banishment*.
A PEASANT, *husband of Electra*.
AN OLD MAN, *formerly servant to Agamemnon*.
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The Scene is laid in the mountains of Argos. The play was first produced between the years 414 *and* 412 B.C.

ELECTRA

The scene represents a hut on a desolate mountain side; the river Inachus is visible in the distance. The time is the dusk of early dawn, before sunrise. The PEASANT *is discovered in front of the hut.*

PEASANT.
Old gleam on the face of the world, I give thee hail,
River of Argos land, where sail on sail
The long ships met, a thousand, near and far,
When Agamemnon walked the seas in war;
Who smote King Priam in the dust, and burned
The storied streets of Ilion, and returned
Above all conquerors, heaping tower and fane
Of Argos high with spoils of Eastern slain.
So in far lands he prospered; and at home
His own wife trapped and slew him. 'Twas the doom
Aegisthus wrought, son of his father's foe.
Gone is that King, and the old spear laid low
That Tantalus wielded when the world was young.
Aegisthus hath his queen, and reigns among
His people. And the children here alone,
Orestes and Electra, buds unblown
Of man and womanhood, when forth to Troy
He shook his sail and left them — lo, the boy
Orestes, ere Aegisthus' hand could fall,
Was stolen from Argos — borne by one old thrall,
Who served his father's boyhood, over seas
Far off, and laid upon King Strophios' knees
In Phocis, for the old king's sake. But here
The maid Electra waited, year by year,
Alone, till the warm days of womanhood
Drew nigh and suitors came of gentle blood
In Hellas. Then Aegisthus was in fear
Lest she be wed in some great house, and bear
A son to avenge her father. Close he wrought

Her prison in his house, and gave her not
To any wooer. Then, since even this
Was full of peril, and the secret kiss
Of some bold prince might find her yet, and rend
Her prison walls, Aegisthus at the end
Would slay her. Then her mother, she so wild
Aforetime, pled with him and saved her child.
Her heart had still an answer for her lord
Murdered, but if the child's blood spoke, what word
Could meet the hate thereof? After that day
Aegisthus thus decreed: whoso should slay
The old king's wandering son, should win rich meed
Of gold; and for Electra, she must wed
With me, not base of blood — in that I stand
True Mycenaean — but in gold and land
Most poor, which maketh highest birth as naught.
So from a powerless husband shall be wrought
A powerless peril. Had some man of might
Possessed her, he had called perchance to light
Her father's blood, and unknown vengeances
Risen on Aegisthus yet.
    Aye, mine she is:
But never yet these arms — the Cyprian knows
My truth! — have clasped her body, and she goes
A virgin still. Myself would hold it shame
To abase this daughter of a royal name.
I am too lowly to love violence. Yea,
Orestes too doth move me, far away,
Mine unknown brother! Will he ever now
Come back and see his sister bowed so low?
Doth any deem me fool, to hold a fair
Maid in my room and seek no joy, but spare
Her maidenhood? If any such there be,
Let him but look within. The fool is he
In gentle things, weighing the more and less
Of love by his own heart's untenderness.
[*As he ceases* ELECTRA *comes out of the hut. She is in mourning garb,*

and carries a large pitcher on her head. She speaks without observing the PEASANT'S *presence*.

ELECTRA.
Dark shepherdess of many a golden star,
Dost see me, Mother Night? And how this jar
Hath worn my earth-bowed head, as forth and fro
For water to the hillward springs I go?
Not for mere stress of need, but purpose set,
That never day nor night God may forget
Aegisthus' sin: aye, and perchance a cry
Cast forth to the waste shining of the sky
May find my father's ear…. The woman bred
Of Tyndareus, my mother — on her head
Be curses! — from my house hath outcast me;
She hath borne children to our enemy;
She hath made me naught, she hath made Orestes naught….
[*As the bitterness of her tone increases, the* PEASANT *comes forward.*

PEASANT.
What wouldst thou now, my sad one, ever fraught
With toil to lighten my toil? And so soft
Thy nurture was! Have I not chid thee oft,
And thou wilt cease not, serving without end?

ELECTRA *(turning to him with impulsive affection)*.
O friend, my friend, as God might be my friend,
Thou only hast not trampled on my tears.
Life scarce can be so hard, 'mid many fears
And many shames, when mortal heart can find
Somewhere one healing touch, as my sick mind
Finds thee…. And should I wait thy word, to endure
A little for thine easing, yea, or pour
My strength out in thy toiling fellowship?
Thou hast enough with fields and kine to keep;
'Tis mine to make all bright within the door.

’Tis joy to him that toils, when toil is o’er,
To find home waiting, full of happy things.

PEASANT.
If so it please thee, go thy way. The springs
Are not far off. And I before the morn
Must drive my team afield, and sow the corn
In the hollows. — Not a thousand prayers can gain
A man’s bare bread, save an he work amain.
[ELECTRA *and the* PEASANT *depart on their several ways. After a few moments there enter stealthily two armed men,* ORESTES *and* PYLADES.

ORESTES.
Thou art the first that I have known in deed
True and my friend, and shelterer of my need.
Thou only, Pylades, of all that knew,
Hast held Orestes of some worth, all through
These years of helplessness, wherein I lie
Downtrodden by the murderer — yea, and by
The murderess, my mother!… I am come,
Fresh from the cleansing of Apollo, home
To Argos — and my coming no man yet
Knoweth — to pay the bloody twain their debt
Of blood. This very night I crept alone
To my dead father’s grave, and poured thereon
My heart’s first tears and tresses of my head
New-shorn, and o’er the barrow of the dead
Slew a black lamb, unknown of them that reign
In this unhappy land…. I am not fain
To pass the city gates, but hold me here
Hard on the borders. So my road is clear
To fly if men look close and watch my way;
If not, to seek my sister. For men say
She dwelleth in these hills, no more a maid
But wedded. I must find her house, for aid
To guide our work, and learn what hath betid
Of late in Argos. — Ha, the radiant lid

Of Dawn's eye lifteth! Come, friend; leave we now
This trodden path. Some worker of the plough,
Or serving damsel at her early task
Will presently come by, whom we may ask
If here my sister dwells. But soft! Even now
I see some bondmaid there, her death-shorn brow
Bending beneath its freight of well-water.
Lie close until she pass; then question her.
A slave might help us well, or speak some sign
Of import to this work of mine and thine.
[*The two men retire into ambush.* ELECTRA *enters, returning from the well.*

ELECTRA.
Onward, O labouring tread,
As on move the years;
Onward amid thy tears,
O happier dead!
Let me remember. I am she, [*Strophe* 1.
Agamemnon's child, and the mother of me
Clytemnestra, the evil Queen,
Helen's sister. And folk, I ween,
That pass in the streets call yet my name
Electra…. God protect my shame!
For toil, toil is a weary thing,
And life is heavy about my head;
And thou far off, O Father and King,
In the lost lands of the dead.
A bloody twain made these things be;
One was thy bitterest enemy,
And one the wife that lay by thee.
Brother, brother, on some far shore [*Antistrophe* 1.
Hast thou a city, is there a door
That knows thy footfall, Wandering One?
Who left me, left me, when all our pain
Was bitter about us, a father slain,
And a girl that wept in her room alone.

Thou couldst break me this bondage sore,
Only thou, who art far away,
Loose our father, and wake once more….
Zeus, Zeus, dost hear me pray?…
The sleeping blood and the shame and the doom!
O feet that rest not, over the foam
Of distant seas, come home, come home!
What boots this cruse that I carry? [*Strophe* 2.
O, set free my brow!
For the gathered tears that tarry
Through the day and the dark till now,
Now in the dawn are free,
Father, and flow beneath
The floor of the world, to be
As a song in she house of Death:
From the rising up of the day
They guide my heart alway,
The silent tears unshed,
And my body mourns for the dead;
My cheeks bleed silently,
And these bruised temples keep
Their pain, remembering thee
And thy bloody sleep.
Be rent, O hair of mine head!
As a swan crying alone
Where the river windeth cold,
For a loved, for a silent one,
Whom the toils of the fowler hold,
I cry, Father, to thee,
O slain in misery!
The water, the wan water, [*Antistrophe* 2.
Lapped him, and his head
Drooped in the bed of slaughter
Low, as one wearièd;
Woe for the edgèd axe,
And woe for the heart of hate,
Houndlike about thy tracks,

O conqueror desolate,
From Troy over land and sea,
Till a wife stood waiting thee;
Not with crowns did she stand,
Nor flowers of peace in her hand;
With Aegisthus' dagger drawn
For her hire she strove,
Through shame and through blood alone;
And won her a traitor's love.
[*As she ceases there enter from right and left the* CHORUS, *consisting of women of Argos, young and old, in festal dress*.

CHORUS.
Some Women.
Child of the mighty dead, [*Strophe*.
Electra, lo, my way
To thee in the dawn hath sped,
And the cot on the mountain grey,
For the Watcher hath cried this day:
He of the ancient folk,
The walker of waste and hill,
Who drinketh the milk of the flock;
And he told of Hera's will;
For the morrow's morrow now
They cry her festival,
And before her throne shall bow
Our damsels all.

ELECTRA.
Not unto joy, nor sweet
Music, nor shining of gold,
The wings of my spirit beat.
Let the brides of Argos hold
Their dance in the night, as of old;
I lead no dance; I mark
No beat as the dancers sway;
With tears I dwell in the dark,

And my thought is of tears alway,
To the going down of the day.
Look on my wasted hair
And raiment…. This that I bear,
Is it meet for the King my sire,
And her whom the King begot?
For Troy, that was burned with fire
And forgetteth not?

CHORUS.
Other Women.
Hera is great! — Ah, come, [*Antistrophe*.
Be kind; and my hand shall bring
Fair raiment, work of the loom,
And many a golden thing,
For joyous robe-wearing.
Deemest thou this thy woe
Shall rise unto God as prayer,
Or bend thine haters low?
Doth God for thy pain have care?
Not tears for the dead nor sighs,
But worship and joy divine
Shall win thee peace in thy skies,
O daughter mine!

ELECTRA.
No care cometh to God
For the voice of the helpless; none
For the crying of ancient blood.
Alas for him that is gone,
And for thee, O wandering one:
That now, methinks, in a land
Of the stranger must toil for hire,
And stand where the poor men stand,
A-cold by another's fire,
O son of the mighty sire:
While I in a beggar's cot

On the wrecked hills, changing not,
Starve in my soul for food;
  But our mother lieth wed
In another's arms, and blood
  Is about her bed.

LEADER.
On all of Greece she wrought great jeopardy,
Thy mother's sister, Helen, — and on thee.
[ORESTES *and* PYLADES *move out from their concealment*; ORESTES *comes forward*: PYLADES *beckons to two* ARMED SERVANTS *and stays with them in the background*.

ELECTRA.
Woe's me! No more of wailing! Women, flee!
Strange armèd men beside the dwelling there
Lie ambushed! They are rising from their lair.
Back by the road, all you. I will essay
The house; and may our good feet save us!

ORESTES *(between ELECTRA and the hut)*.
  Stay,
Unhappy woman! Never fear my steel.

ELECTRA *(in utter panic)*.
O bright Apollo! Mercy! See, I kneel;
Slay me not.

ORESTES.
  Others I have yet to slay
Less dear than thou.

ELECTRA.
  Go from me! Wouldst thou lay
Hand on a body that is not for thee?

ORESTES.
None is there I would touch more righteously.

ELECTRA.
Why lurk'st thou by my house? And why a sword?

ORESTES.
Stay. Listen! Thou wilt not gainsay my word.

ELECTRA.
There — I am still. Do what thou wilt with me.
Thou art too strong.

ORESTES.
A word I bear to thee…
Word of thy brother.

ELECTRA.
Oh, friend! More than friend!
Living or dead?

ORESTES.
He lives; so let me send
My comfort foremost, ere the rest be heard.

ELECTRA.
God love thee for the sweetness of thy word!

ORESTES.
God love the twain of us, both thee and me.

ELECTRA.
He lives! Poor brother! In what land weareth he
His exile?

ORESTES.
Not one region nor one lot
His wasted life hath trod.

ELECTRA.
He lacketh not

For bread?

ORESTES.
Bread hath he; but a man is weak
In exile.

ELECTRA.
What charge laid he on thee? Speak.

ORESTES.
To learn if thou still live, and how the storm,
Living, hath struck thee.

ELECTRA.
That thou seest; this form
Wasted…

ORESTES.
Yea, riven with the fire of woe.
I sigh to look on thee.

ELECTRA.
My face; and, lo,
My temples of their ancient glory shorn.

ORESTES.
Methinks thy brother haunts thee, being forlorn;
Aye, and perchance thy father, whom they slew…

ELECTRA.
What should be nearer to me than those two?

ORESTES.
And what to him, thy brother, half so dear
As thou?

ELECTRA.
His is a distant love, not near

At need.

ORESTES.
But why this dwelling place, this life
Of loneliness?

ELECTRA *(with sudden bitterness)*.
Stranger, I am a wife….
O better dead!

ORESTES.
That seals thy brother's doom!
What Prince of Argos…?

ELECTRA.
Not the man to whom
My father thought to give me.

ORESTES.
Speak; that I
May tell thy brother all.

ELECTRA.
'Tis there, hard by,
His dwelling, where I live, far from men's eyes.

ORESTES.
Some ditcher's cot, or cowherd's, by its guise!

ELECTRA *(struck with shame for her ingratitude)*.
A poor man; but true-hearted, and to me
God-fearing.

ORESTES.
How? What fear of God hath he?

ELECTRA.
He hath never held my body to his own.

ORESTES.
Hath he some vow to keep? Or is it done
To scorn thee?

ELECTRA.
Nay; he only scorns to sin
Against my father's greatness.

ORESTES.
But to win
A princess! Doth his heart not leap for pride?

ELECTRA.
He honoureth not the hand that gave the bride.

ORESTES.
I see. He trembles for Orestes' wrath?

ELECTRA.
Aye, that would move him. But beside, he hath
A gentle heart.

ORESTES.
Strange! A good man…. I swear
He well shall be requited.

ELECTRA.
Whensoe'er
Our wanderer comes again!

ORESTES.
Thy mother stays
Unmoved 'mid all thy wrong?

ELECTRA.
A lover weighs
More than a child in any woman's heart.

ORESTES.
But what end seeks Aegisthus, by such art
Of shame?

ELECTRA.
To make mine unborn children low
And weak, even as my husband.

ORESTES.
Lest there grow
From thee the avenger?

ELECTRA.
Such his purpose is:
For which may I requite him!

ORESTES.
And of this
Thy virgin life — Aegisthus knows it?

ELECTRA.
Nay,
We speak it not. It cometh not his way.

ORESTES.
These women hear us. Are they friends to thee?

ELECTRA.
Aye, friends and true. They will keep faithfully
All words of mine and thine.

ORESTES *(trying her)*.
Thou art well stayed
With friends. And could Orestes give thee aid
In aught, if e'er…

ELECTRA.
Shame on thee! Seest thou not?

Is it not time?

ORESTES *(catching her excitement)*.
How time? And if he sought
To slay, how should he come at his desire?

ELECTRA.
By daring, as they dared who slew his sire!

ORESTES.
Wouldst thou dare with him, if he came, thou too,
To slay her?

ELECTRA.
Yes; with the same axe that slew
My father!

ORESTES.
'Tis thy message? And thy mood
Unchanging?

ELECTRA.
Let me shed my mother's blood,
And I die happy.

ORESTES.
God!… I would that now
Orestes heard thee here.

ELECTRA.
Yet, wottest thou,
Though here I saw him, I should know him not.

ORESTES.
Surely. Ye both were children, when they wrought
Your parting.

ELECTRA.
One alone in all this land
Would know his face.

ORESTES.
The thrall, methinks, whose hand
Stole him from death — or so the story ran?

ELECTRA.
He taught my father, too, an old old man
Of other days than these.

ORESTES.
Thy father's grave…
He had due rites and tendance?

ELECTRA.
What chance gave,
My father had, cast out to rot in the sun.

ORESTES.
God, 'tis too much!… To hear of such things done
Even to a stranger, stings a man…. But speak,
Tell of thy life, that I may know, and seek
Thy brother with a tale that must be heard
Howe'er it sicken. If mine eyes be blurred,
Remember, 'tis the fool that feels not. Aye,
Wisdom is full of pity; and thereby
Men pay for too much wisdom with much pain.

LEADER.
My heart is moved as this man's. I would fain
Learn all thy tale. Here dwelling on the hills
Little I know of Argos and its ills.

ELECTRA.
If I must speak — and at love's call, God knows,
I fear not — I will tell thee all; my woes,

My father's woes, and — O, since thou hast stirred
This storm of speech, thou bear him this my word —
His woes and shame! Tell of this narrow cloak
In the wind; this grime and reek of toil, that choke
My breathing; this low roof that bows my head
After a king's. This raiment … thread by thread,
'Tis I must weave it, or go bare — must bring,
Myself, each jar of water from the spring.
No holy day for me, no festival,
No dance upon the green! From all, from all
I am cut off. No portion hath my life
'Mid wives of Argos, being no true wife.
No portion where the maidens throng to praise
Castor — my Castor, whom in ancient days,
Ere he passed from us and men worshipped him,
They named my bridegroom! —
        And she, she!… The grim
Troy spoils gleam round her throne, and by each hand
Queens of the East, my father's prisoners, stand,
A cloud of Orient webs and tangling gold.
And there upon the floor, the blood, the old
Black blood, yet crawls and cankers, like a rot
In the stone! And on our father's chariot
The murderer's foot stands glorying, and the red
False hand uplifts that ancient staff, that led
The armies of the world!… Aye, tell him how
The grave of Agamemnon, even now,
Lacketh the common honour of the dead;
A desert barrow, where no tears are shed,
No tresses hung, no gift, no myrtle spray.
And when the wine is in him, so men say,
Our mother's mighty master leaps thereon,
Spurning the slab, or pelteth stone on stone,
Flouting the lone dead and the twain that live:
"Where is thy son Orestes? Doth he give
Thy tomb good tendance? Or is all forgot?"
So is he scorned because he cometh not….

O Stranger, on my knees, I charge thee, tell
This tale, not mine, but of dumb wrongs that swell
Crowding — and I the trumpet of their pain,
This tongue, these arms, this bitter burning brain;
These dead shorn locks, and he for whom they died!
His father slew Troy's thousands in their pride;
He hath but one to kill…. O God, but one!
Is he a man, and Agamemnon's son?

LEADER.
But hold: is this thy husband from the plain,
His labour ended, hasting home again?
Enter the PEASANT.

PEASANT.
Ha, who be these? Strange men in arms before
My house! What would they at this lonely door?
Seek they for me? — Strange gallants should not stay
A woman's goings.

ELECTRA.
Friend and helper! — Nay,
Think not of any evil. These men be
Friends of Orestes, charged with words for me!…
Strangers, forgive his speech.

PEASANT.
What word have they
Of him? At least he lives and sees the day!

ELECTRA.
So fares their tale — and sure I doubt it not!

PEASANT.
And ye two still are living in his thought,
Thou and his father?

ELECTRA.
In his dreams we live.
An exile hath small power.

PEASANT.
And did he give
Some privy message?

ELECTRA.
None: they come as spies
For news of me.

PEASANT.
Thine outward news their eyes
Can see; the rest, methinks, thyself will tell.

ELECTRA.
They have seen all, heard all. I trust them well.

PEASANT.
Why were our doors not open long ago? —
Be welcome, strangers both, and pass below
My lintel. In return for your glad words
Be sure all greeting that mine house affords
Is yours. — Ye followers, bear in their gear! —
Gainsay me not; for his sake are ye dear
That sent you to our house; and though my part
In life be low, I am no churl at heart.
[*The* PEASANT *goes to the* ARMED SERVANTS *at the back, to help them with the baggage.*

ORESTES *(aside to ELECTRA)*.
Is this the man that shields thy maidenhood
Unknown, and will not wrong thy father's blood?

ELECTRA.
He is called my husband. 'Tis for him I toil.

ORESTES.
How dark lies honour hid! And what turmoil
In all things human: sons of mighty men
Fallen to naught, and from ill seed again
Good fruit: yea, famine in the rich man's scroll
Writ deep, and in poor flesh a lordly soul.
As, lo, this man, not great in Argos, not
With pride of house uplifted, in a lot
Of unmarked life hath shown a prince's grace.
[*To the* PEASANT, *who has returned.*
All that is here of Agamemnon's race,
And all that lacketh yet, for whom we come,
Do thank thee, and the welcome of thy home
Accept with gladness. — Ho, men; hasten ye
Within! — This open-hearted poverty
Is blither to my sense than feasts of gold.
Lady, thine husband's welcome makes me bold;
Yet would thou hadst thy brother, before all
Confessed, to greet us in a prince's hall!
Which may be, even yet. Apollo spake
The word; and surely, though small store I make
Of man's divining, God will fail us not.
[ORESTES *and* PYLADES *go in, following the* SERVANTS.

LEADER.
O never was the heart of hope so hot
Within me. How? So moveless in time past,
Hath Fortune girded up her loins at last?

ELECTRA.
Now know'st thou not thine own ill furniture,
To bid these strangers in, to whom for sure
Our best were hardship, men of gentle breed?

PEASANT.
Nay, if the men be gentle, as indeed

I deem them, they will take good cheer or ill
With even kindness.

ELECTRA.
'Twas ill done; but still —
Go, since so poor thou art, to that old friend
Who reared my father. At the realm's last end
He dwells, where Tanaos river foams between
Argos and Sparta. Long time hath he been
An exile 'mid his flocks. Tell him what thing
Hath chanced on me, and bid him haste and bring
Meat for the strangers' tending. — Glad, I trow,
That old man's heart will be, and many a vow
Will lift to God, to learn the child he stole
From death, yet breathes. — I will not ask a dole
From home; how should my mother help me? Nay,
I pity him that seeks that door, to say
Orestes liveth!

PEASANT.
Wilt thou have it so?
I will take word to the old man. But go
Quickly within, and whatso there thou find
Set out for them. A woman, if her mind
So turn, can light on many a pleasant thing
To fill her board. And surely plenishing
We have for this one day.— 'Tis in such shifts
As these, I care for riches, to make gifts
To friends, or lead a sick man back to health
With ease and plenty. Else small aid is wealth
For daily gladness; once a man be done
With hunger, rich and poor are all as one.
[*The* PEASANT *goes off to the left*; ELECTRA *goes into the house.*
* * * * *

CHORUS.
O for the ships of Troy, the beat [*Strophe* 1.

Of oars that shimmered
Innumerable, and dancing feet
Of Nereids glimmered;
And dolphins, drunken with the lyre,
Across the dark blue prows, like fire,
Did bound and quiver,
To cleave the way for Thetis' son,
Fleet-in-the-wind Achilles, on
To war, to war, till Troy be won
Beside the reedy river.
Up from Euboea's caverns came [*Antistrophe* 1.
The Nereids, bearing
Gold armour from the Lords of Flame,
Wrought for his wearing:
Long sought those daughters of the deep,
Up Pelion's glen, up Ossa's steep
Forest enchanted,
Where Peleus reared alone, afar,
His lost sea-maiden's child, the star
Of Hellas, and swift help of war
When weary armies panted.
There came a man from Troy, and told [*Strophe* 2.
Here in the haven,
How, orb on orb, to strike with cold
The Trojan, o'er that targe of gold,
Dread shapes were graven.
All round the level rim thereof
Perseus, on wingèd feet, above
The long seas hied him;
The Gorgon's wild and bleeding hair
He lifted; and a herald fair,
He of the wilds, whom Maia bare,
God's Hermes, flew beside him.
[*Antistrophe* 2.
But midmost, where the boss rose higher,
A sun stood blazing,
And wingèd steeds, and stars in choir,

Hyad and Pleiad, fire on fire,
  For Hector's dazing:
Across the golden helm, each way,
Two taloned Sphinxes held their prey,
  Song-drawn to slaughter:
And round the breastplate ramping came
A mingled breed of lion and flame,
Hot-eyed to tear that steed of fame
  That found Pirênê's water.
The red red sword with steeds four-yoked [*Epode*.
  Black-maned, was graven,
That laboured, and the hot dust smoked
  Cloudwise to heaven.
Thou Tyndarid woman! Fair and tall
Those warriors were, and o'er them all
  One king great-hearted,
Whom thou and thy false love did slay:
Therefore the tribes of Heaven one day
For these thy dead shall send on thee
An iron death: yea, men shall see
The white throat drawn, and blood's red spray,
  And lips in terror parted.
[*As they cease, there enters from the left a very old man, bearing a lamb, a wineskin, and a wallet*.

OLD MAN.
Where is my little Princess? Ah, not now;
But still my queen, who tended long ago
The lad that was her father…. How steep-set
These last steps to her porch! But faint not yet:
Onward, ye failing knees and back with pain
Bowed, till we look on that dear face again.
  [*Enter* ELECTRA.
Ah, daughter, is it thou? — Lo, here I am,
With gifts from all my store; this suckling lamb
Fresh from the ewe, green crowns for joyfulness,
And creamy things new-curdled from the press.

And this long-storèd juice of vintages
Forgotten, cased in fragrance: scant it is,
But passing sweet to mingle nectar-wise
With feebler wine. — Go, bear them in; mine eyes…
Where is my cloak? — They are all blurred with tears.

ELECTRA.
What ails thine eyes, old friend? After these years
Doth my low plight still stir thy memories?
Or think'st thou of Orestes, where he lies
In exile, and my father? Aye, long love
Thou gavest him, and seest the fruit thereof
Wasted, for thee and all who love thee!

OLD MAN.
All
Wasted! And yet 'tis that lost hope withal
I cannot brook. But now I turned aside
To see my master's grave. All, far and wide,
Was silence; so I bent these knees of mine
And wept and poured drink-offerings from the wine
I bear the strangers, and about the stone
Laid myrtle sprays. And, child, I saw thereon
Just at the censer slain, a fleeced ewe,
Deep black, in sacrifice: the blood was new
About it: and a tress of bright brown hair
Shorn as in mourning, close. Long stood I there
And wondered, of all men what man had gone
In mourning to that grave. — My child, 'tis none
In Argos. Did there come … Nay, mark me now…
Thy brother in the dark, last night, to bow
His head before that unadorèd tomb?
O come, and mark the colour of it. Come
And lay thine own hair by that mourner's tress!
A hundred little things make likenesses
In brethren born, and show the father's blood.

ELECTRA *(trying to mask her excitement and resist the contagion of his)*.
Old heart, old heart, is this a wise man's mood?…
O, not in darkness, not in fear of men,
Shall Argos find him, when he comes again,
Mine own undaunted … Nay, and if it were,
What likeness could there be? My brother's hair
Is as a prince's and a rover's, strong
With sunlight and with strife: not like the long
Locks that a woman combs…. And many a head
Hath this same semblance, wing for wing, tho' bred
Of blood not ours…. 'Tis hopeless. Peace, old man.

OLD MAN.
The footprints! Set thy foot by his, and scan
The track of frame and muscles, how they fit!

ELECTRA.
That ground will take no footprint! All of it
Is bitter stone…. It hath?… And who hath said
There should be likeness in a brother's tread
And sister's? His is stronger every way.

OLD MAN.
But hast thou nothing…? If he came this day
And sought to show thee, is there no one sign
Whereby to know him?… Stay; the robe was thine,
Work of thy loom, wherein I wrapt him o'er
That night and stole him through the murderers' door.

ELECTRA.
Thou knowest, when Orestes was cast out
I was a child…. If I did weave some clout
Of raiment, would he keep the vesture now
He wore in childhood? Should my weaving grow
As his limbs grew?… 'Tis lost long since. No more!
O, either 'twas some stranger passed, and shore
His locks for very ruth before that tomb:

Or, if he found perchance, to seek his home,
Some spy…

OLD MAN.
The strangers! Where are they? I fain
Would see them, aye, and bid them answer plain…

ELECTRA.
Here at the door! How swift upon the thought!
Enter ORESTES *and* PYLADES.

OLD MAN.
High-born: albeit for that I trust them not.
The highest oft are false…. Howe'er it be,
[*Approaching them*.
I bid the strangers hail!

ORESTES.
All hail to thee,
Greybeard! — Prithee, what man of all the King
Trusted of old, is now this broken thing?

ELECTRA.
'Tis he that trained my father's boyhood.

ORESTES.
How?
And stole from death thy brother? Sayest thou?

ELECTRA.
This man was his deliverer, if it be
Deliverance.

ORESTES.
How his old eye pierceth me,
As one that testeth silver and alloy!
Sees he some likeness here?

ELECTRA.
Perchance ’tis joy,
To see Orestes’ comrade, that he feels.

ORESTES.
None dearer. — But what ails the man? He reels
Dizzily back.

ELECTRA.
I marvel. I can say
No more.

OLD MAN *(in a broken voice)*.
Electra, mistress, daughter, pray!
Pray unto God!

ELECTRA.
Of all the things I crave,
The thousand things, or all that others have,
What should I pray for?

OLD MAN.
Pray thine arms may hold
At last this treasure-dream of more than gold
God shows us!

ELECTRA.
God, I pray thee!… Wouldst thou more?

OLD MAN.
Gaze now upon this man, and bow before
Thy dearest upon earth!

ELECTRA.
I gaze on thee!
O, hath time made thee mad?

OLD MAN.
Mad, that I see
Thy brother?

ELECTRA.
My … I know not what thou say'st:
I looked not for it…

OLD MAN.
I tell thee, here confessed
Standeth Orestes, Agamemnon's son!

ELECTRA.
A sign before I trust thee! O, but one!
How dost thou know…?

OLD MAN.
There, by his brow, I see
The scar he made, that day he ran with thee
Chasing thy fawn, and fell.

ELECTRA *(in a dull voice)*.
A scar? 'Tis so.
I see a scar.

OLD MAN.
And fearest still to throw
Thine arms round him thou lovest?

ELECTRA.
O, no more!
Thy sign hath conquered me…. *(throwing herself into ORESTES' arms)*.
At last, at last!
Thy face like light! And do I hold thee fast,
Unhoped for?

ORESTES.
Yea, at last! And I hold thee.

ELECTRA.
I never knew…

ORESTES.
I dreamed not.

ELECTRA.
Is it he,
Orestes?

ORESTES.
Thy defender, yea, alone
To fight the world! Lo, this day have I thrown
A net, which once unbroken from the sea
Drawn home, shall … O, and it must surely be!
Else men shall know there is no God, no light
In Heaven, if wrong to the end shall conquer right.

CHORUS.
Comest thou, comest thou now,
Chained by the years and slow,
O Day long sought?
A light on the mountains cold
Is lit, yea, a fire burneth,
'Tis the light of one that turneth
From roamings manifold,
Back out of exile old
To the house that knew him not.
Some spirit hath turned our way,
Victory visible,
Walking at thy right hand,
Belovèd; O lift this day
Thine arms, thy voice, as a spell;
And pray for thy brother, pray,
Threading the perilous land,
That all be well!

ORESTES.
Enough; this dear delight is mine at last
Of thine embracing; and the hour comes fast
When we shall stand again as now we stand,
And stint not. — Stay, Old Man: thou, being at hand
At the edge of time, advise me, by what way
Best to requite my father's murderers. Say,
Have I in Argos any still to trust;
Or is the love, once borne me, trod in dust,
Even as my fortunes are? Whom shall I seek?
By day or night? And whither turn, to wreak
My will on them that hate us? Say.

OLD MAN.
My son,
In thine adversity, there is not one
Will call thee friend. Nay, that were treasure-trove,
A friend to share, not faltering from love,
Fair days and foul the same. Thy name is gone
Forth to all Argos, as a thing o'erthrown
And dead. Thou hast not left one spark to glow
With hope in one friend's heart! Hear all, and know:
Thou hast God's fortune and thine own right hand,
Naught else, to conquer back thy fatherland.

ORESTES.
The deed, the deed! What must we do?

OLD MAN.
Strike down
Aegisthus … and thy mother.

ORESTES.
'Tis the crown
My race is run for. But how find him?

OLD MAN.
Not

Within the city walls, however hot
Thy spirit.

ORESTES.
Ha! With watchers doth he go
Begirt, and mailèd pikemen?

OLD MAN.
Even so:
He lives in fear of thee, and night nor day
Hath slumber.

ORESTES.
That way blocked!— 'Tis thine to say
What next remains.

OLD MAN.
I will; and thou give ear.
A thought has found me!

ORESTES.
All good thoughts be near,
For thee to speak and me to understand!

OLD MAN.
But now I saw Aegisthus, close at hand
As here I journeyed.

ORESTES.
That good word shall trace
My path for me! Thou saw'st him? In what place?

OLD MAN.
Out on the pastures where his horses stray.

ORESTES.
What did he there so far? — A gleam of day
Crosseth our darkness.

OLD MAN.
'Twas a feast, methought,
Of worship to the wild-wood nymphs he wrought.

ORESTES.
The watchers of men's birth? Is there a son
New born to him, or doth he pray for one
That cometh? [*Movement of* ELECTRA.

OLD MAN.
More I know not; he had there
A wreathed ox, as for some weighty prayer.

ORESTES.
What force was with him? Not his serfs alone?

OLD MAN.
No Argive lord was there; none but his own
Household.

ORESTES.
Not any that aught know my face,
Or guess?

OLD MAN.
Thralls, thralls; who ne'er have seen thy face.

ORESTES.
Once I prevail, the thralls will welcome me!

OLD MAN.
The slaves' way, that; and no ill thing for thee!

ORESTES.
How can I once come near him?

OLD MAN.
Walk thy ways

Hard by, where he may see thee, ere he slays
His sacrifice.

ORESTES.
How? Is the road so nigh?

OLD MAN.
He cannot choose but see thee, passing by,
And bid thee stay to share the beast they kill.

ORESTES.
A bitter fellow-feaster, if God will!

OLD MAN.
And then … then swift be heart and brain, to see
God's chances!

ORESTES.
Aye. Well hast thou counselled me.
But … where is she?

OLD MAN.
In Argos now, I guess;
But goes to join her husband, ere the press
Of the feast.

ORESTES.
Why goeth not my mother straight
Forth at her husband's side?

OLD MAN.
She fain will wait
Until the gathered country-folk be gone.

ORESTES.
Enough! She knows what eyes are turned upon
Her passings in the land!

OLD MAN.
Aye, all men hate
The unholy woman.

ORESTES.
How then can I set
My snare for wife and husband in one breath?

ELECTRA *(coming forward)*.
Hold! It is I must work our mother's death.

ORESTES.
If that be done, I think the other deed
Fortune will guide.

ELECTRA.
This man must help our need,
One friend alone for both.

OLD MAN.
He will, he will!
Speak on. What cunning hast thou found to fill
Thy purpose?

ELECTRA.
Get thee forth, Old Man, and quick
Tell Clytemnestra … tell her I lie sick,
New-mothered of a man-child.

OLD MAN.
Thou hast borne
A son! But when?

ELECTRA.
Let this be the tenth morn.
Till then a mother stays in sanctity,
Unseen.

OLD MAN.
And if I tell her, where shall be
The death in this?

ELECTRA.
That word let her but hear,
Straight she will seek me out!

OLD MAN.
The queen! What care
Hath she for thee, or pain of thine?

ELECTRA.
She will;
And weep my babe's low station!

OLD MAN.
Thou hast skill
To know her, child; say on.

ELECTRA.
But bring her here,
Here to my hand; the rest will come.

OLD MAN.
I swear,
Here at the gate she shall stand palpable!

ELECTRA.
The gate: the gate that leads to me and Hell.

OLD MAN.
Let me but see it, and I die content.

ELECTRA.
First, then, my brother: see his steps be bent…

OLD MAN.
Straight yonder, where Aegisthus makes his prayer!

ELECTRA.
Then seek my mother's presence, and declare
My news.

OLD MAN.
Thy very words, child, as tho' spoke
From thine own lips!

ELECTRA.
Brother, thine hour is struck.
Thou standest in the van of war this day.

ORESTES *(rousing himself)*.
Aye, I am ready…. I will go my way,
If but some man will guide me.

OLD MAN.
Here am I,
To speed thee to the end, right thankfully.

ORESTES *(turning as he goes and raising his hands to heaven)*.
Zeus of my sires, Zeus of the lost battle,

ELECTRA.
Have pity; have pity; we have earned it well!

OLD MAN.
Pity these twain, of thine own body sprung!

ELECTRA.
O Queen o'er Argive altars, Hera high,

ORESTES.
Grant us thy strength, if for the right we cry.

OLD MAN.
Strength to these twain, to right their father's wrong!

ELECTRA.
O Earth, deep Earth, to whom I yearn in vain,

ORESTES.
And deeper thou, O father darkly slain,

OLD MAN.
Thy children call, who love thee: hearken thou!

ORESTES.
Girt with thine own dead armies, wake, O wake!

ELECTRA.
With all that died at Ilion for thy sake …

OLD MAN.
And hate earth's dark defilers; help us now!

ELECTRA.
Dost hear us yet, O thou in deadly wrong,
Wronged by my mother?

OLD MAN.
Child, we stay too long.
He hears; be sure he hears!

ELECTRA.
And while he hears,
I speak this word for omen in his ears:
"Aegisthus dies, Aegisthus dies."… Ah me,
My brother, should it strike not him, but thee,
This wrestling with dark death, behold, I too
Am dead that hour. Think of me as one true,
Not one that lives. I have a sword made keen
For this, and shall strike deep.

I will go in
And make all ready. If there come from thee
Good tidings, all my house for ecstasy
Shall cry; and if we hear that thou art dead,
Then comes the other end! — Lo, I have said.

ORESTES.
I know all, all.

ELECTRA.
Then be a man to-day!
[ORESTES *and the* OLD MAN *depart*.
O Women, let your voices from this fray
Flash me a fiery signal, where I sit,
The sword across my knees, expecting it.
For never, though they kill me, shall they touch
My living limbs! — I know my way thus much.
[*She goes into the house*.
* * * * *

CHORUS.
When white-haired folk are met [*Strophe*.
In Argos about the fold,
A story lingereth yet,
A voice of the mountains old,
That tells of the Lamb of Gold:
A lamb from a mother mild,
But the gold of it curled and beat;
And Pan, who holdeth the keys of the wild,
Bore it to Atreus' feet:
His wild reed pipes he blew,
And the reeds were filled with peace,
And a joy of singing before him flew,
Over the fiery fleece:
And up on the basèd rock,
As a herald cries, cried he:
"Gather ye, gather, O Argive folk,

The King's Sign to see,
The sign of the blest of God,
For he that hath this, hath all!"
Therefore the dance of praise they trod
In the Atreïd brethren's hall.
They opened before men's eyes [*Antistrophe*.
That which was hid before,
The chambers of sacrifice,
The dark of the golden door,
And fires on the altar floor.
And bright was every street,
And the voice of the Muses' tree.
The carven lotus, was lifted sweet;
When afar and suddenly,
Strange songs, and a voice that grew:
"Come to your king, ye folk!
Mine, mine, is the Golden Ewe!"
'Twas dark Thyestes spoke.
For, lo, when the world was still,
With his brother's bride he lay,
And won her to work his will,
And they stole the Lamb away!
Then forth to the folk strode he,
And called them about his fold,
And showed that Sign of the King to be,
The fleece and the horns of gold.
Then, then, the world was changed; [*Strophe* 2.
And the Father, where they ranged,
Shook the golden stars and glowing,
And the great Sun stood deranged
In the glory of his going.
Lo, from that day forth, the East
Bears the sunrise on his breast,
And the flaming Day in heaven
Down the dim ways of the west
Driveth, to be lost at even.
The wet clouds to Northward beat;

And Lord Ammon's desert seat
Crieth from the South, unslaken,
For the dews that once were sweet,
For the rain that God hath taken.
'Tis a children's tale, that old [*Antistrophe* 2.
Shepherds on far hills have told;
And we reck not of their telling,
Deem not that the Sun of gold
Ever turned his fiery dwelling,
Or beat backward in the sky,
For the wrongs of man, the cry
Of his ailing tribes assembled,
To do justly, ere they die!
Once, men told the tale, and trembled;
Fearing God, O Queen: whom thou
Hast forgotten, till thy brow
With old blood is dark and daunted.
And thy brethren, even now,
Walk among the stars, enchanted.

LEADER.
Ha, friends, was that a voice? Or some dream sound
Of voices shaketh me, as underground
God's thunder shuddering? Hark, again, and clear!
It swells upon the wind. — Come forth and hear!
Mistress, Electra!

ELECTRA, *a bare sword in her hand, comes from the house.*

ELECTRA.
Friends! Some news is brought?
How hath the battle ended?

LEADER.
I know naught.
There seemed a cry as of men massacred!

ELECTRA.
I heard it too. Far off, but still I heard.

LEADER.
A distant floating voice … Ah, plainer now!

ELECTRA.
Of Argive anguish! — Brother, is it thou?

LEADER.
I know not. Many confused voices cry…

ELECTRA.
Death, then for me! That answer bids me die.

LEADER.
Nay, wait! We know not yet thy fortune. Wait!

ELECTRA.
No messenger from him! — Too late, too late!

LEADER.
The message yet will come. 'Tis not a thing
So light of compass, to strike down a king.
Enter a MESSENGER, *running*.

MESSENGER.
Victory, Maids of Argos, Victory!
Orestes … all that love him, list to me!…
Hath conquered! Agamemnon's murderer lies
Dead! O give thanks to God with happy cries!

ELECTRA.
Who art thou? I mistrust thee…. 'Tis a plot!

MESSENGER.
Thy brother's man. Look well. Dost know me not?

ELECTRA.
Friend, friend; my terror made me not to see
Thy visage. Now I know and welcome thee.
How sayst thou? He is dead, verily dead,
My father's murderer…?

MESSENGER.
Shall it be said
Once more? I know again and yet again
Thy heart would hear. Aegisthus lieth slain!

ELECTRA.
Ye Gods! And thou, O Right, that seest all,
Art come at last?… But speak; how did he fall?
How swooped the wing of death?… I crave to hear.

MESSENGER.
Forth of this hut we set our faces clear
To the world, and struck the open chariot road;
Then on toward the pasture lands, where stood
The great Lord of Mycenae. In a set
Garden beside a channelled rivulet,
Culling a myrtle garland for his brow,
He walked: but hailed us as we passed: "How now,
Strangers! Who are ye? Of what city sprung,
And whither bound?" "Thessalians," answered young
Orestes: "to Alpheüs journeying,
With gifts to Olympian Zeus." Whereat the king:
"This while, beseech you, tarry, and make full
The feast upon my hearth. We slay a bull
Here to the Nymphs. Set forth at break of day
To-morrow, and 'twill cost you no delay.
But come" — and so he gave his hand, and led
The two men in— "I must not be gainsaid;
Come to the house. Ho, there; set close at hand
Vats of pure water, that the guests may stand
At the altar's verge, where falls the holy spray."

Then quickly spake Orestes: “By the way
We cleansed us in a torrent stream. We need
No purifying here. But if indeed
Strangers may share thy worship, here are we
Ready, O King, and swift to follow thee.”
So spoke they in the midst. And every thrall
Laid down the spears they served the King withal,
And hied him to the work. Some bore amain
The death-vat, some the corbs of hallowed grain;
Or kindled fire, and round the fire and in
Set cauldrons foaming; and a festal din
Filled all the place. Then took thy mother’s lord
The ritual grains, and o’er the altar poured
Its due, and prayed: “O Nymphs of Rock and Mere,
With many a sacrifice for many a year,
May I and she who waits at home for me,
My Tyndarid Queen, adore you. May it be
Peace with us always, even as now; and all
Ill to mine enemies” — meaning withal
Thee and Orestes. Then my master prayed
Against that prayer, but silently, and said
No word, to win once more his fatherland.
Then in the corb Aegisthus set his hand,
Took the straight blade, cut from the proud bull’s head
A lock, and laid it where the fire was red;
Then, while the young men held the bull on high,
Slew it with one clean gash; and suddenly
Turned on thy brother: “Stranger, every true
Thessalian, so the story goes, can hew
A bull’s limbs clean, and tame a mountain steed.
Take up the steel, and show us if indeed
Rumour speak true,” Right swift Orestes took
The Dorian blade, back from his shoulders shook
His broochèd mantle, called on Pylades
To aid him, and waved back the thralls. With ease
Heelwise he held the bull, and with one glide
Bared the white limb; then stripped the mighty hide

From off him, swifter than a runner runs
His furlongs, and laid clean the flank. At once
Aegisthus stooped, and lifted up with care
The ominous parts, and gazed. No lobe was there;
But lo, strange caves of gall, and, darkly raised,
The portal vein boded to him that gazed
Fell visitations. Dark as night his brow
Clouded. Then spake Orestes: “Why art thou
Cast down so sudden?” “Guest,” he cried, “there be
Treasons from whence I know not, seeking me.
Of all my foes, ’tis Agamemnon’s son;
His hate is on my house, like war.” “Have done!”
Orestes cried: “thou fear’st an exile’s plot,
Lord of a city? Make thy cold heart hot
With meat. — Ho, fling me a Thessalian steel!
This Dorian is too light. I will unseal
The breast of him.” He took the heavier blade,
And clave the bone. And there Aegisthus stayed,
The omens in his hand, dividing slow
This sign from that; till, while his head bent low,
Up with a leap thy brother flashed the sword,
Then down upon his neck, and cleft the cord
Of brain and spine. Shuddering the body stood
One instant in an agony of blood,
And gasped and fell. The henchmen saw, and straight
Flew to their spears, a host of them to set
Against those twain. But there the twain did stand
Unfaltering, each his iron in his hand,
Edge fronting edge. Till “Hold,” Orestes calls:
“I come not as in wrath against these walls
And mine own people. One man righteously
I have slain, who slew my father. It is I,
The wronged Orestes! Hold, and smite me not,
Old housefolk of my father!” When they caught
That name, their lances fell. And one old man,
An ancient in the house, drew nigh to scan
His face, and knew him. Then with one accord

They crowned thy brother's temples, and outpoured
joy and loud songs. And hither now he fares
To show the head, no Gorgon, that he bears,
But that Aegisthus whom thou hatest! Yea,
Blood against blood, his debt is paid this day.
[*He goes off to meet the others* — ELECTRA *stands as though stupefied*.

CHORUS.
Now, now thou shalt dance in our dances,
Beloved, as a fawn in the night!
The wind is astir for the glances
Of thy feet; thou art robed with delight.
He hath conquered, he cometh to free us
With garlands new-won,
More high than the crowns of Alpheüs,
Thine own father's son:
Cry, cry, for the day that is won!

ELECTRA.
O Light of the Sun, O chariot wheels of flame,
O Earth and Night, dead Night without a name
That held me! Now mine eyes are raised to see,
And all the doorways of my soul flung free.
Aegisthus dead! My father's murderer dead!
What have I still of wreathing for the head
Stored in my chambers? Let it come forth now
To bind my brother's and my conqueror's brow.
[*Some garlands are brought out from the house to* ELECTRA.

CHORUS.
Go, gather thy garlands, and lay them
As a crown on his brow, many-tressed,
But our feet shall refrain not nor stay them:
'Tis the joy that the Muses have blest.
For our king is returned as from prison,
The old king, to be master again,
Our belovèd in justice re-risen:

With guile he hath slain…
But cry, cry in joyance again!
[*There enter from the left* ORESTES *and* PYLADES, *followed by some thralls*.

ELECTRA.
O conqueror, come! The king that trampled Troy
Knoweth his son Orestes. Come in joy,
Brother, and take to bind thy rippling hair
My crowns!…. O what are crowns, that runners wear
For some vain race? But thou in battle true
Hast felled our foe Aegisthus, him that slew
By craft thy sire and mine. [*She crowns* ORESTES.
And thou no less,
O friend at need, O reared in righteousness,
Take, Pylades, this chaplet from my hand.
'Twas half thy battle. And may ye two stand
Thus alway, victory-crowned, before my face! [*She crowns* PYLADES.

ORESTES.
Electra, first as workers of this grace
Praise thou the Gods, and after, if thou will,
Praise also me, as chosen to fulfil
God's work and Fate's. — Aye, 'tis no more a dream;
In very deed I come from slaying him.
Thou hast the knowledge clear, but lo, I bring
More also. See himself, dead!
[*Attendants bring in the body of* AEGISTHUS *on a bier*.
Wouldst thou fling
This lord on the rotting earth for beasts to tear?
Or up, where all the vultures of the air
May glut them, pierce and nail him for a sign
Far off? Work all thy will. Now he is thine.

ELECTRA.
It shames me; yet, God knows, I hunger sore —

ORESTES.
What wouldst thou? Speak; the old fear nevermore
Need touch thee.

ELECTRA.
To let loose upon the dead
My hate! Perchance to rouse on mine own head
The sleeping hate of the world?

ORESTES.
No man that lives
Shall scathe thee by one word.

ELECTRA.
Our city gives
Quick blame; and little love have men for me.

ORESTES.
If aught thou hast unsaid, sister, be free
And speak. Between this man and us no bar
Cometh nor stint, but the utter rage of war.
[*She goes and stands over the body. A moment's silence*.

ELECTRA.
Ah me, what have I? What first flood of hate
To loose upon thee? What last curse to sate
My pain, or river of wild words to flow
Bank-high between?… Nothing?… And yet I know
There hath not passed one sun, but through the long
Cold dawns, over and over, like a song,
I have said them — words held back, O, some day yet
To flash into thy face, would but the fret
Of ancient fear fall loose and let me free.
And free I am, now; and can pay to thee
At last the weary debt.
Oh, thou didst kill
My soul within. Who wrought thee any ill,
That thou shouldst make me fatherless? Aye, me

And this my brother, loveless, solitary?
’Twas thou, didst bend my mother to her shame:
Thy weak hand murdered him who led to fame
The hosts of Hellas — thou, that never crossed
O’erseas to Troy!… God help thee, wast thou lost
In blindness, long ago, dreaming, some-wise,
She would be true with thee, whose sin and lies
Thyself had tasted in my father’s place?
And then, that thou wert happy, when thy days
Were all one pain? Thou knewest ceaselessly
Her kiss a thing unclean, and she knew thee
A lord so little true, so dearly won!
So lost ye both, being in falseness one,
What fortune else had granted; she thy curse,
Who marred thee as she loved thee, and thou hers…
And on thy ways thou heardst men whispering,
“Lo, the Queen’s husband yonder” — not “the King.”
  And then the lie of lies that dimmed thy brow,
Vaunting that by thy gold, thy chattels, Thou
Wert Something; which themselves are nothingness.
Shadows, to clasp a moment ere they cease.
The thing thou art, and not the things thou hast,
Abideth, yea, and bindeth to the last
Thy burden on thee: while all else, ill-won
And sin-companioned, like a flower o’erblown,
Flies on the wind away.
      Or didst them find
In women … Women?… Nay, peace, peace! The blind
Could read thee. Cruel wast thou in thine hour,
Lord of a great king’s house, and like a tower
Firm in thy beauty. [*Starting back with a look of loathing*.
      Ah, that girl-like face!
God grant, not that, not that, but some plain grace
Of manhood to the man who brings me love:
A father of straight children, that shall move
Swift on the wings of War.
  So, get thee gone!

Naught knowing how the great years, rolling on,
Have laid thee bare, and thy long debt full paid.
O vaunt not, if one step be proudly made
In evil, that all Justice is o'ercast:
Vaunt not, ye men of sin, ere at the last
The thin-drawn marge before you glimmereth
Close, and the goal that wheels 'twixt life and death.

LEADER.
Justice is mighty. Passing dark hath been
His sin: and dark the payment of his sin.

ELECTRA *(with a weary sigh, turning from the body)*.
Ah me! Go some of you, bear him from sight,
That when my mother come, her eyes may light
On nothing, nothing, till she know the sword….
[*The body is borne into the hut*. PYLADES *goes with it*.

ORESTES *(looking along the road)*.
Stay, 'tis a new thing! We have still a word
To speak…

ELECTRA.
What? Not a rescue from the town
Thou seëst?

ORESTES.
'Tis my mother comes: my own
Mother, that bare me. [*He takes off his crown*.

ELECTRA *(springing, as it were, to life again, and moving where she can see the road)*.
Straight into the snare!
Aye, there she cometh, — Welcome in thy rare
Chariot! All welcome in thy brave array!

ORESTES.
What would we with our mother? Didst thou say

Kill her?

ELECTRA *(turning on him)*.
What? Is it pity? Dost thou fear
To see thy mother's shape?

ORESTES.
'Twas she that bare
My body into life. She gave me suck.
How can I strike her?

ELECTRA.
Strike her as she struck
Our father!

ORESTES *(to himself, brooding)*.
Phoebus, God, was all thy mind
Turned unto darkness?

ELECTRA.
If thy God be blind,
Shalt thou have light?

ORESTES *(as before)*.
Thou, thou, didst bid me kill
My mother: which is sin.

ELECTRA.
How brings it ill
To thee, to raise our father from the dust?

ORESTES.
I was a clean man once. Shall I be thrust
From men's sight, blotted with her blood?

ELECTRA.
Thy blot
Is black as death if him thou succour not!

ORESTES.
Who shall do judgment on me, when she dies?

ELECTRA.
Who shall do judgment, if thy father lies.
Forgotten?

ORESTES *(turning suddenly to ELECTRA)*.
Stay! How if some fiend of Hell,
Hid in God's likeness, spake that oracle?

ELECTRA.
In God's own house? I trow not.

ORESTES.
And I trow
It was an evil charge! [*He moves away from her.*

ELECTRA *(almost despairing)*.
To fail me now!
To fail me now! A coward! — O brother, no!

ORESTES.
What shall it be, then? The same stealthy blow …

ELECTRA.
That slew our father! Courage! thou hast slain
Aegisthus.

ORESTES.
Aye. So be it. — I have ta'en
A path of many terrors: and shall do
Deeds horrible. 'Tis God will have it so….
Is this the joy of battle, or wild woe? [*He goes into the house.*

LEADER.
O Queen o'er Argos thronèd high,
O Woman, sister of the twain,

God's Horsemen, stars without a stain,
Whose home is in the deathless sky,
Whose glory in the sea's wild pain,
Toiling to succour men that die:
Long years above us hast thou been,
God-like for gold and marvelled power:
Ah, well may mortal eyes this hour
Observe thy state: All hail, O Queen!
Enter from the right CLYTEMNESTRA *on a chariot, accompanied by richly dressed Handmaidens*.

CLYTEMNESTRA.
Down from the wain, ye dames of Troy, and hold
Mine arm as I dismount…. [*Answering* ELECTRA'S *thought*.
The spoils and gold
Of Ilion I have sent out of my hall
To many shrines. These bondwomen are all
I keep in mine own house…. Deemst thou the cost
Too rich to pay me for the child I lost —
Fair though they be?

ELECTRA.
Nay, Mother, here am I
Bond likewise, yea, and homeless, to hold high
Thy royal arm!

CLYTEMNESTRA.
Child, the war slaves are here;
Thou needst not toil.

ELECTRA.
What was it but the spear
Of war, drove me forth too? Mine enemies
Have sacked my father's house, and, even as these,
Captives and fatherless, made me their prey.

CLYTEMNESTRA.
It was thy father cast his child away,

A child he might have loved!… Shall I speak out?
(Controlling herself) Nay; when a woman once is caught about
With evil fame, there riseth in her tongue
A bitter spirit — wrong, I know! Yet, wrong
Or right, I charge ye look on the deeds done;
And if ye needs must hate, when all is known,
Hate on! What profits loathing ere ye know?
  My father gave me to be his. 'Tis so.
But was it his to kill me, or to kill
The babes I bore? Yet, lo, he tricked my will
With fables of Achilles' love: he bore
To Aulis and the dark ship-clutching shore,
He held above the altar-flame, and smote,
Cool as one reaping, through the strainèd throat,
My white Iphigenia…. Had it been
To save some falling city, leaguered in
With foemen; to prop up our castle towers,
And rescue other children that were ours,
Giving one life for many, by God's laws
I had forgiven all! Not so. Because
Helen was wanton, and her master knew
No curb for her: for that, for that, he slew
My daughter! — Even then, with all my wrong,
No wild beast yet was in me. Nay, for long,
I never would have killed him. But he came,
At last, bringing that damsel, with the flame
Of God about her, mad and knowing all:
And set her in my room; and in one wall
Would hold two queens! — O wild are woman's eyes
And hot her heart. I say not otherwise.
But, being thus wild, if then her master stray
To love far off, and cast his own away,
Shall not her will break prison too, and wend
Somewhere to win some other for a friend?
And then on us the world's curse waxes strong
In righteousness! The lords of all the wrong
Must hear no curse! — I slew him. I trod then

The only road: which led me to the men
He hated. Of the friends of Argos whom
Durst I have sought, to aid me to the doom
I craved? — Speak if thou wouldst, and fear not me,
If yet thou deemst him slain unrighteously.

LEADER.
Thy words be just, yet shame their justice brings;
A woman true of heart should bear all things
From him she loves. And she who feels it not,
I cannot reason of her, nor speak aught.

ELECTRA.
Remember, mother, thy last word of grace,
Bidding me speak, and fear not, to thy face.

CLYTEMNESTRA.
So said I truly, child, and so say still.

ELECTRA.
Wilt softly hear, and after work me ill?

CLYTEMNESTRA.
Not so, not so. I will but pleasure thee.

ELECTRA.
I answer then. And, mother, this shall be
My prayer of opening, where hangs the whole:
Would God that He had made thee clean of soul!
Helen and thou — O, face and form were fair,
Meet for men's praise; but sisters twain ye were,
Both things of naught, a stain on Castor's star,
And Helen slew her honour, borne afar
In wilful ravishment: but thou didst slay
The highest man of the world. And now wilt say
'Twas wrought in justice for thy child laid low
At Aulis?… Ah, who knows thee as I know?
Thou, thou, who long ere aught of ill was done

Thy child, when Agamemnon scarce was gone,
Sate at the looking-glass, and tress by tress
Didst comb the twined gold in loneliness.
When any wife, her lord being far away.
Toils to be fair, O blot her out that day
As false within! What would she with a cheek
So bright in strange men's eyes, unless she seek
Some treason? None but I, thy child, could so
Watch thee in Hellas: none but I could know
Thy face of gladness when our enemies
Were strong, and the swift cloud upon thine eyes
If Troy seemed falling, all thy soul keen-set
Praying that he might come no more!… And yet
It was so easy to be true. A king
Was thine, not feebler, not in anything
Below Aegisthus; one whom Hellas chose
For chief beyond all kings. Aye, and God knows,
How sweet a name in Greece, after the sin
Thy sister wrought, lay in thy ways to win.
Ill deeds make fair ones shine, and turn thereto
Men's eyes. — Enough: but say he wronged thee; slew
By craft thy child: — what wrong had I done, what
The babe Orestes? Why didst render not
Back unto us, the children of the dead,
Our father's portion? Must thou heap thy bed
With gold of murdered men, to buy to thee
Thy strange man's arms? Justice! Why is not he
Who cast Orestes out, cast out again?
Not slain for me whom doubly he hath slain,
In living death, more bitter than of old
My sister's? Nay, when all the tale is told
Of blood for blood, what murder shall we make,
I and Orestes, for our father's sake?

CLYTEMNESTRA.
Aye, child; I know thy heart, from long ago.
Thou hast alway loved him best. 'Tis oft-time so:

One is her father's daughter, and one hot
To bear her mother's part. I blame thee not….
Yet think not I am happy, child; nor flown
With pride now, in the deeds my hand hath done….
[*Seeing* ELECTRA *unsympathetic, she checks herself.*
But thou art all untended, comfortless
Of body and wild of raiment; and thy stress
Of travail scarce yet ended!… Woe is me!
'Tis all as I have willed it. Bitterly
I wrought against him, to the last blind deep
Of bitterness…. Woe's me!

ELECTRA.
Fair days to weep,
When help is not! Or stay: though he lie cold
Long since, there lives another of thy fold
Far off; there might be pity for thy son?

CLYTEMNESTRA.
I dare not!… Yes, I fear him. 'Tis mine own
Life, and not his, comes first. And rumour saith
His heart yet burneth for his father's death.

ELECTRA.
Why dost thou keep thine husband ever hot
Against me?

CLYTEMNESTRA.
'Tis his mood. And thou art not
So gentle, child!

ELECTRA.
My spirit is too sore!
Howbeit, from this day I will no more
Hate him.

CLYTEMNESTRA *(with a flash of hope)*.
O daughter! — Then, indeed, shall he,

I promise, never more be harsh to thee!

ELECTRA.
He lieth in my house, as ‘twere his own.
’Tis that hath made him proud.

CLYTEMNESTRA.
Nay, art thou flown
To strife again so quick, child?

ELECTRA.
Well; I say
No more; long have I feared him, and alway
Shall fear him, even as now!

CLYTEMNESTRA.
Nay, daughter, peace!
It bringeth little profit, speech like this…
Why didst thou call me hither?

ELECTRA.
It reached thee,
My word that a man-child is born to me?
Do thou make offering for me — for the rite
I know not — as is meet on the tenth night.
I cannot; I have borne no child till now.

CLYTEMNESTRA.
Who tended thee? ’Tis she should make the vow.

ELECTRA.
None tended me. Alone I bare my child.

CLYTEMNESTRA
What, is thy cot so friendless? And this wild
So far from aid?

ELECTRA.
Who seeks for friendship sake
A beggar's house?

CLYTEMNESTRA.
I will go in, and make
Due worship for thy child, the Peace-bringer.
To all thy need I would be minister.
Then to my lord, where by the meadow side
He prays the woodland nymphs.
Ye handmaids, guide
My chariot to the stall, and when ye guess
The rite draws near its end, in readiness
Be here again. Then to my lord!… I owe
My lord this gladness, too.
[*The Attendants depart;* CLYTEMNESTRA, *left alone, proceeds to enter the house*.

ELECTRA.
Welcome below
My narrow roof! But have a care withal,
A grime of smoke lies deep upon the wall.
Soil not thy robe!…
Not far now shall it be,
The sacrifice God asks of me and thee.
The bread of Death is broken, and the knife
Lifted again that drank the Wild Bull's life:
And on his breast…. Ha, Mother, hast slept well
Aforetime? Thou shalt lie with him in Hell.
That grace I give to cheer thee on thy road;
Give thou to me — peace from my father's blood!
[*She follows her mother into the house*.

CHORUS.
Lo, the returns of wrong.
The wind as a changèd thing
Whispereth overhead

Of one that of old lay dead
In the water lapping long:
My King, O my King!
A cry in the rafters then
Rang, and the marble dome:
"Mercy of God, not thou,
"Woman! To slay me now,
"After the harvests ten
"Now, at the last, come home!"
O Fate shall turn as the tide,
Turn, with a doom of tears
For the flying heart too fond;
A doom for the broken bond.
She hailed him there in his pride,
Home from the perilous years,
In the heart of his wallèd lands,
In the Giants' cloud-capt ring;
Herself, none other, laid
The hone to the axe's blade;
She lifted it in her hands,
The woman, and slew her king.
Woe upon spouse and spouse,
Whatso of evil sway
Held her in that distress!
Even as a lioness
Breaketh the woodland boughs
Starving, she wrought her way.

VOICE OF CLYTEMNESTRA.
O Children, Children; in the name of God,
Slay not your mother!
A WOMAN.
Did ye hear a cry
Under the rafters?

ANOTHER.
I weep too, yea, I;

Down on the mother's heart the child hath trod!
[*A death-cry from within*.

ANOTHER.
God bringeth Justice in his own slow tide.
Aye, cruel is thy doom; but thy deeds done
Evil, thou piteous woman, and on one
Whose sleep was by thy side!
[*The door bursts open, and* ORESTES *and* ELECTRA *come forth in disorder. Attendants bring out the bodies of* CLYTEMNESTRA *and* AEGISTHUS.

LEADER.
Lo, yonder, in their mother's new-spilt gore
Red-garmented and ghastly, from the door
They reel…. O horrible! Was it agony
Like this, she boded in her last wild cry?
There lives no seed of man calamitous,
Nor hath lived, like this seed of Tantalus.

ORESTES.
O Dark of the Earth, O God,
Thou to whom all is plain;
Look on my sin, my blood,
This horror of dead things twain;
Gathered as one they lie
Slain; and the slayer was I,
I, to pay for my pain!

ELECTRA.
Let tear rain upon tear,
Brother: but mine is the blame.
A fire stood over her,
And out of the fire I came,
I, in my misery….
And I was the child at her knee.
'Mother' I named her name.

CHORUS.
Alas for Fate, for the Fate of thee,
O Mother, Mother of Misery:
And Misery, lo, hath turned again,
To slay thee, Misery and more,
Even in the fruit thy body bore.
Yet hast thou Justice, Justice plain,
  For a sire's blood spilt of yore!

ORESTES.
Apollo, alas for the hymn
  Thou sangest, as hope in mine ear!
The Song was of Justice dim,
  But the Deed is anguish clear;
And the Gift, long nights of fear,
  Of blood and of wandering,
  Where cometh no Greek thing,
Nor sight, nor sound on the air.
Yea, and beyond, beyond,
  Roaming — what rest is there?
Who shall break bread with me?
Who, that is clean, shall see
And hate not the blood-red hand,
  His mother's murderer?

ELECTRA.
And I? What clime shall hold
  My evil, or roof it above?
I cried for dancing of old,
  I cried in my heart for love:
What dancing waiteth me now?
What love that shall kiss my brow
  Nor blench at the brand thereof?

CHORUS.
Back, back, in the wind and rain
Thy driven spirit wheeleth again.

Now is thine heart made clean within
That was dark of old and murder-fraught.
But, lo, thy brother; what hast thou wrought….
Yea, though I love thee…. what woe, what sin,
  On him, who willed it not!

ORESTES.
Saw'st thou her raiment there,
  Sister, there in the blood?
  She drew it back as she stood,
She opened her bosom bare,
  She bent her knees to the earth,
  The knees that bent in my birth….
And I … Oh, her hair, her hair….
      [*He breaks into inarticulate weeping*

CHORUS.
Oh, thou didst walk in agony,
Hearing thy mother's cry, the cry
Of wordless wailing, well know I.

ELECTRA.
She stretched her hand to my cheek,
  And there brake from her lips a moan;
  'Mercy, my child, my own!'
Her hand clung to my cheek;
Clung, and my arm was weak;
  And the sword fell and was gone.

CHORUS.
Unhappy woman, could thine eye
Look on the blood, and see her lie,
Thy mother, where she turned to die?

ORESTES.
I lifted over mine eyes
  My mantle: blinded I smote,

As one smiteth a sacrifice;
  And the sword found her throat.

ELECTRA.
I gave thee the sign and the word;
I touched with mine hand thy sword.

LEADER.
Dire is the grief ye have wrought.

ORESTES.
Sister, touch her again:
  Oh, veil the body of her;
  Shed on her raiment fair,
And close that death-red stain.
 — Mother! And didst thou bear,
Bear in thy bitter pain,
  To life, thy murderer?
[*The two kneel over the body of* CLYTEMNESTRA, *and cover her with raiment*.

ELECTRA.
On her that I loved of yore,
  Robe upon robe I cast:
On her that I hated sore.

CHORUS.
O House that hath hated sore,
  Behold thy peace at the last!
* * * * *

LEADER.
Ha, see: above the roof-tree high
  There shineth … Is some spirit there
  Of earth or heaven? That thin air
Was never trod by things that die!
  What bodes it now that forth they fare,
To men revealèd visibly?

[*There appears in the air a vision of* CASTOR *and* POLYDEUCES. *The mortals kneel or veil their faces.*

CASTOR.
Thou Agamemnon's Son, give ear! 'Tis we.
Castor and Polydeuces, call to thee,
God's Horsemen and thy mother's brethren twain.
An Argive ship, spent with the toiling main,
We bore but now to peace, and, here withal
Being come, have seen thy mother's bloody fall,
Our sister's. Righteous is her doom this day,
But not thy deed. And Phoebus, Phoebus … Nay;
He is my lord; therefore I hold my peace.
Yet though in light he dwell, no light was this
He showed to thee, but darkness! Which do thou
Endure, as man must, chafing not. And now
Fare forth where Zeus and Fate have laid thy life.
  The maid Electra thou shalt give for wife
To Pylades; then turn thy head and flee
From Argos' land. 'Tis never more for thee
To tread this earth where thy dead mother lies.
And, lo, in the air her Spirits, bloodhound eyes,
Most horrible yet Godlike, hard at heel
Following shall scourge thee as a burning wheel,
Speed-maddened. Seek thou straight Athena's land,
And round her awful image clasp thine hand,
Praying: and she will fence them back, though hot
With flickering serpents, that they touch thee not,
Holding above thy brow her gorgon shield.
  There is a hill in Athens, Ares' field,
Where first for that first death by Ares done
On Halirrhothius, Poseidon's son,
Who wronged his daughter, the great Gods of yore
Held judgment: and true judgments evermore
Flow from that Hill, trusted of man and God.
There shalt thou stand arraignèd of this blood;
And of those judges half shall lay on thee

Death, and half pardon; so shalt thou go free.
For Phoebus in that hour, who bade thee shed
Thy mother's blood, shall take on his own head
The stain thereof. And ever from that strife
The law shall hold, that when, for death or life
Of one pursued, men's voices equal stand,
Then Mercy conquereth. — But for thee, the band
Of Spirits dread, down, down, in very wrath,
Shall sink beside that Hill, making their path
Through a dim chasm, the which shall aye be trod
By reverent feet, where men may speak with God.
But thou forgotten and far off shalt dwell,
By great Alpheüs' waters, in a dell
Of Arcady, where that gray Wolf-God's wall
Stands holy. And thy dwelling men shall call
Orestes Town. So much to thee be spoke.
But this dead man, Aegisthus, all the folk
Shall bear to burial in a high green grave
Of Argos. For thy mother, she shall have
Her tomb from Menelaus, who hath come
This day, at last, to Argos, bearing home
Helen. From Egypt comes she, and the hall
Of Proteus, and in Troy hath ne'er at all
Set foot. 'Twas but a wraith of Helen, sent
By Zeus, to make much wrath and ravishment.
  So forth for home, bearing the virgin bride,
Let Pylades make speed, and lead beside
Thy once-named brother, and with golden store
Stablish his house far off on Phocis' shore.
  Up, gird thee now to the steep Isthmian way,
Seeking Athena's blessèd rock; one day,
Thy doom of blood fulfilled and this long stress
Of penance past, thou shalt have happiness.

LEADER *(looking up)*.
  Is it for us, O Seed of Zeus,
    To speak and hear your words again!

CASTOR. Speak: of this blood ye bear no stain.

ELECTRA. I also, sons of Tyndareus,
My kinsmen; may my word be said?

CASTOR. Speak: on Apollo's head we lay
The bloody doings of this day.

LEADER. Ye Gods, ye brethren of the dead,
Why held ye not the deathly herd
Of Kêres back from off this home?

CASTOR. There came but that which needs must come
By ancient Fate and that dark word
That rang from Phoebus in his mood.

ELECTRA. And what should Phoebus seek with me,
Or all God's oracles that be,
That I must bear my mother's blood?

CASTOR. Thy hand was as thy brother's hand,
Thy doom shall be as his. One stain,
From dim forefathers on the twain
Lighting, hath sapped your hearts as sand.

ORESTES *(who has never raised his head, nor spoken to the Gods)*.
After so long, sister, to see
And hold thee, and then part, then part,
By all that chained thee to my heart
Forsaken, and forsaking thee!

CASTOR. Husband and house are hers. She bears
No bitter judgment, save to go
Exiled from Argos.

ELECTRA. And what woe,
What tears are like an exile's tears?

ORESTES. Exiled and more am I; impure,
A murderer in a stranger's hand:

CASTOR. Fear not. There dwells in Pallas' land
All holiness. Till then endure!
[ORESTES *and* ELECTRA *embrace*

ORESTES. Aye, closer; clasp my body well,
And let thy sorrow loose, and shed,
As o'er the grave of one new dead,
Dead evermore, thy last farewell! [*A sound of weeping*.

CASTOR. Alas, what would ye? For that cry
Ourselves and all the sons of heaven
Have pity. Yea, our peace is riven
By the strange pain of these that die.

ORESTES. No more to see thee! ELECTRA. Nor thy breath
Be near my face! ORESTES. Ah, so it ends.

ELECTRA. Farewell, dear Argos. All ye friends,
Farewell! ORESTES. O faithful unto death,
Thou goest? ELECTRA. Aye, I pass from you,
Soft-eyed at last. ORESTES. Go, Pylades,
And God go with you! Wed in peace
My tall Electra, and be true.
[ELECTRA *and* PYLADES *depart to the left.*

CASTOR.
Their troth shall fill their hearts. — But on:
Dread feet are near thee, hounds of prey,
Snake-handed, midnight-visaged, yea,
And bitter pains their fruit! Begone!
[ORESTES *departs to the right*.
But hark, the far Sicilian sea
Calls, and a noise of men and ships
That labour sunken to the lips
In bitter billows; forth go we,

Through the long leagues of fiery blue,
With saving; not to souls unshriven;
But whoso in his life hath striven
To love things holy and be true,
Through toil and storm we guard him; we
Save, and he shall not die! — Therefore,
O praise the lying man no more,
Nor with oath-breakers sail the sea:
Farewell, ye walkers on the shore
Of death! A God hath counselled ye.
[CASTOR *and* POLYDEUCES *disappear*.

CHORUS.

Farewell, farewell! — But he who can so fare,
And stumbleth not on mischief anywhere,
Blessed on earth is he!

HERACLES

Translated by Edward P. Coleridge

This tragedy was first performed in c. 416 BC at the City Dionysia festival and is the second of two surviving tragedies by Euripides where the family of Heracles are suppliants, the first being *Heracleidae* (Heracles' Children). The play narrates how Heracles is tragically driven insane, murdering his wife and children in a frenzy.

As the play opens, Amphitryon outlines the ancestral history of Heracles' and Lycus' families. Lycus is ruling Thebes unlawfully and is about to kill Amphitryon, and Heracles' wife Megara and their children. Heracles is unable to help his family, as he is in Hades engaged in the last of his twelve labours, bringing back the monster Cerberus that guards the gates. The family has taken refuge at the altar of Zeus, where they are forbidden to enter their palace and are watched closely, preventing any escape.

The Chorus sympathises with them, but being formed of old men, they are unable to help. Lycus comes to ask how long they are going to try to prolong their lives by clinging to the altar. He claims that Heracles has been killed in Hades and will never help them. He justifies the proposed slaughter, claiming that Heracles' children will attempt to avenge their grandfather, Creon, by killing Lycus when they grow up. He depreciates the deeds of Heracles, calling him a coward for using a bow instead of a spear. Amphitryon, point by point, argues the other side and asks permission for them to go into exile. Lycus declares that he is through with words and orders his men to burn the suppliants alive. Although Heracles arrives in time to save them, the goddesses Iris and Madness eventually cause him to kill his wife and children in a maddened frenzy.

One of the most famous depictions of Heracles, originally by Lysippos, a Roman copy called Hercules Farnese, 216 CE

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'Hercules on the Pyre' by Guido Reni, c. 1633

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HERACLES

(SCENE:-Before the palace of HERACLES at Thebes. Nearby stands the altar of Zeus, on the steps of which are now seated AMPHITRYON, MEGARA and her sons by HERACLES. They are seeking refuge at the altar.)

AMPHITRYON WHAT mortal hath not heard of him who shared a wife with Zeus, Amphitryon of Argos, whom on a day Alcaeus, son of Perseus begat, Amphitryon the father of Heracles? He it was dwelt here in Thebes, where from the sowing of the dragon's teeth grew up a crop of earth-born giants; for of these Ares saved a scanty band, and their children's children people the city of Cadmus. Hence sprung Creon, son of Menoeceus, king of this land; and Creon became the father of this lady Megara, whom once all Cadmus' race escorted with the glad music of lutes at her wedding, in the day that Heracles, illustrious chief, led her to my halls. Now he, my son, left Thebes where I was settled, left his wife Megara and her kin, eager to make his home in Argolis, in that walled town which the Cyclopes built, whence I am exiled for the slaying of Electryon; so he, wishing to lighten my affliction and to find a home in his own land, did offer Eurystheus a mighty price for my recall, even to free the world of savage monsters, whether it was that Hera goaded him to submit to this, or that fate was leagued against him. Divers are the toils he hath accomplished, and last of all hath he passed through the mouth of Taenarus into the halls of Hades to drag to the light that hound with bodies three, and thence is he never returned. Now there is an ancient legend amongst the race of Cadmus, that one Lycus in days gone by was husband to Dirce being king of this city with its seven towers, before that Amphion and Zethus, sons of Zeus, lords of the milk-white steeds, became rulers in the land. His son, called by the same name as his father, albeit no Theban but a stranger from Euboea, slew Creon, and after that seized the government, having fallen on this city when weakened by dissension. So this connection with Creon is likely to prove to us a serious evil; for now that my son is in the bowels of the earth, this illustrious monarch Lycus is bent on extirpating the children of Heracles, to quench one bloody feud with another, likewise his wife and me, if useless age like mine is to rank amongst men, that the boys may never grow up to exact a

blood-penalty of their uncle's family. So I, left here by my son, whilst he is gone into the pitchy darkness of the earth, to tend and guard his children in his house, am taking my place with their mother, that the race of Heracles may not perish, here at the altar of Zeus the Saviour, which my own gallant child set up to commemorate his glorious victory over the Minyae. And here we are careful to keep our station, though in need of everything, of food, of drink, and raiment, huddled together on the hard bare ground; for we are barred out from our house and sit here for want of any other safety. As for friends, some I see are insincere; while others, who are staunch, have no power to help us further. This is what misfortune means to man; God grant it may never fall to the lot of any who bears the least goodwill to me, to apply this never-failing test of friendship!

MEGARA
Old warrior, who erst did raze the citadel of the Taphians leading on the troops of Thebes to glory, how uncertain are God's dealings with man! For I, as far as concerned my sire was never an outcast of fortune, for he was once accounted a man of might by reason of his wealth, possessed as he was of royal power, for which long spears are launched at the lives of the fortunate through love of it; children too he had; and me did he betroth to thy son, matching me in glorious marriage with Heracles. Whereas now all that is dead and gone from us; and I and thou, old friend, art doomed to die, and these children of Heracles, whom I am guarding 'neath my wing as a bird keepeth her tender chicks under her. And they the while in turn keep asking me, "Mother, whither is our father gone from the land? what is he about? when will he return?" Thus they inquire for their father, in childish perplexity; while I put them off with excuses, inventing stories; but still I wonder if 'tis he whenever a door creaks on its hinges, and up they all start, thinking to embrace their father's knees. What hope or way of salvation art thou now devising, old friend? for to thee I look. We can never steal beyond the boundaries of the land unseen, for there is too strict a watch set on us at every outlet, nor have we any longer hopes of safety in our friends.
Whatever thy scheme is, declare it, lest our death be made ready, while we are only prolonging the time, powerless to escape.

AMPHITRYON 'Tis by no means easy, my daughter, to give one's earnest advice on such matters easily, without weary thought.

MEGARA
Dost need a further taste of grief, or cling so fast to life?

AMPHITRYON
Yes, I love this life, and cling to its hopes.

MEGARA
So do I; but it boots not to expect the unexpected, old friend.

AMPHITRYON
In these delays is left the only cure for our evils.

MEGARA ’Tis the pain of that interval I feel so.

AMPHITRYON
Daughter, there may yet be a happy escape from present troubles for me and thee; my son, thy husband, may yet arrive. So calm thyself, and wipe those tears from thy children’s eyes, and soothe them with soft words, inventing a tale to delude them, piteous though such fraud be. Yea, for men’s misfortunes ofttimes flag, and the stormy wind doth not always blow so strong, nor are the prosperous ever so; for all things change, making way for each other. The bravest man is he who relieth ever on his hopes, but despair is the mark of a coward.

(The CHORUS OF OLD MEN OF THEBES enters.)

CHORUS *(chanting)* To the sheltering roof, to the old man’s couch, leaning on my staff have I set forth, chanting a plaintive dirge like some bird grown grey, I that am but a voice and nothing more, a fancy bred of the visions of sleep by night, palsied with age, yet meaning kindly. All hail! ye orphaned babes! all hail, old friend thou too, -unhappy mother, wailing for thy husband in the halls of Hades!

Faint not too soon upon your way, nor let your limbs grow weary, even as a colt beneath the yoke grows weary as he mounts some stony hill, dragging the weight of a wheeled car. Take hold of hand or robe, whoso feels his footsteps falter. Old friend, escort another like thyself, who erst amid his

toiling peers in the days of our youth would take his place beside thee, no blot upon his country's glorious record.

See, how like their father's sternly flash these children's eyes! Misfortune, God wot, hath not failed his children, nor yet hath his comeliness been denied them. O Hellas! if thou lose these, of what allies wilt thou rob thyself!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS
But I see Lycus, the ruler of this land, drawing near the house.

(Lycus and his attendants enter.)

LYCUS
One question, if I may, to this father of Heracles and his wife; and certainly as your lord and master I have a right to put what questions choose. How long do ye seek to prolong your lives? What hope, what succour do ye see to save you from death? Do you trust that these children's father, who lies dead in the halls of Hades, will return? How unworthily ye show your sorrow at having to die, thou

(to AMPHITRYON) after thy idle boasts, scattered broadcast through Hellas, that Zeus was partner in thy marriage-bed and there begat a new god; and thou *(to MEGARA)* after calling thyself the wife of so peerless a lord.

After all, what was the fine exploit thy husband achieved, if he did kil a hydra in a marsh or that monster of Nemea? which he caught in a snare, for all he says he strangled it to death in his arms. Are these your weapons for the hard struggle? Is it for this then that Heracles' children should be spared? a man who has won a reputation for valour in his contests with beasts, in all else a weakling; who ne'er buckled shield to arm nor faced the spear, but with a bow, that coward's weapon, was ever ready to run away. Archery is no test of manly bravery; no! he is a man who keeps his post in the ranks and steadily faces the swift wound the spear may plough. My policy, again, old man, shows no reckless cruelty, but caution; for I am well aware I slew Creon, the father of Megara, and am in possession of his

throne. So I have no wish that these children should grow up and be left to take vengeance on me in requital for what I have done.

AMPHITRYON
As for Zeus, let Zeus defend his son's case; but as for me, Heracles, I am only anxious on thy behalf to prove by what I say this tyrant's ignorance; for I cannot allow thee to be ill spoken of. First then for that which should never have been said,-for to speak of thee Heracles as coward is, methinks, outside the pale of speech,-of that must I clear the with heaven to witness. I appeal then to the thunder of Zeus, and the chariot wherein he rode, when he pierced the giants, earth's brood, to the heart with his winged shafts, and with gods uplifted the glorious triumph-song; or go to Pholoe and ask the insolent tribe of four-legged Centaurs, thou craven king, ask them who they would judge their bravest foe; will they not say my son, who according to thee is but a pretender? Wert thou to ask Euboean Dirphys, thy native place, it would nowise sing thy praise, for thou hast never done a single gallant deed to which thy country can witness. Next thou dost disparage that clever invention, an archer's weapon; come, listen to me and learn wisdom. A man who fights in line is a slave to his weapons, and if his fellow-comrades want for courage he is slain himself through the cowardice of his neighbours, or, if he break his spear, he has not wherewithal to defend his body from death, having only one means of defence; whereas all who are armed with the trusty bow, though they have but one weapon, yet is it the best; for a man, after discharging countless arrows, still has others wherewith to defend himself from death, and standing at a distance keeps off the enemy, wounding them for all their watchfulness with shafts invisible, and never exposing himself to the foe, but keeping under cover; and this is far the wisest course in battle, to harm the enemy, if they are not stationed out of shot, and keep safe oneself. These arguments are completely opposite to thine with regard to the point at issue. Next, why art thou desirous of slaying these children? What have they done to thee? One piece of wisdom credit thee with, thy coward terror of a brave man's descendants. Still it is hard on us, if for thy cowardice we must die; a fate that ought to have overtaken thee at our braver hands, if Zeus had been fairly disposed towards us. But, if thou art so anxious to make thyself supreme in the land, let us at least go into exile; abstain from all violence, else thou wilt suffer by it whenso the deity causes fortune's breeze to veer round.

Ah! thou land of Cadmus,-for to thee too will I turn, upbraiding thee with words of reproach,-is this your succour of Heracles and his children? the man who faced alone the Minyan host in battle and allowed Thebes to see the light with freemen's eyes. I cannot praise Hellas, nor will I ever keep silence, finding her so craven as regards my son; she should have come with fire and sword and warrior's arms to help these tender babes, to requite him for all his labours in purging land and sea. Such help, my children, neither Hellas nor the city of Thebes affords you; to me a feeble friend ye look, that am but empty sound and nothing more. For the vigour which once I had, is gone from me; my limbs are palsied with age, and my strength is decayed. Were I but young and still a man of my hands, I would have seized my spear and dabbled those flaxen locks of his with blood, so that the coward would now be flying from my prowes beyond the bounds of Atlas.

LEADER
Have not the brave amongst mankind a fair opening for speech, albeit slow to begin?

LYCUS
Say what thou wilt of me in thy exalted phrase, but I by deeds will make thee rue those words. *(Calling to his servants)* Ho! bid wood-cutters go, some to Helicon, others to the glens of Parnassus, and cut me logs of oak, and when they are brought to the town, pile up a stack of wood all round the altar on either side thereof, and set fire to it and burn them all alive, that they may learn that the dead no longer rules this land, but that for the present I am king.

(angrily to the CHORUS) As for you, old men, since ye thwart my views, not for the children of Heracles alone shall ye lament but likewise for every blow that strikes his house, and ye shall ne'er forget ye are slaves and I your prince.

LEADER
Ye sons of Earth, whom Ares on a day did sow, when from the dragon's ravening jaw he had torn the teeth, up with your staves, whereon ye lean your hands, and dash out this miscreant's brains! a fellow who, without even being a Theban, but a foreigner, lords it shamefully o'er the younger folk; but my master shalt thou never be to thy joy, nor shalt thou reap the

harvest of all my toil; begone with my curse upon thee! carry thy insolence back to the place whence it came. For never whilst I live, shalt thou slay these sons of Heracles; not so deep beneath the earth hath their father disappeared from his children's ken. Thou art in possession of this land which thou hast ruined, while he its benefactor has missed his just reward; and yet do I take too much upon myself because I help those I love after their death, when most they need a friend? Ah! right hand, how fain wouldst thou wield the spear, but thy weakness is a death-blow to thy fond desire; for then had I stopped thee calling me slave, and I would have governed Thebes, wherein thou art now exulting, with credit; for city sick with dissension and evil counsels thinketh not aright; otherwise it would never have accepted thee as its master.

MEGARA
Old sirs, I thank you; 'tis right that friends should feel virtuous indignation on behalf of those they love; but do not on our account vent your anger on the tyrant to your own undoing. Hear my advice, Amphitryon, if haply there appear to thee to be aught in what I say. I love my children; strange if I did not love those whom I laboured to bring forth! Death I count a dreadful fate; but the man who wrestles with necessity I esteem a fool. Since we must die, let us do so without being burnt alive, to furnish our foes with food for merriment, which to my mind is an evil worse than death; for many a fair guerdon do we owe our family. Thine has ever been a warrior's fair fame, so 'tis not to be endured that thou shouldst die a coward's death; and my husband's reputation needs no one to witness that he would ne'er consent to save these children's lives by letting them incur the stain of cowardice; for the noble are afflicted by disgrace on account of their children, nor must I shrink from following my lord's example. As to thy hopes consider how I weigh them. Thou thinkest thy son will return from beneath the earth: who ever has come back from the dead out of the halls of Hades? Thou hast a hope perhaps of softening this man by entreaty: no, no! better to fly from one's enemy when he is so brutish, but yield to men of breeding and wisdom; for thou wilt more easily obtain mercy there by friendly overtures. True, a thought has already occurred to me that we might by entreaty obtain a sentence of exile for the children; yet this too is misery, to compass their deliverance with dire penury as the result; for 'tis a saying that hosts look sweetly on banished friends for a day and no more. Steel thy

heart to die with us, for that awaits thee after all. By thy brave soul I challenge thee, old friend; for whoso struggles hard to escape destiny shows zeal no doubt, but 'tis zeal with a taint of folly; for what must be, no one will ever avail to alter.

LEADER
If a man had insulted thee, while yet my arms were lusty, there would have been an easy way to stop him; but now am I a thing of naught; and so thou henceforth, Amphitryon, must scheme how to avert misfortune.

AMPHITRYON 'Tis not cowardice or any longing for life that hinders my dying, but my wish to save my son's children, though no doubt I am vainly wishing for impossibilities. Lo! here is my neck ready for thy sword to pierce, my body for thee to hack or hurl from the rock; only one boon I crave for both of us, O king; slay me and this hapless mother before thou slay the children, that we may not see the hideous sight, as they gasp out their lives, calling on their mother and their father's sire; for the rest work thy will, if so thou art inclined; for we have no defence against death.

MEGARA I too implore thee add a second boon, that by thy single act thou mayst put us both under a double obligation; suffer me to deck my children in the robes of death,-first opening the palace gates, for now are we shut out,-that this at least they may obtain from their father's halls.

LYCUS I grant it, and bid my servants undo the bolts. Go in and deck yourselves; robes I grudge not. But soon as ye have clothed yourselves, I will return to you to consign you to the nether world.

(Lycus and his retinue withdraw.)

MEGARA
Children, follow the footsteps of your hapless mother to your father's halls, where others possess his substance, though his name is still ours.

(MEGARA and her children enter the palace.)

AMPHITRYON O Zeus, in vain it seems, did I get thee to share my bride with me; in vain used we to call thee father of my son. After all thou art less

our friend than thou didst pretend. Great god as thou art, I, a mere mortal. surpass thee in true worth. For I did not betray the children of Heracles; but thou by stealth didst find thy way to my couch, taking another's wife without leave given, while to save thy own friends thou hast no skill. Either thou art a god of little sense, or else naturally unjust.

(AMPHITRYON follows MEGARA into the palace.)

CHORUS *(singing)* Phoebus is singing a plaintive dirge to drown his happier strains, striking with key of gold his sweet-tongued lyre; so too am I fain to sing a song of praise, a crown to all his toil, concerning him who is gone to the gloom beneath the nether world, whether I am to call him son of Zeus or of Amphitryon. For the praise of noble toils accomplished is a glory to the dead. First he cleared the grove of Zeus of a lion, and put its skin upon his back, hiding his auburn hair in its fearful gaping jaws;

Then on a day, with murderous bow he wounded the race of wild Centaurs, that range the hills, slaying them with winged shafts; Peneus, the river of fair eddies, knows him well, and those far fields unharvested, and the steadings on Pelion and they who haunt the glens of Homole bordering thereupon, whence they rode forth to conquer Thessaly, arming themselves with pines for clubs; likewise he slew that dappled hind with horns of gold, that preyed upon the country-folk, glorifying Artemis, huntress queen of Oenoe;

Next he mounted on a car and tamed with the bit the steeds of Diomede, that greedily champed their bloody food at gory mangers with jaws unbridled, devouring with hideous joy the flesh of men; then crossing Hebrus' silver stream he still toiled on to perform the hests of the tyrant of Mycenae, till he came to the strand of the Malian gulf by the streams of Anaurus, where he slew with his arrows Cycnus, murderer of his guests, the savage wretch who dwelt in Amphanae;

Also he came to those minstrel maids, to their orchard in the west, to pluck from the leafy apple-tree its golden fruit, when he had slain the tawny dragon, whose awful coils were twined all round to guard it; and he made his way into ocean's lairs, bringing calm to men that use the oar; moreover he sought the home of Atlas, and stretched out his hands to uphold the

firmament, and on his manly shoulders took the starry mansions of the gods;

Then he went through the waves of heaving Euxine against the mounted host of Amazons dwelling round Maeotis, the lake that is fed by many a stream, having gathered to his standard all his friends from Hellas, to fetch the gold-embroidered raiment of the warrior queen, a deadly quest for a girdle. And Hellas won those glorious spoils of the barbarian maid, and safe in Mycenae are they now. On Lerna's murderous hound, the many-headed hydra, he set his branding-iron, and smeared its venom on his darts, wherewith he slew the shepherd of Erytheia, a monster with three bodies;

And many another glorious achievement he brought to a happy issue; to Hades' house of tears hath he now sailed, the goal of his labours, where he is ending his career of toil, nor cometh he thence again. Now is thy house left without a friend, and Charon's boat awaits thy children to bear them on that journey out of life, whence is no returning, contrary to God's law and man's justice; and it is to thy prowess that thy house is looking although thou art not here. Had I been strong and lusty, able to brandish the spear in battle's onset, my Theban compeers too, I would have stood by thy children to champion them; but now my happy youth is gone and I am left.

But lo! I see the children of Heracles who was erst so great, clad in the vesture of the grave, and his loving wife dragging her babes along at her side, and that hero's aged sire. Ah! woe is me! no longer can I stem the flood of tears that spring to my old eyes.

(MEGARA, AMPHITRYON, and the children enter from the palace.)

MEGARA
Come now, who is to sacrifice or butcher these poor children? or rob me of my wretched life? Behold! the victims are ready to be led to Hades' halls. O my children! an ill-matched company are we hurried off to die, old men and babes, and mothers, all together. Alas! for my sad fate and my children's, whom these eyes now for the last time behold. So I gave you birth and reared you only for our foes to mock, to flout, and slay. Ah me! how bitterly my hopes have disappointed me in the expectation once formed from the words of your father. *(Addressing each of her sons in turn)* To thee thy dead

sire was for giving Argos; and thou wert to dwell in the halls of Eurystheus, lording it o'er the fair fruitful land of Argolis; and o'er thy head would he throw that lion's skin wherewith himself was girt. Thou wert to be king of Thebes, famed for its chariots, receiving as thy heritage my broad lands, for so thou didst coax thy father dear; and to thy hand used he to resign the carved club, his sure defence, pretending to give it thee. To thee he promised to give Oechalia, which once his archery had wasted. Thus with three principalities would your father exalt you his three sons, proud of your manliness; while I was choosing the best brides for you, scheming to link you by marriage to Athens, Thebes, and Sparta, that ye might live a happy life with a fast sheet-anchor to hold by. And now that is all vanished; fortune's breeze hath veered and given to you for brides the maidens of death in their stead, and tears to me to bathe them in; woe is me for my foolish thoughts and your grandsire here is celebrating your marriage-feast, accepting Hades as the father of your brides, a grim relationship to make. Ah me! which of you shall I first press to my bosom, which last? on which bestow my kiss, or clasp close to me? Oh! would that like the bee with russet wing, I could collect from every source my sighs in one, and, blending them together, shed them in one copious flood! Heracles, dear husband mine, to thee I call, if haply mortal voice can make itself heard in Hades' halls; thy father and children are dying and I am doomed, I who once because of thee was counted blest as men count bliss. Come to our rescue; appear, I pray, if but as a phantom, since thy mere coming would be enough, for they are cowards compared with thee, who are slaying thy children.

AMPHITRYON
Lady, do thou prepare the funeral rites; but I, O Zeus, stretching out my hand to heaven, call on thee to help these children, if such be thy intention; for soon will any aid of thine be unavailing; and yet thou hast been oft invoked; my toil is wasted; death seems inevitable. Ye aged friends, the joys of life are few; so take heed that ye pass through it as gladly as ye may, without a thought of sorrow from morn till night; for time recks little of preserving our hopes; and, when he has busied himself on his own business, away he flies. Look at me, a man who had made mark amongst his fellows by deeds of note; yet hath fortune in a single day robbed me of it as of a feather that floats away toward the sky. know not any whose plenteous

wealth and high reputation is fixed and sure; fare ye well, for now have ye seen the last of your old friend, my comrades.

(MEGARA catches sight of HERACLES approaching.)

MEGARA
Ha! old friend, is it my own, my dearest I behold? or what am I to say?

AMPHITRYON I know not, my daughter; I too am struck dumb.

MEGARA
Is this he who, they told us, was beneath the earth?

AMPHITRYON ’Tis he, unless some day-dream mocks our sight.

MEGARA
What am I saying? What visions do these anxious eyes behold? Old man, this is none other than thy own son. Come hither, my children, cling to your father’s robe, make haste to come, never loose your hold, for here is one to help you, nowise behind our saviour Zeus.

(HERACLES enters.)

HERACLES
All hail! my house, and portals of my home, how glad am I to emerge to the light and see thee. Ha! what is this? I see my children before the house in the garb of death, with chaplets on their heads, my wife amid a throng of men, and my father weeping o’er some mischance. Let me draw near to them and inquire; lady, what strange stroke of fate hath fallen on the house?

MEGARA
Dearest of all mankind to me! O ray of light appearing to thy sire! art thou safe, and is thy coming just in time to help thy dear ones?

HERACLES
What meanest thou? what is this confusion I find on my arrival, father?

MEGARA
We are being ruined; forgive me, old friend, if I have anticipated that which

thou hadst a right to tell him; for woman's nature is perhaps more prone than man's to grief, and they are my children that were being led to death, which was my own lot too.

HERACLES
Great Apollo! what a prelude to thy story!

MEGARA
Dead are my brethren, dead my hoary sire.

HERACLES
How so? what befell him? who dealt the fatal blow?

MEGARA
Lycus, our splendid monarch, slew him.

HERACLES
Did he meet him in fair fight, or was the land sick and weak?

MEGARA
Aye, from faction; now is he master of the city of Cadmus with its seven gates.

HERACLES
Why hath panic fallen on thee and my aged sire?

MEGARA
He meant to kill thy father, me, and my children.

HERACLES
Why, what had he to fear from my orphan babes?

MEGARA
He was afraid they might some day avenge Creon's death.

HERACLES
What means this dress they wear, suited to the dead?

MEGARA 'Tis the garb of death we have already put on.

HERACLES
And were ye being haled to death? O woe is me!

MEGARA
Yes, deserted by every friend, and informed that thou wert dead.

HERACLES
What put such desperate thoughts into your heads?

MEGARA
That was what the heralds of Eurystheus kept proclaiming.

HERACLES
Why did ye leave my hearth and home?

MEGARA
He forced us; thy father was dragged from his bed.

HERACLES
Had he no mercy, to ill-use the old man so?

MEGARA
Mercy forsooth! that goddess and he dwell far enough apart.

HERACLES
Was I so poor in friends in my absence?

MEGARA
Who are the friends of a man in misfortune?

HERACLES
Do they make so light of my hard warring with the Minyae?

MEGARA
Misfortune, to repeat it to thee, has no friends.

HERACLES
Cast from your heads these chaplets of death, look up to the light, for instead of the nether gloom your eyes behold the welcome sun. I, meantime,

since here is work for my hand, will first go raze this upstart tyrant's halls, and when I have beheaded the miscreant, I will throw him to dogs to tear; and every Theban who I find has played the traitor after my kindness, will I destroy with this victorious club; the rest will I scatter with my feathered shafts and fill Ismenus full of bloody corpses, and Dirce's clear fount shall run red with gore. For whom ought I to help rather than wife and children and aged sire? Farewell my labours! for it was in vain I accomplished them rather than succoured these. And yet I ought to die in their defence, since they for their sire were doomed; else what shall we find so noble in having fought a hydra and a lion at the hests of Eurystheus, if I make no effort to save my own children from death? No longer I trow, as heretofore, shall I be called Heracles the victor.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS 'Tis only right that parents should help their children, their aged sires, and the partners of their marriage.

AMPHITRYON
My son, 'tis like thee to show thy love for thy dear ones and thy hate for all that is hostile; only curb excessive hastiness.

HERACLES
Wherein, father, am I now showing more than fitting haste?

AMPHITRYON
The king hath a host of allies, needy villains though pretending to be rich, who sowed dissension and o'erthrew the state with a view to plundering their neighbours; for the wealth they had in their houses was ali spent, dissipated by their sloth. Thou wast seen entering the city; and, that being so, beware that thou bring not thy enemies together and be slain unawares.

HERACLES
Little I reck if the whole city saw me; but chancing to see a bird perched in an ill-omened spot, from it I learnt that some trouble had befallen my house; so I purposely made my entry to the land by stealth.

AMPHITRYON
For thy lucky coming hither, go salute thy household altar, and let thy father's halls behold thy face. For soon will the king be here in person to

drag away thy wife and children and murder them, and to add me to the bloody list. But if thou remain on the spot all will go well, and thou wilt profit by this security; but do not rouse thy city ere thou hast these matters well in train, my son.

HERACLES I will do so; thy advice is good; I will enter my house. After my return at length from the sunless den of Hades and the maiden queen of hell, I will not neglect to greet first of all the gods beneath my roof.

AMPHITRYON
Why, didst thou in very deed go to the house of Hades, my son?

HERACLES
Aye, and brought to the light that three-headed monster.

AMPHITRYON
Didst worst him in fight, or receive him from the goddess?

HERACLES
In fair fight; for I had been lucky enough to witness the rites of the initiated.

AMPHITRYON
Is the monster really lodged in the house of Eurystheus?

HERACLES
The grove of Demeter and the city of Hermione are his prison.

AMPHITRYON
Does not Eurystheus know that thou hast returned to the upper world?

HERACLES
He knows not; I came hither first to learn your news.

AMPHITRYON
How is it thou wert so long beneath the earth?

HERACLES I stayed awhile attempting to bring back Theseus from Hades, father.

AMPHITRYON
Where is he? gone to his native land?

HERACLES
He set out for Athens right glad to have escaped from the lower world. Come, children, attend your father to the house. My entering in is fairer in your eyes, I trow, than my going out. Take heart, and no more let the tears stream from your eyes; thou too, dear wife, collect thy courage, cease from fear; let go my robe; for I cannot fly away, nor have I any wish to flee from those I love. Ah! they do not loose their hold, but cling to my garments all the more; were ye in such jeopardy? Well, I must lead them, taking them by the hand to draw them after me, like a ship when towing; for I too do not reject the care of my children; here all mankind are equal; all love their children, both those of high estate and those; who are naught; 'tis wealth that makes distinctions among them; some have, others want; but all the human race loves its offspring.

(HERACLES, MEGARA, AMPHITRYON and the children enter the palace.)

CHORUS *(singing)* Dear to me is youth, but old age is ever hanging o'er my head, a burden heavier than Aetna's crags, casting its pall of gloom upon my eyes. Oh! never may the wealth of Asia's kings tempt me to barter for houses stored with gold my happy youth, which is in wealth and poverty alike most fair! But old age is gloomy and deathly; I hate it; let it sink beneath the waves! Would it had never found its way to the homes and towns of mortal men, but were still drifting on for ever down the wind.

Had the gods shown discernment and wisdom, as mortals count these things, men would have gotten youth twice over, a visible mark of worth amongst whomsoever found, and after death would these have retraced their steps once more to the sun-light, while the mean man would have had but a single portion of life; and thus would it have been possible to distinguish the good and the bad, just as sailors know the number of the stars amid the clouds. But, as it is, the gods have set no certain boundary 'twixt good and bad, but time's onward roll brings increase only to man's wealth.

Never will I cease to link in one the Graces and the Muses, fairest union. Never may my lines be cast among untutored boors, but ever may I find a

place among the crowned choir! Yes, still the aged bard lifts up his voice of bygone memories; still is my song of the triumphs of Heracles, whether Bromius the giver of wine is nigh, or the strains of the seven-stringed lyre and the Libyan flute are rising; not yet will I cease to sing the Muses' praise, my patrons in the dance.

As the maids of Delos raise their song of joy, circling round the temple gates in honour of Leto's fair son, the graceful dancer; so with my old lips will sing songs of victory at thy palace-doors, song of my old age, such as sings the dying swan; for there is a goodly theme for minstrelsy; he is the son of Zeus; yet high above his noble birth tower his deeds of prowess, for his toil secured this life of calm for man, having destroyed all fearsome beasts.

(AMPHITRYON comes out of the palace as Lycus and his retinue enter.)

LYCUS
Ha! Amphitryon, 'tis high time thou camest forth from the palace; ye have been too long arraying yourselves in the robes and trappings of the dead. Come, bid the wife and children of Heracles show themselves outside the house, to die on the conditions you yourselves offered.

AMPHITRYON O king, thou dost persecute me in my misery and heapest insult upon me over and above the loss of my son; thou shouldst have been more moderate in thy zeal, though thou art my lord and master. But since thou dost impose death's stern necessity on me, needs must I acquiesce and do thy will.

LYCUS
Pray, where is Megara? where are the children of Alcmena's son?

AMPHITRYON
She, I believe, so far as I can guess from outside-

LYCUS
What grounds hast thou to base thy fancy on?

AMPHITRYON
Is sitting as a suppliant on the altar's hallowed steps.

LYCUS
Imploring them quite uselessly to save her life.

AMPHITRYON
And calling on her dead husband, quite in vain.

LYCUS
He is nowhere near, and he certainly will never come.

AMPHITRYON
No, unless perhaps a god should raise him from the dead.

LYCUS
Go to her and bring her from the palace.

AMPHITRYON
By doing so I should become an accomplice in her murder.

LYCUS
Since thou hast this scruple, I, who have left fear behind, will myself bring out the mother and her children. Follow me, servants, that we may put an end to this delay of our work to our joy.

(Lycus and his servants enter the palace.)

AMPHITRYON
Then go thy way along the path of fate; for what remains, maybe another will provide. Expect for thy evil deeds to find some ill thyself. Ah! my aged friends, he is marching fairly to his doom; soon will he be entangled in the snare of the sword, thinking to slay his neighbours, the villain! I will hence, to see him fall dead; for the sight of a foe being slain and paying the penalty of his misdeeds gives pleasure.

(AMPHITRYON follows Lycus into the palace.)

CHORUS *(singing)* Evil has changed sides; he who was erst a mighty king is now turning his life backward into the road to Hades.

Hail to thee! justice and heavenly retribution.

At last hast thou reached the goal where thy death will pay the

forfeit,

For thy insults against thy betters.

Joy makes my tears burst forth.

There is come a retribution, which the prince of the land never once thought in his heart would happen.

Come, old friends, let us look within to see if one we know has met the fate I hope.

LYCUS *(within)* Ah me! ah me!

CHORUS *(singing)* Ha! how sweet to hear that opening note of his within the house; death is not far off him now.

Hark! the prince cries out in his agony; that preludes death.

LYCUS *(within)* O kingdom of Cadmus, by treachery I am perishing!

CHORUS *(singing)* Thou wert thyself for making others perish; endure thy retribution; ’tis only the penalty of thy own deeds thou art paying.

Who was he, weak son of man, that aimed his silly saying at the blessed gods of heaven with impious blasphemy, maintaining that they are weaklings after all?

Old friends, our godless foe is now no more.

The house is still; let us to our dancing.

Yea, for fortune smiles upon my friends as I desire.

Dances and banquets now prevail throughout the holy town of Thebes. For release from tears and respite from sorrow give birth to song. The upstart king is dead and gone; our former monarch now is prince, having made his way even from the bourn of Acheron. Hope beyond all expectation is fulfilled.

To heed the right and wrong is heaven's care. 'Tis their gold and their good luck that lead men's hearts astray, bringing in their train unholy tyranny. For no man ever had the courage to reflect what reverses time might bring; but, disregarding law to gratify lawlessness, he shatters in gloom the car of happiness.

Deck thee with garlands, O Ismenus! break forth into dancing, ye paved streets of our seven-gated city! come Dirce, fount of waters fair; and joined with her ye daughters of Asopus, come from your father's waves to add your maiden voices to our hymn, the victor's prize that Heracles hath won. O Pythian rock, with forests crowned, and haunts of the Muses on Helicon! make my city and her walls re-echo with cries of joy; where sprang the earth-born crop to view, a warrior-host with shields of brass, who are handing on their realm to children's children, a light divine to Thebes.

All hail the marriage! wherein two bridegrooms shared; the one, a mortal; the other, Zeus, who came to wed the maiden sprung from Perseus; for that marriage of thine, O Zeus, in days gone by has been proved to me a true story beyond all expectation; and time hath shown the lustre of Heracles' prowess, who emerged from caverns 'neath the earth after leaving Pluto's halls below. To me art thou a worthier lord than that base-born king, who now lets it be plainly seen in this struggle 'twixt armed warriors, whether justice still finds favour in heaven.

(The spectres of MADNESS and IRIS appear from above. The CHORUS sees them.)

Ha! see there, my old comrades! is the same wild panic fallen on us all; what phantom is this I see hovering o'er the house? Fly, fly, bestir thy tardy steps! begone! away! away! O saviour prince, avert calamity from me!

IRIS
Courage, old men! she, whom you see, is Madness, daughter of Night, and I am Iris, the handmaid of the gods. We have not come to do your city any hurt, but against the house of one man only is our warfare, even against him whom they call the son of Zeus and Alcmena. For until he had finished all his grievous toils, Destiny was preserving him, nor would father Zeus ever suffer me or Hera to harm him. But now that he hath accomplished the labours of Eurystheus, Hera is minded to brand him with the guilt of shedding kindred blood by slaying his own children, and I am one with her. Come then, maid unwed, child of murky Night, harden thy heart relentlessly, send forth frenzy upon him, confound his mind even to the slaying of his children, drive him, goad him wildly on his mad career, shake out the sails of death, that when he has sent o'er Acheron's ferry that fair group of children by his own murderous hand, he may learn to know how fiercely against him the wrath of Hera burns and may also experience mine; otherwise, if he escape punishment, the gods will become as naught, while man's power will grow.

MADNESS
Of noble parents was I born, the daughter of Night, sprung from the blood of Uranus; and these prerogatives I hold, not to use them in anger against friends, nor have I any joy in visiting the homes of men; and fain would I counsel Hera, before I see her err, and thee too, if ye will hearken to my words. This man, against whose house thou art sending me, has made himself a name alike in heaven and earth; for, after taming pathless wilds and raging sea, he by his single might raised up again the honours of the gods when sinking before man's impiety; wherefore I counsel thee, do not wish him dire mishaps.

IRIS
Spare us thy advice on Hera's and my schemes.

MADNESS I seek to turn thy steps into the best path instead of into this one of evil.

IRIS 'Twas not to practice self-control that the wife of Zeus sent thee hither.

MADNESS I call the sun-god to witness that herein I am acting against my will; but if indeed I must forthwith serve thee and Hera and follow you in full cry as hounds follow the huntsman, why go I will; nor shall ocean with its moaning waves, nor the earthquake, nor the thunderbolt with blast of agony be half so furious as the headlong rush I will make into the breast of Heracles; through his roof will I burst my way and swoop upon his house, after first slaying his children; nor shall their murderer know that he is killing his own-begotten babes, till he is released from my madness. Behold him! see how even now he is wildly tossing his head at the outset, and rolling his eyes fiercely from side to side without word; nor can he control his panting breath; but like a bull in act to charge, he bellows fearfully, calling on the goddesses of nether hell. Soon will I rouse thee to yet wilder dancing and sound a note of terror in thine ear. Soar away, O Iris, to Olympus on thy honoured course; while I unseen will steal into the halls of Heracles.

(IRIS and MADNESS vanish.)

CHORUS *(chanting)* Alas! alas! lament, O city; the son of Zeus, thy fairest bloom, is being cut down.

Woe is thee, Hellas! that wilt cast from thee thy benefactor, and destroy him as he madly, wildly dances where no pipe is heard.

She is mounted on her car, the queen of sorrow and sighing, and is goading on her steeds, as if for outrage, the Gorgon child of Night, with hundred hissing serpent-heads, Madness of the flashing eyes.

Soon hath the god changed his good fortune; soon will his children breathe their last, slain by a father’s hand.

Ah me! alas! soon will vengeance, mad, relentless, lay low by cruel death thy unhappy son, O Zeus, exacting a full penalty.

Alas, O house! the fiend begins her dance of death without the cymbal’s crash, with no glad waving of the wine-god’s staff.

Woe to these halls toward bloodshed she moves, and not to pour libations of the juice of the grape.

O children, haste to fly; that is the chant of death her piping plays.

Ah, yes! he is chasing the children. Never, ah! never will Madness lead her revel rout in vain.

Ah misery!

Ah me! how I lament that aged sire, that mother too that bore his babes in vain.

Look! look!

A tempest rocks the house; the roof is falling with it.

Oh! what art thou doing, son of Zeus?

Thou art sending hell's confusion against thy house, as erst did Pallas on Enceladus.

(A MESSENGER enters from the palace.)

MESSENGER
Ye hoary men of eld!

CHORUS
Why, oh! why this loud address to me?

MESSENGER
Awful is the sight within!

CHORUS
No need for me to call another to announce that.

MESSENGER
Dead lie the children.

CHORUS
Alas!

MESSENGER
Ah weep! for here is cause for weeping.

CHORUS A cruel murder, wrought by parents' hands!

MESSENGER
No words can utter more than we have suffered.

CHORUS
What, canst thou prove this piteous ruin was a father's outrage on his children? Tell me how these heaven-sent woes came rushing on the house; say how the children met their sad mischance.

MESSENGER
Victims to purify the house were stationed before the altar of Zeus, for Heracles had slain and cast from his halls the king of the land. There stood his group of lovely children, with his sire and Megara; and already the basket was being passed round the altar, and we were keeping holy silence. But just as Alcmena's son was bringing the torch in his right hand to dip it in the holy water, he stopped without a word. And as their father lingered, his children looked at him; and lo! he was changed; his eyes were rolling; he was distraught; his eyeballs were bloodshot and starting from their sockets, and foam was oozing down his bearded cheek. Anon he spoke, laughing the while a madman's laugh, "Father, why should I sacrifice before I have slain Eurystheus, why kindle the purifying flame and have the toil twice over, when I might at one stroke so fairly end it all? Soon as I have brought the head of Eurystheus hither, I will cleanse my hands for those already slain. Spill the water, cast the baskets from your hands. Ho! give me now my bow and club! To famed Mycenae will I go; crow-bars and pick-axes must I take, for I will heave from their very base with iron levers those city-walls which the Cyclopes squared with red plumb-line and mason's tools."

Then he set out, and though he had no chariot there, he thought he had, and was for mounting to its seat, and using a goad as though his fingers really

held one. A twofold feeling filled his servants' breasts, half amusement, and half fear; and one looking to his neighbour said, "Is our master making sport for us, or is he mad?" But he the while was pacing to and fro in his house; and, rushing into the men's chamber, he thought he had reached the city of Nisus, albeit he had gone into his own halls. So he threw himself upon the floor, as if he were there, and made ready to feast. But after waiting a brief space he began saying he was on his way to the plains amid the valleys of the Isthmus; and then stripping himself of his mantle, he fell to competing with an imaginary rival, o'er whom he proclaimed himself victor with his own voice, calling on imaginary spectators to listen. Next, fancy carrying him to Mycenae, he was uttering fearful threats against Eurystheus. Meantime his father caught him by his stalwart arm, and thus addressed him, "My son, what meanest thou hereby? What strange doings are these? Can it be that the blood of thy late victims has driven thee frantic?" But he, supposing it was the father of Eurystheus striving in abject supplication to touch his hand, thrust him aside, and then against his own children aimed his bow and made ready his quiver, thinking to slay the sons of Eurystheus. And they in wild affright darted hither and thither, one to his hapless mother's skirts, another to the shadow of a pillar, while a third cowered 'neath the altar like a bird. Then cried their mother, "O father, what art thou doing? dost mean to slay thy children?" Likewise his aged sire and all the gathered servants cried aloud. But he, hunting the child round and round, the column, in dreadful circles, and coming face to face with him shot him to the heart; and he fell upon his back, sprinkling the stone pillars with blood as he gasped out his life. Then did Heracles shout for joy and boasted loud, "Here lies one of Eurystheus' brood dead at my feet, atoning for his father's hate." Against a second did he aim his bow, who had crouched at the altar's foot thinking to escape unseen. But ere he fired, the poor child threw himself at his father's knees, and, flinging his hand to reach his beard or neck, cried, "Oh! slay me not, dear father mine! I am thy child, thine own; 'tis no son of Eurystheus thou wilt slay."

But that other, with savage Gorgon-scowl, as the child now stood in range of his baleful archery, smote him on the head, as smites a smith his molten iron, bringing down his club upon the fair-haired boy, and crushed the bones. The second caught, away he hies to add a third victim to the other twain. But ere he could, the poor mother caught up her babe and carried him

within the house and shut the doors; forthwith the madman, as though he really were at the Cyclopean walls, prizes open the doors with levers, and, hurling down their posts, with one fell shaft laid low his wife and child. Then in wild career he starts to slay his aged sire; but lo! there came a phantom,-so it seemed to us on-lookers,-Of Pallas, with plumed helm, brandishing a spear; and she hurled a rock against the breast of Heracles, which stayed him from his frenzied thirst for blood and plunged him into sleep; to the ground he fell, smiting his back against a column that had fallen on the floor in twain when the roof fell in. Thereon we rallied from our flight, and with the old man's aid bound him fast with knotted cords to the pillar, that on his awakening he might do no further evil. So there he sleeps, poor wretch! a sleep that is not blest, having murdered wife and children; nay, for my part know not any son of man more miserable than he.

(The MESSENGER withdraws.)

CHORUS *(singing)* That murder wrought by the daughters of Danaus, whereof my native Argos wots, was formerly the most famous and notorious in Hellas; but this hath surpassed and outdone those previous horrors. I could tell of the murder of that poor son of Zeus, whom Procne, mother of an only child, slew and offered to the Muses; but thou hadst three children, wretched parent, and all of them hast thou in thy frenzy slain. What groans or wails, what funeral dirge, or chant of death am I to raise? Alas and woe! see, the bolted doors of the lofty palace are being rolled apart. Ah me! behold these children lying dead before their wretched father, who is sunk in awful slumber after shedding their blood. Round him are bonds and cords, made fast with many a knot about the body of Heracles, and lashed to the stone columns of his house. While he, the aged sire, like mother-bird wailing her unfledged brood, comes hasting hither with halting steps on his bitter journey.

(The central doors of the palace have opened and have disclosed HERACLES lying asleep, bound to a shattered column. AMPHITRYON steps out. The following lines between AMPHITRYON and the CHORUS are chanted responsively.)

AMPHITRYON
Softly, softly! ye aged sons of Thebes, let him sleep on and forget his

sorrows.

CHORUS
For thee, old friend, I weep and mourn, for the children too and that victorious chief.

AMPHITRYON
Stand further off, make no noise nor outcry, rouse him not from his calm deep slumber.

CHORUS O horrible! all this blood-

AMPHITRYON
Hush, hush! ye will be my ruin.

CHORUS
That he has spilt is rising up against him.

AMPHITRYON
Gently raise your dirge of woe, old friends; lest he wake, and, bursting his bonds, destroy the city, rend his sire, and dash his house to pieces.

CHORUS I cannot, cannot-

AMPHITRYON
Hush! let me note his breathing; come, let me put my ear close.

CHORUS
Is he sleeping?

AMPHITRYON
Aye, that is he, a deathly sleep, having slain wife and children with the arrows of his twanging bow.

CHORUS
Ah! mourn-

AMPHITRYON I do.

CHORUS
The children's death;

AMPHITRYON
Ah me!

CHORUS
And thy own son's doom.

AMPHITRYON
Ah misery!

CHORUS
Old friend-

AMPHITRYON
Hush! hush! he is turning, he is waking! Oh Oh! let me hide myself beneath the covert of yon roof.

CHORUS
Courage! darkness still broods o'er thy son's eye.

AMPHITRYON
Oh! beware; 'tis not that I shrink from leaving the light after my miseries, poor wretch! but should he slay me that am his father, then will he be devising woe on woe, and to the avenging curse will add a parent's blood.

CHORUS
Well for thee hadst thou died in that day, when, to win thy wife, thou didst go forth to exact vengeance for her slain brethren by sacking the Taphians' sea-beat town.

AMPHITRYON
Fly, fly, my aged friends, haste from before the palace, escape his waking fury! For soon will he heap up fresh carnage on the old, ranging wildly once more through the streets of Thebes.

CHORUS O Zeus, why hast thou shown such savage hate against thine own son and plunged him in this sea of troubles?

HERACLES *(waking)* Aha! my breath returns; I am alive; and my eyes see, opening on the sky and earth and yon sun's darting beam; but how my senses reel! in what strange turmoil am I plunged! my fevered breath in quick spasmodic gasps escapes my lungs. How now? why am I lying here, made fast with cables like a ship, my brawny chest and arms tied to a shattered piece of masonry, with corpses for my neighbours; while o'er the floor my bow and arrows are scattered, that erst like trusty squires to my arm both kept me safe and were kept safe of me? Surely I am not come a second time to Hades' halls, having just returned from thence for Eurystheus? No, I do not see Sisyphus with his stone, or Pluto, or his queen, Demeter's child. Surely I am distraught; I cannot remember where I am. Ho, there! which of my friends is near or far to help me in my ignorance? For I have no clear knowledge of things once familiar.

AMPHITRYON
My aged friends, shall I approach the scene of my sorrow?

LEADER OF THE CHORUS
Yes, and let me go with thee, nor desert thee in thy trouble.

HERACLES
Father, why dost thou weep and veil thy eyes, standing aloof from thy beloved son?

AMPHITRYON
My child! mine still, for all thy misery.

HERACLES
Why, what is there so sad in my case that thou dost weep?

AMPHITRYON
That which might make any of the gods weep, were he to suffer so.

HERACLES A bold assertion that, but thou art not yet explaining what has happened.

AMPHITRYON
Thine own eyes see that, if by this time thou are restored to thy senses.

HERACLES
Fill in thy sketch if any change awaits my life.

AMPHITRYON I will explain, if thou art no longer mad as a fiend of hell.

HERACLES
God help us! what suspicions these dark hints of thine again excite!

AMPHITRYON I am still doubtful whether thou art in thy sober senses.

HERACLES I never remember being mad.

AMPHITRYON
Am I to loose my son, old friends, or what?

HERACLES
Loose and say who bound me; for I feel shame at this.

AMPHITRYON
Rest content with what thou knowest of thy woes; the rest forego.

HERACLES
Enough! I have no wish to probe thy silence.

AMPHITRYON O Zeus, dost thou behold these deeds proceeding from the throne of Hera?

HERACLES
What! have I suffered something from her enmity?

AMPHITRYON A truce to the goddess! attend to thy own troubles.

HERACLES I am undone; what mischance wilt thou unfold?

AMPHITRYON
See here the corpses of thy children.

HERACLES O horror! what hideous sight is here? ah me!

AMPHITRYON
My son, against thy children hast thou waged unnatural war.

HERACLES
War! what meanst thou? who killed these?

AMPHITRYON
Thou and thy bow and some god, whoso he be that is to blame.

HERACLES
What sayst thou? what have I done? Speak, father, thou messenger of evil.

AMPHITRYON
Thou wert distraught; 'tis a sad explanation thou art asking.

HERACLES
Was it I that slew my wife also?

AMPHITRYON
Thy own unaided arm hath done all this.

HERACLES
Ah, woe is me! a cloud of sorrow wraps me round.

AMPHITRYON
The reason this that I lament thy fate.

HERACLES
Did I dash my house to pieces or incite others thereto?

AMPHITRYON
Naught know I save this, that thou art utterly undone.

HERACLES
Where did my frenzy seize me? where did it destroy me?

AMPHITRYON
In the moment thou wert purifying thyself witb fire at the altar.

HERACLES
Ah me! why do I spare my own life when I have taken that of my dear children? Shall I not hasten to leap from some sheer rock, or aim the sword against my heart and avenge my children's blood, or burn my body in the fire and so avert from my life the infamy which now awaits me?

But hither I see Theseus coming to check my deadly counsels, my kinsman and friend. Now shall I stand revealed, and the dearest of my friends will see the pollution I have incurred by my children's murder. Ah, woe is me! what am I to do? Where can I find release from my sorrows? shall I take wings or plunge beneath the earth? Come, let me veil my head in darkness; for I am ashamed of the evil I have done, and, since for these I have incurred fresh blood-guiltiness, I would fain not harm the innocent.

(THESEUS and his retinue enter.)

THESEUS I am come, and others with me, young warriors from the land of Athens, encamped by the streams of Asopus, to help thy son, old friend. For a rumour reached the city of the Erechtheidae, that Lycus had usurped the sceptre of this land and was become your enemy even to battle. Wherefore I came making recompense for the former kindness of Heracles in saving me from the world below, if haply ye have any need of such aid as I or my allies can give, old prince.

Ha! what means this heap of dead upon the floor? Surely I have not delayed too long and come too late to check new ills? Who slew these children? whose wife is this I see? Boys do not go to battle; nay, it must be some other strange mischance I here discover.

(The following lines between THESEUS and AMPHITRYON are chanted responsively.)

AMPHITRYON O king, whose home is that olive-clad hill!

THESEUS
Why this piteous prelude in addressing me?

AMPHITRYON
Heaven has afflicted us with grievous suffering.

THESEUS
Whose be these children, o'er whom thou weepest?

AMPHITRYON
My own son's children, woe to him! their father and butcher both was he, hardening his heart to the bloody deed.

THESEUS
Hush good words only!

AMPHITRYON I would I could obey!

THESEUS
What dreadful words!

AMPHITRYON
Fortune has spread her wings, and we are ruined, ruined.

THESEUS
What meanest thou? what hath he done?

AMPHITRYON
Slain them in a wild fit of frenzy with arrows dipped in the venom of the hundred-headed hydra.

THESEUS
This is Hera's work; but who lies there among the dead, old man?

AMPHITRYON
My son, my own enduring son, that marched with gods to Phlegra's plain, there to battle with giants and slay them, warrior that he was.

THESEUS
Ah, woe for him! whose fortune was e'er so curst as his?

AMPHITRYON
Never wilt thou find another that hath borne a larger share of suffering or been more fatally deceived.

THESEUS
Why doth he veil his head, poor wretch, in his robe?

AMPHITRYON
He is ashamed to meet thine eye; his kinsman's kind intent and his children's blood make him abashed.

THESEUS
But I come to sympathize; uncover him.

AMPHITRYON
My son, remove that mantle from thine eyes, throw it from thee, show thy fare unto the sun; a counterpoise to weeping is battling for the mastery. In suppliant wise I entreat thee, as I grasp thy beard, thy knees, thy hands, and let fall the tear from my old eyes. O my child! restrain thy savage lion-like temper, for thou art rushing forth on an unholy course of bloodshed, eager to join woe to woe.

THESEUS
Ho! To thee I call who art huddled there in thy misery, show to they friends thy face; for no darkness is black enough to hide thy sad mischance. Why dost thou wave thy hand at me, signifying murder? is it that I may not be polluted by speaking with thee? If I share thy misfortune, what is that to me? For if I too had luck in days gone by, must refer it to the time when thou didst bring me safe from the dead to the light of life. I hate a friend whose gratitude grows old; one who ready to enjoy his friends' prosperity but unwilling to sail in the same ship with them when their fortune lours. Arise, unveil thy head, poor wretch! and look on me. The gallant soul endures without a word such blows as heaven deals.

HERACLES O Theseus, didst thou witness this struggle with my children?

THESEUS I heard of it, and now I see the horrors thou meanest.

HERACLES
Why then hast thou unveiled my head to the sun?

THESEUS
Why have I? Thou, a man, canst not pollute what is of God.

HERACLES
Fly, luckless wretch, from my unholy taint.

THESEUS
The avenging fiend goes not forth from friend to friend.

HERACLES
For this I thank thee; I do not regret the service I did thee.

THESEUS
While I, for kindness then received, now show my pity for thee.

HERACLES
Ah yes! I am piteous, a murderer of my sons.

THESEUS I weep for thee in thy changed fortunes.

HERACLES
Didst ever find another more afflicted?

THESEUS
Thy misfortunes reach from earth to heaven.

HERACLES
Therefore am I resolved on death.

THESEUS
Dost thou suppose the gods attend to these thy threats?

HERACLES
Remorseless hath heaven been to me; so I will prove the like to it.

THESEUS
Hush! lest thy presumption add to thy sufferings.

HERACLES
My barque is freighted full with sorrow; there is no room to stow aught further.

THESEUS
What wilt thou do? whither is thy fury drifting thee?

HERACLES I will die and return to that world below whence I have just come.

THESEUS
Such language is fit for any common fellow.

HERACLES
Ah! thine is the advice of one outside sorrow's pale.

THESEUS
Are these indeed the words of Heracles, the much-enduring?

HERACLES
Though never so much as this. Endurance must have a limit.

THESEUS
Is this man's benefactor, his chiefest friend?

HERACLES
Man brings no help to me; no! Hera has her way.

THESEUS
Never will Hellas suffer thee to die through sheer perversity.

HERACLES
Hear me a moment, that I may enter the lists with words in answer to thy admonitions; and I will unfold to thee why life now as well as formerly has been unbearable to me. First I am the son of a man who incurred the guilt of blood, before he married my mother Alcmena, by slaying her aged sire.

Now when the foundation is badly laid at birth, needs must the race be cursed with woe; and Zeus, whoever this Zeus may be, begot me as a butt for Hera's hate; yet be not thou vexed thereat, old man; for thee rather than Zeus do I regard as my father. Then whilst I was yet being suckled, that bride of Zeus did foist into my cradle fearsome snakes to compass my death. After I was grown to man's estate, of all the toils I then endured what need to tell? of all the lions, Typhons triple-bodied, and giants that I slew; or of the battle I won against the hosts of four-legged Centaurs? or how when I had killed the hydra, that monster with a ring of heads with power to grow again, I passed through countless other toils besides and came unto the dead to fetch to the light at the bidding of Eurystheus the three-headed hound, hell's porter. Last, ah, woe is me have I perpetrated this bloody deed to crown the sorrows of my house with my children's murder. To this sore strait am I come; no longer may I dwell in Thebes, the city that I love; for suppose I stay, to what temple or gathering of friends shall I repair? For mine is no curse that invites address. Shall I to Argos? how can I, when I am an exile from my country? Well, is there a single other city I can fly to? And if there were, am I to be looked at askance as a marked man, branded by cruel stabbing tongues, "Is not this the son of Zeus that once murdered wife and children? Plague take him from the land!"

Now to one who was erst called happy, such changes are a grievous thing; though he who is always unfortunate feels no such pain, for sorrow is his birthright. This, methinks, is the piteous pass I shall one day come to; for earth will cry out forbidding me to touch her, the sea and the river-springs will refuse me a crossing, and I shall become like Ixion who revolves in chains upon that wheel. Wherefore this is best, that henceforth I be seen by none of the Hellenes, amongst whom in happier days I lived in bliss. What right have I to live? what profit can I have in the possession of a useless, impious life? So let that noble wife of Zeus break forth in dancing, beating with buskined foot on heaven's bright floor; for now hath she worked her heart's desire in utterly confounding the chiefest of Hellas' sons. Who would pray to such a goddess? Her jealousy of Zeus for his love of a woman hath destroyed the benefactors of Hellas, guiltless though they were.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS
This is the work of none other of the gods than the wife of Zeus; thou art

right in that surmise.

THESEUS I cannot counsel you to die rather than to go on suffering. There is not a man alive that hath wholly ‘scaped misfortune’s taint, nor any god either, if what poets sing is true. Have they not intermarried in ways that law forbids? Have they not thrown fathers into ignominious chains to gain the sovereign power? Still they inhabit Olympus and brave the issue of their crimes. And yet what shalt thou say in thy defence, if thou, child of man, dost kick against the pricks of fate, while they do not? Nay, then, leave Thebes in compliance with the law, and come with me to the city of Pallas. There, when I have purified thee of thy pollution, will I give thee temples and the half of all I have. Yea, I will give thee all those presents I received from the citizens for saving their children, seven sons and daughters seven, on the day I slew the bull of Crete; for I have plots of land assigned me throughout the country; these shall henceforth be called after thee by men, whilst thou livest; and at thy death, when thou art gone to Hades’ halls, the city of Athens shall unite in exalting thy honour with sacrifices and a monument of stone. For ’tis a noble crown for citizens to win from Hellas, even a reputation fair, by helping a man of worth. This is the return that I will make thee for saving me, for now art thou in need of friends. But when heaven delights to honour a man, he has no need of friends; for the god’s aid, when he chooses to give it, is enough.

HERACLES
Alas! this is quite beside the question of my troubles. For my part, I do not believe that the gods indulge in unholy unions; and as for putting fetters on parents’ hands, I have never thought that worthy of belief, nor will I now be so persuaded, nor again that one god is naturally lord and master of another. For the deity, if he be really such, has no wants; these are miserable fictions of the poets. But I, for all my piteous plight, reflected whether I should let myself be branded as a coward for giving up my life. For whoso schooleth not his frail mortal nature to bear fate’s buffets as he ought, will never be able to withstand even a man’s weapon. I will harden my heart against death and seek thy city, with grateful thanks for all thou offerest me.

(He weeps.)

Of countless troubles have I tasted, God knows, but never yet did faint at any or shed a single tear; nay, nor ever dreamt that I should come to this, to let the tear-drop fall. But now, it seems, I must be fortune's slave. Well, let it pass; old father mine, thou seest me go forth to exile, and in me beholdest my own children's murderer. Give them burial and lay them out in death with the tribute of a tear, for the law forbids my doing so. Rest their heads upon their mother's bosom and fold them in her arms, sad pledges of our union, whom I, alas! unwittingly did slay. And when thou hast buried these dead, live on here still, in bitternes maybe, but still constrain thy soul to share my sorrows. O children! he who begat you, your own father, hath been your destroyer, and ye have had no profit of my triumphs, all my restless toil to win you a fair name in life, a glorious guerdon from a sire. Thee too, unhappy wife, this hand hath slain, a poor return to make thee for preserving mine honour so safe, for all the weary watch thou long hast kept within my house. Alas for you, my wife, my sons! and woe for me, how sad my lot, cut off from wife and child! Ah! these kisses, bitter-sweet! these weapons which 'tis pain to own! I am not sure whether to keep or let them go; dangling at my side they thus will say, "With us didst thou destroy children and wife; we are thy children's slayers, and thou keepest us." Shall I carry them after that? what answer can I make? Yet, am I to strip me of these weapons, the comrades of my glorious career in Hellas, and put myself thereby in the power of my foes, to die a death of shame? No! I must not let them go, but keep them, though it grieve me. In one thing, Theseus, help my misery; come to Argos with me and aid in settling my reward for bringing Cerberus thither; lest, if I go all alone, my sorrow for my sons do me some hurt.

O land of Cadmus, and all ye folk of Thebes! cut off your hair, and mourn with me; go to my children's burial, and with united dirge lament alike the dead and me; for on all of us hath Hera inflicted the same cruel blow of destruction.

THESEUS
Rise, unhappy man! thou hast had thy fill of tears.

HERACLES I cannot rise; my limbs are rooted here.

THESEUS
Yea, even the strong are o'erthrown by misfortunes.

HERACLES
Ah! would I could grow into a stone upon this spot, oblivious of trouble!

THESEUS
Peace! give thy hand to a friend and helper.

HERACLES
Nay, let me not wipe off the blood upon thy robe.

THESEUS
Wipe it off and spare not; I will not say thee nay.

HERACLES
Reft of my own sons, I find thee as a son to me.

THESEUS
Throw thy arm about my neck; I will be thy guide.

HERACLES A pair of friends in sooth are we, but one a man of sorrows. Ah! aged sire, this is the kind of man to make a friend.

AMPHITRYON
Blest in her sons, the country that gave him birth!

HERACLES O Theseus, turn me back again to see my babes.

THESEUS
What charm dost think to find in this to soothe thy soul?

HERACLES I long to do so, and would fain embrace my sire.

AMPHITRYON
Here am I, my son; thy wish is no less dear to me.

THESEUS
Hast thou so short a memory for thy troubles?

HERACLES
All that I endured of yore was easier to bear than this.

THESEUS
If men see thee play the woman, they will scoff.

HERACLES
Have I by living grown so abject in thy sight? 'twas not so once, methinks.

THESEUS
Aye, too much so; for how dost show thyself the glorious Heracles of yore?

HERACLES
What about thyself? what kind of hero wert thou when in trouble in the world below?

THESEUS I was worse than anyone as far as courage went.

HERACLES
How then canst thou say of me, that I am abased by my troubles?

THESEUS
Forward!

HERACLES
Farewell, my aged sire!

AMPHITRYON
Farewell to thee, my son!

HERACLES
Bury my children as I said.

AMPHITRYON
But who will bury me, my son?

HERACLES I will.

AMPHITRYON
When wilt thou come?

HERACLES
After thou hast buried my children.

AMPHITRYON
How?

HERACLES I will fetch thee from Thebes to Athens. But carry my children within, a grievous burden to the earth. And I, after ruining my house by deeds of shame, will follow in the wake of Theseus, totally destroyed. Whoso prefers wealth or might to the possession of good friends, thinketh amiss.

(THESEUS and his attendants lead HERACLES away.)

CHORUS *(chanting)* With grief and many a bitter tear we go our way, robbed of all we prized most dearly.

THE TROJAN WOMEN

Translated by Gilbert Murray

One of Euripides' most widely performed plays today, *The Trojan Women* was initially performed in 415 BC during the Peloponnesian War and is often considered a commentary on the capture of the Aegean island of Melos and the subsequent slaughter and subjugation of its populace by the Athenians earlier that year. It was the third tragedy of a trilogy of dealing with the Trojan War, with the first play, *Alexandros*, concerning the recognition of the Trojan prince Paris, who had been abandoned in infancy by his parents and rediscovered in adulthood. The second tragedy, *Palamedes*, dealt with the Greeks' mistreatment of Palamedes. The trilogy was presented at the Dionysia along with the comedic satyr play *Sisyphos*. Euripides won second prize at the City Dionysia for his effort, losing to the obscure tragedian Xenocles, whose works are now largely lost, surviving only in small fragments.

The tragedy follows the fates of the women of Troy after their city has been sacked, their husbands killed and as their remaining families are about to be taken away as slaves. The drama is celebrated for its in depth exploration of grief, while the Greeks continue to add to the sufferings of the Trojan women, as their young children are brutally murdered, their homes burnt to the ground and they are parcelled off as concubines to the victorious Greek commanders. One of the principal sufferers is Queen Hecuba, who the Greek herald Talthybius arrives to tell that she and her children will be taken away with the Greek general Odysseus, while Cassandra, her daughter, is destined to become the conquering general Agamemnon's concubine.

‘The Trojan Women Set Fire to their Fleet’ by Claude Lorrain

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THE TROJAN WOMEN

Aomawa Baker as Andromache in the 2003 performance of The Trojan Women, directed by Brad Mays at the ARK Theatre Company in Los Angeles

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

THE GOD POSEIDON.
THE GODDESS PALLAS ATHENA.
HECUBA, *Queen of Troy, wife of Priam, mother of Hector and Paris*.
CASSANDRA, *daughter of Hecuba, a prophetess*.
ANDROMACHE, *wife of Hector, Prince of Troy*.
HELEN, *wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta; carried off by Paris, Prince of Troy*.
TALTHYBIUS, *Herald of the Greeks*.
MENELAUS, King of Sparta, and, together with his brother Agamemnon, General of the Greeks.
SOLDIERS ATTENDANT ON TALTHYBIUS AND MENELAUS.
CHORUS OF CAPTIVE TROJAN WOMEN, YOUNG AND OLD, MAIDEN AND MARRIED.

The Troädes was first acted in the year 415 B.C. "*The first prize was won by Xenocles, whoever he may have been, with the four plays Oedipus, Lycaon, Bacchae and Athamas, a Satyr-play. The second by Euripides with the Alexander, Palamêdês, Troädes and Sisyphus, a Satyr-play*." — AELIAN, *Varia Historia*, ii. 8.

THE TROJAN WOMEN

The scene represents a battlefield, a few days after the battle. At the back are the walls of Troy, partially ruined. In front of them, to right and left, are some huts, containing those of the Captive Women who have been specially set apart for the chief Greek leaders. At one side some dead bodies of armed men are visible. In front a tall woman with white hair is lying on the ground asleep.
It is the dusk of early dawn, before sunrise. The figure of the god POSEIDON *is dimly seen before the walls.*

POSEIDON.
Up from Aegean caverns, pool by pool
Of blue salt sea, where feet most beautiful
Of Nereid maidens weave beneath the foam
Their long sea-dances, I, their lord, am come,
Poseidon of the Sea. 'Twas I whose power,
With great Apollo, builded tower by tower
These walls of Troy; and still my care doth stand
True to the ancient People of my hand;
Which now as smoke is perished, in the shock
Of Argive spears. Down from Parnassus' rock
The Greek Epeios came, of Phocian seed,
And wrought by Pallas' mysteries a Steed
Marvellous, big with arms; and through my wall
It passed, a death-fraught image magical.
  The groves are empty and the sanctuaries
Run red with blood. Unburied Priam lies
By his own hearth, on God's high altar-stair,
And Phrygian gold goes forth and raiment rare
To the Argive ships; and weary soldiers roam
Waiting the wind that blows at last for home,
For wives and children, left long years away,
Beyond the seed's tenth fullness and decay,
To work this land's undoing.
  And for me,

Since Argive Hera conquereth, and she
Who wrought with Hera to the Phrygians' woe,
Pallas, behold, I bow mine head and go
Forth from great Ilion and mine altars old.
When a still city lieth in the hold
Of Desolation, all God's spirit there
Is sick and turns from worship. — Hearken where
The ancient River waileth with a voice
Of many women, portioned by the choice
Of war amid new lords, as the lots leap
For Thessaly, or Argos, or the steep
Of Theseus' Rock. And others yet there are,
High women, chosen from the waste of war
For the great kings, behind these portals hid;
And with them that Laconian Tyndarid,
Helen, like them a prisoner and a prize.
  And this unhappy one — would any eyes
Gaze now on Hecuba? Here at the Gates
She lies 'mid many tears for many fates
Of wrong. One child beside Achilles' grave
In secret slain, Polyxena the brave,
Lies bleeding. Priam and his sons are gone;
And, lo, Cassandra, she the Chosen One,
Whom Lord Apollo spared to walk her way
A swift and virgin spirit, on this day
Lust hath her, and she goeth garlanded
A bride of wrath to Agamemnon's bed.
[*He turns to go; and another divine Presence becomes visible in the dusk. It is the goddess* PALLAS ATHENA.
O happy long ago, farewell, farewell,
Ye shining towers and mine old citadel;
Broken by Pallas, Child of God, or still
Thy roots had held thee true.

PALLAS.
  Is it the will
Of God's high Brother, to whose hand is given

Great power of old, and worship of all Heaven,
To suffer speech from one whose enmities
This day are cast aside?

POSEIDON.
  His will it is:
Kindred and long companionship withal,
Most high Athena, are things magical.

PALLAS.
Blest be thy gentle mood! — Methinks I see
A road of comfort here, for thee and me.

POSEIDON.
Thou hast some counsel of the Gods, or word
Spoken of Zeus? Or is it tidings heard
From some far Spirit?

PALLAS.
  For this Ilion's sake,
Whereon we tread, I seek thee, and would make
My hand as thine.

POSEIDON.
  Hath that old hate and deep
Failed, where she lieth in her ashen sleep?
Thou pitiest her?

PALLAS.
  Speak first; wilt thou be one
In heart with me and hand till all be done?

POSEIDON.
Yea; but lay bare thy heart. For this land's sake
Thou comest, not for Hellas?

PALLAS.
  I would make

Mine ancient enemies laugh for joy, and bring
On these Greek ships a bitter homecoming.

POSEIDON.
Swift is thy spirit's path, and strange withal,
And hot thy love and hate, where'er they fall.

PALLAS.
A deadly wrong they did me, yea within
Mine holy place: thou knowest?

POSEIDON.
I know the sin
Of Ajax, when he cast Cassandra down….

PALLAS.
And no man rose and smote him; not a frown
Nor word from all the Greeks!

POSEIDON.
And 'twas thine hand
That gave them Troy!

PALLAS.
Therefore with thee I stand
To smite them.

POSEIDON.
All thou cravest, even now
Is ready in mine heart. What seekest thou?

PALLAS.
An homecoming that striveth ever more
And cometh to no home.

POSEIDON.
Here on the shore
Wouldst hold them or amid mine own salt foam?

PALLAS.
When the last ship hath bared her sail for home!
  Zeus shall send rain, long rain and flaw of driven
Hail, and a whirling darkness blown from heaven;
To me his levin-light he promiseth
O'er ships and men, for scourging and hot death:
Do thou make wild the roads of the sea, and steep
With war of waves and yawning of the deep,
Till dead men choke Euboea's curling bay.
So Greece shall dread even in an after day
My house, nor scorn the Watchers of strange lands!

POSEIDON.
I give thy boon unbartered. These mine hands
Shall stir the waste Aegean; reefs that cross
The Delian pathways, jag-torn Myconos,
Scyros and Lemnos, yea, and storm-driven
Caphêreus with the bones of drownèd men
Shall glut him. — Go thy ways, and bid the Sire
Yield to thine hand the arrows of his fire.
Then wait thine hour, when the last ship shall wind
Her cable coil for home! [*Exit* PALLAS.
   How are ye blind,
Ye treaders down of cities, ye that cast
Temples to desolation, and lay waste
Tombs, the untrodden sanctuaries where lie
The ancient dead; yourselves so soon to die!
[*Exit* POSEIDON.
* * * * *
The day slowly dawns: HECUBA *wakes*.

HECUBA.
Up from the earth, O weary head!
  This is not Troy, about, above —
  Not Troy, nor we the lords thereof.
Thou breaking neck, be strengthenèd!
Endure and chafe not. The winds rave

And falter. Down the world's wide road,
Float, float where streams the breath of God;
Nor turn thy prow to breast the wave.
Ah woe!… For what woe lacketh here?
My children lost, my land, my lord.
O thou great wealth of glory, stored
Of old in Ilion, year by year
We watched … and wert thou nothingness?
What is there that I fear to say?
And yet, what help?… Ah, well-a-day,
This ache of lying, comfortless
And haunted! Ah, my side, my brow
And temples! All with changeful pain
My body rocketh, and would fain
Move to the tune of tears that flow:
For tears are music too, and keep
A song unheard in hearts that weep.
[*She rises and gazes towards the Greek ships far off on the shore.*
O ships, O crowding faces
Of ships, O hurrying beat
Of oars as of crawling feet,
How found ye our holy places?
Threading the narrows through,
Out from the gulfs of the Greek,
Out to the clear dark blue,
With hate ye came and with joy,
And the noise of your music flew,
Clarion and pipe did shriek,
As the coilèd cords ye threw,
Held in the heart of Troy!
What sought ye then that ye came?
A woman, a thing abhorred:
A King's wife that her lord
Hateth: and Castor's shame
Is hot for her sake, and the reeds
Of old Eurôtas stir
With the noise of the name of her.

She slew mine ancient King,
The Sower of fifty Seeds,
  And cast forth mine and me,
  As shipwrecked men, that cling
    To a reef in an empty sea.
Who am I that I sit
  Here at a Greek king's door,
Yea, in the dust of it?
  A slave that men drive before,
A woman that hath no home,
  Weeping alone for her dead;
  A low and bruisèd head,
And the glory struck therefrom.
[*She starts up from her solitary brooding, and calls to the other Trojan Women in the huts.*
O Mothers of the Brazen Spear,
  And maidens, maidens, brides of shame,
  Troy is a smoke, a dying flame;
Together we will weep for her:
I call ye as a wide-wing'd bird
  Calleth the children of her fold,
To cry, ah, not the cry men heard
   In Ilion, not the songs of old,
That echoed when my hand was true
  On Priam's sceptre, and my feet
  Touched on the stone one signal beat,
   And out the Dardan music rolled;
And Troy's great Gods gave ear thereto.
[*The door of one of the huts on the right opens, and the Women steal out severally, startled and afraid*.

FIRST WOMAN.
[*Strophe* I.
How say'st thou? Whither moves thy cry,
   Thy bitter cry? Behind our door
   We heard thy heavy heart outpour
Its sorrow: and there shivered by

Fear and a quick sob shaken
From prisoned hearts that shall be free no more!

HECUBA.
Child, 'tis the ships that stir upon the shore….

SECOND WOMAN.
The ships, the ships awaken!

THIRD WOMAN.
Dear God, what would they? Overseas
Bear me afar to strange cities?

HECUBA.
Nay, child, I know not. Dreams are these,
Fears of the hope-forsaken.

FIRST WOMAN.
Awake, O daughters of affliction, wake
And learn your lots! Even now the Argives break
Their camp for sailing!

HECUBA.
Ah, not Cassandra! Wake not her
Whom God hath maddened, lest the foe
Mock at her dreaming. Leave me clear
From that one edge of woe.
O Troy, my Troy, thou diest here
Most lonely; and most lonely we
The living wander forth from thee,
And the dead leave thee wailing!
[*One of the huts on the left is now open, and the rest of the* CHORUS *come out severally. Their number eventually amounts to fifteen*.

FOURTH WOMAN.
[*Antistrophe* I.
Out of the tent of the Greek king
I steal, my Queen, with trembling breath:

What means thy call? Not death; not death!
They would not slay so low a thing!

FIFTH WOMAN.
O, 'tis the ship-folk crying
To deck the galleys: and we part, we part!

HECUBA.
Nay, daughter: take the morning to thine heart.

FIFTH WOMAN.
My heart with dread is dying!

SIXTH WOMAN.
An herald from the Greek hath come!

FIFTH WOMAN.
How have they cast me, and to whom
A bondmaid?

HECUBA.
Peace, child: wait thy doom.
Our lots are near the trying.

FOURTH WOMAN.
Argos, belike, or Phthia shall it be,
Or some lone island of the tossing sea,
Far, far from Troy?

HECUBA.
And I the agèd, where go I,
A winter-frozen bee, a slave
Death-shapen, as the stones that lie
Hewn on a dead man's grave:
The children of mine enemy
To foster, or keep watch before
The threshold of a master's door,
I that was Queen in Troy!

A WOMAN TO ANOTHER.
[*Strophe 2*.
And thou, what tears can tell thy doom?

THE OTHER.
The shuttle still shall flit and change
Beneath my fingers, but the loom,
  Sister, be strange.

ANOTHER *(wildly)*.
Look, my dead child! My child, my love,
The last look….

ANOTHER.
  Oh, there cometh worse.
A Greek's bed in the dark….

ANOTHER.
  God curse
That night and all the powers thereof!

ANOTHER.
Or pitchers to and fro to bear
  To some Pirênê on the hill,
 Where the proud water craveth still
Its broken-hearted minister.

ANOTHER.
God guide me yet to Theseus' land,
 The gentle land, the famed afar….

ANOTHER.
But not the hungry foam — Ah, never! —
Of fierce Eurotas, Helen's river,
To bow to Menelaus' hand,
 That wasted Troy with war!
A WOMAN.
[*Antistrophe 2*.

They told us of a land high-born,
  Where glimmers round Olympus' roots
A lordly river, red with corn
  And burdened fruits.

ANOTHER.
Aye, that were next in my desire
  To Athens, where good spirits dwell….

ANOTHER.
Or Aetna's breast, the deeps of fire
  That front the Tyrian's Citadel:
First mother, she, of Sicily
  And mighty mountains: fame hath told
  Their crowns of goodness manifold….

ANOTHER.
And, close beyond the narrowing sea,
A sister land, where float enchanted
  Ionian summits, wave on wave,
And Crathis of the burning tresses
Makes red the happy vale, and blesses
With gold of fountains spirit-haunted
  Homes of true men and brave!

LEADER.
But lo, who cometh: and his lips
  Grave with the weight of dooms unknown:
A Herald from the Grecian ships.
  Swift comes he, hot-foot to be done
And finished. Ah, what bringeth he
Of news or judgment? Slaves are we,
  Spoils that the Greek hath won!
[TALTHYBIUS, *followed by some Soldiers, enters from the left*.

TALTHYBIUS.
Thou know'st me, Hecuba. Often have I crossed
Thy plain with tidings from the Hellene host.

’Tis I, Talthybius…. Nay, of ancient use
Thou know’st me. And I come to bear thee news.

HECUBA.
Ah me, ’tis here, ’tis here,
Women of Troy, our long embosomed fear!

TALTHYBIUS.
The lots are cast, if that it was ye feared.

HECUBA.
What lord, what land…. Ah me,
Phthia or Thebes, or sea-worn Thessaly?

TALTHYBIUS.
Each hath her own. Ye go not in one herd.

HECUBA.
Say then what lot hath any? What of joy
Falls, or can fall on any child of Troy?

TALTHYBIUS.
I know: but make thy questions severally.

HECUBA.
My stricken one must be
Still first. Say how Cassandra’s portion lies.

TALTHYBIUS.
Chosen from all for Agamemnon’s prize!

HECUBA.
How, for his Spartan bride
A tirewoman? For Helen’s sister’s pride?

TALTHYBIUS.
Nay, nay: a bride herself, for the King’s bed.

HECUBA.
The sainted of Apollo? And her own
Prize that God promised
Out of the golden clouds, her virgin crown?…

TALTHYBIUS.
He loved her for that same strange holiness.

HECUBA.
Daughter, away, away,
Cast all away,
The haunted Keys, the lonely stole's array
That kept thy body like a sacred place!

TALTHYBIUS.
Is't not rare fortune that the King hath smiled
On such a maid?

HECUBA.
What of that other child
Ye reft from me but now?

TALTHYBIUS *(speaking with some constraint)*.
Polyxena? Or what child meanest thou?

HECUBA.
The same. What man now hath her, or what doom?

TALTHYBIUS.
She rests apart, to watch Achilles' tomb.

HECUBA.
To watch a tomb? My daughter? What is this?…
Speak, Friend? What fashion of the laws of Greece?

TALTHYBIUS.
Count thy maid happy! She hath naught of ill
To fear….

HECUBA.
What meanest thou? She liveth still?

TALTHYBIUS.
I mean, she hath one toil that holds her free
From all toil else.

HECUBA.
What of Andromache,
Wife of mine iron-hearted Hector, where
Journeyeth she?

TALTHYBIUS.
Pyrrhus, Achilles' son, hath taken her.

HECUBA.
And I, whose slave am I,
The shaken head, the arm that creepeth by,
Staff-crutchèd, like to fall?

TALTHYBIUS.
Odysseus, Ithaca's king, hath thee for thrall.

HECUBA.
Beat, beat the crownless head:
Rend the cheek till the tears run red!
A lying man and a pitiless
Shall be lord of me, a heart full-flown
With scorn of righteousness:
O heart of a beast where law is none,
Where all things change so that lust be fed,
The oath and the deed, the right and the wrong,
Even the hate of the forked tongue:
Even the hate turns and is cold,
False as the love that was false of old!
O Women of Troy, weep for me!
Yea, I am gone: I am gone my ways.

Mine is the crown of misery,
The bitterest day of all our days.

LEADER.
Thy fate thou knowest, Queen: but I know not
What lord of South or North has won my lot.

TALTHYBIUS.
Go, seek Cassandra, men! Make your best speed,
That I may leave her with the King, and lead
These others to their divers lords…. Ha, there!
What means that sudden light? Is it the flare
Of torches?
[*Light is seen shining through the crevices of the second hut on the right. He moves towards it.*
Would they fire their prison rooms,
Or how, these dames of Troy?— ‘Fore God, the dooms
Are known, and now they burn themselves and die
Rather than sail with us! How savagely
In days like these a free neck chafes beneath
Its burden!… Open! Open quick! Such death
Were bliss to them, it may be: but ‘twill bring
Much wrath, and leave me shamed before the King!

HECUBA.
There is no fire, no peril: ’tis my child,
Cassandra, by the breath of God made wild.
[*The door opens from within and* CASSANDRA *enters, white-robed and wreathed like a Priestess, a great torch in her hand. She is singing softly to herself and does not see the Herald or the scene before her.*

CASSANDRA.
Lift, lift it high: [*Strophe*.
Give it to mine hand!
Lo, I bear a flame
Unto God! I praise his name.
I light with a burning brand
This sanctuary.

Blessèd is he that shall wed,
  And blessèd, blessèd am I
  In Argos: a bride to lie
With a king in a king's bed.
Hail, O Hymen red,
  O Torch that makest one!
  Weepest thou, Mother mine own?
Surely thy cheek is pale
With tears, tears that wail
  For a land and a father dead.
  But I go garlanded:
I am the Bride of Desire:
  Therefore my torch is borne —
  Lo, the lifting of morn,
Lo, the leaping of fire! —
For thee, O Hymen bright,
  For thee, O Moon of the Deep,
So Law hath charged, for the light
  Of a maid's last sleep.
Awake, O my feet, awake: [*Antistrophe*.
  Our father's hope is won!
    Dance as the dancing skies
    Over him, where he lies
  Happy beneath the sun!…
Lo, the Ring that I make….
[*She makes a circle round her with a torch, and visions appear to her*.
Apollo!… Ah, is it thou?
  O shrine in the laurels cold,
  I bear thee still, as of old,
Mine incense! Be near to me now.
[*She waves the torch as though bearing incense*.
O Hymen, Hymen fleet:
  Quick torch that makest one!…
  How? Am I still alone?
Laugh as I laugh, and twine
In the dance, O Mother mine:
  Dear feet, be near my feet!

Come, greet ye Hymen, greet
  Hymen with songs of pride:
Sing to him loud and long,
Cry, cry, when the song
  Faileth, for joy of the bride!
O Damsels girt in the gold
  Of Ilion, cry, cry ye,
For him that is doomed of old
  To be lord of me!

LEADER.
O hold the damsel, lest her trancèd feet
Lift her afar, Queen, toward the Hellene fleet!

HECUBA.
O Fire, Fire, where men make marriages
Surely thou hast thy lot; but what are these
Thou bringest flashing? Torches savage-wild
And far from mine old dreams. — Alas, my child,
How little dreamed I then of wars or red
Spears of the Greek to lay thy bridal bed!
Give me thy brand; it hath no holy blaze
Thus in thy frenzy flung. Nor all thy days
Nor all thy griefs have changed them yet, nor learned
Wisdom. — Ye women, bear the pine half burned
To the chamber back; and let your drownèd eyes
Answer the music of these bridal cries!
[*She takes the torch and gives it to one of the women*.

CASSANDRA.
O Mother, fill mine hair with happy flowers,
And speed me forth. Yea, if my spirit cowers,
Drive me with wrath! So liveth Loxias,
A bloodier bride than ever Helen was
Go I to Agamemnon, Lord most high
Of Hellas!… I shall kill him, mother; I
Shall kill him, and lay waste his house with fire

As he laid ours. My brethren and my sire
Shall win again….
(Checking herself) But part I must let be,
And speak not. Not the axe that craveth me,
And more than me; not the dark wanderings
Of mother-murder that my bridal brings,
And all the House of Atreus down, down, down….
Nay, I will show thee. Even now this town
Is happier than the Greeks. I know the power
Of God is on me: but this little hour,
Wilt thou but listen, I will hold him back!
One love, one woman's beauty, o'er the track
Of hunted Helen, made their myriads fall.
And this their King so wise, who ruleth all,
What wrought he? Cast out Love that Hate might feed:
Gave to his brother his own child, his seed
Of gladness, that a woman fled, and fain
To fly for ever, should be turned again!
So the days waned, and armies on the shore
Of Simois stood and strove and died. Wherefore?
No man had moved their landmarks; none had shook
Their wallèd towns. — And they whom Ares took,
Had never seen their children: no wife came
With gentle arms to shroud the limbs of them
For burial, in a strange and angry earth
Laid dead. And there at home, the same long dearth:
Women that lonely died, and aged men
Waiting for sons that ne'er should turn again,
Nor know their graves, nor pour drink-offerings,
To still the unslakèd dust. These be the things
The conquering Greek hath won!
But we — what pride,
What praise of men were sweeter? — fighting died
To save our people. And when war was red
Around us, friends upbore the gentle dead
Home, and dear women's heads about them wound
White shrouds, and here they sleep in the old ground

Belovèd. And the rest long days fought on,
Dwelling with wives and children, not alone
And joyless, like these Greeks.
  And Hector's woe,
What is it? He is gone, and all men know
His glory, and how true a heart he bore.
It is the gift the Greek hath brought! Of yore
Men saw him not, nor knew him. Yea, and even
Paris hath loved withal a child of heaven:
Else had his love but been as others are.
  Would ye be wise, ye Cities, fly from war!
Yet if war come, there is a crown in death
For her that striveth well and perisheth
Unstained: to die in evil were the stain!
Therefore, O Mother, pity not thy slain,
Nor Troy, nor me, the bride. Thy direst foe
And mine by this my wooing is brought low.

TALTHYBIUS *(at last breaking through the spell that has held him)*.
I swear, had not Apollo made thee mad,
Not lightly hadst thou flung this shower of bad
Bodings, to speed my General o'er the seas!
  'Fore God, the wisdoms and the greatnesses
Of seeming, are they hollow all, as things
Of naught? This son of Atreus, of all kings
Most mighty, hath so bowed him to the love
Of this mad maid, and chooseth her above
All women! By the Gods, rude though I be,
I would not touch her hand!
  Look thou; I see
Thy lips are blind, and whatso words they speak,
Praises of Troy or shamings of the Greek,
I cast to the four winds! Walk at my side
In peace!… And heaven content him of his bride!
[*He moves as though to go, but turns to* HECUBA, *and speaks more gently*.
And thou shalt follow to Odysseus' host

When the word comes. 'Tis a wise queen thou
go'st
To serve, and gentle: so the Ithacans say.

CASSANDRA *(seeing for the first time the Herald and all the scene)*.
How fierce a slave!… O Heralds, Heralds!
Yea,
Voices of Death; and mists are over them
Of dead men's anguish, like a diadem,
These weak abhorred things that serve the hate
Of kings and peoples!…
To Odysseus' gate
My mother goeth, say'st thou? Is God's word
As naught, to me in silence ministered,
That in this place she dies?… *(To herself)* No
more; no more!
Why should I speak the shame of them, before
They come?… Little he knows, that hard-beset
Spirit, what deeps of woe await him yet;
Till all these tears of ours and harrowings
Of Troy, by his, shall be as golden things.
Ten years behind ten years athwart his way
Waiting: and home, lost and unfriended….
Nay:
Why should Odysseus' labours vex my breath?
On; hasten; guide me to the house of Death,
To lie beside my bridegroom!…
Thou Greek King,
Who deem'st thy fortune now so high a thing,
Thou dust of the earth, a lowlier bed I see,
In darkness, not in light, awaiting thee:
And with thee, with thee … there, where yawneth
plain
A rift of the hills, raging with winter rain,
Dead … and out-cast … and naked…. It is I
Beside my bridegroom: and the wild beasts cry,
And ravin on God's chosen!

[*She clasps her hands to her brow and feels the wreaths.*
O, ye wreaths!
Ye garlands of my God, whose love yet breathes
About me, shapes of joyance mystical,
Begone! I have forgot the festival,
Forgot the joy. Begone! I tear ye, so,
From off me!… Out on the swift winds they go.
With flesh still clean I give them back to thee,
Still white, O God, O light that leadest me!
[Turning upon the Herald.
Where lies the galley? Whither shall I tread?
See that your watch be set, your sail be spread
The wind comes quick! Three Powers — mark me,
thou! —
There be in Hell, and one walks with thee now!
Mother, farewell, and weep not! O my sweet
City, my earth-clad brethren, and thou great
Sire that begat us, but a space, ye Dead,
And I am with you, yea, with crowned head
I come, and shining from the fires that feed
On these that slay us now, and all their seed!
[*She goes out, followed by Talthybius and the Soldiers* Hecuba, *after waiting for an instant motionless, falls to the ground.*

LEADER OF CHORUS.
The Queen, ye Watchers! See, she falls, she falls,
Rigid without a word! O sorry thralls,
Too late! And will ye leave her downstricken,
A woman, and so old? Raise her again!
[*Some women go to HECUBA, but she refuses their aid and speaks without rising.*

HECUBA.
Let lie … the love we seek not is no love….
This ruined body! Is the fall thereof
Too deep for all that now is over me
Of anguish, and hath been, and yet shall be?

Ye Gods…. Alas! Why call on things so weak
For aid? Yet there is something that doth seek,
Crying, for God, when one of us hath woe.
O, I will think of things gone long ago
And weave them to a song, like one more tear
In the heart of misery…. All kings we were;
And I must wed a king. And sons I brought
My lord King, many sons … nay, that were naught;
But high strong princes, of all Troy the best.
Hellas nor Troäs nor the garnered East
Held such a mother! And all these things beneath
The Argive spear I saw cast down in death,
And shore these tresses at the dead men's feet.
  Yea, and the gardener of my garden great,
It was not any noise of him nor tale
I wept for; these eyes saw him, when the pale
Was broke, and there at the altar Priam fell
Murdered, and round him all his citadel
Sacked. And my daughters, virgins of the fold,
Meet to be brides of mighty kings, behold,
'Twas for the Greek I bred them! All are gone;
And no hope left, that I shall look upon
Their faces any more, nor they on mine.
  And now my feet tread on the utmost line:
An old, old slave-woman, I pass below
Mine enemies' gates; and whatso task they know
For this age basest, shall be mine; the door,
Bowing, to shut and open…. I that bore
Hector!… and meal to grind, and this racked head
Bend to the stones after a royal bed;
Tom rags about me, aye, and under them
Tom flesh; 'twill make a woman sick for shame!
Woe's me; and all that one man's arms might hold
One woman, what long seas have o'er me rolled
And roll for ever!… O my child, whose white
Soul laughed amid the laughter of God's light,
Cassandra, what hands and how strange a day

Have loosed thy zone! And thou, Polyxena,
Where art thou? And my sons? Not any seed
Of man nor woman now shall help my need.
  Why raise me any more? What hope have I
To hold me? Take this slave that once trod high
In Ilion; cast her on her bed of clay
Rock-pillowed, to lie down, and pass away
Wasted with tears. And whatso man they call
Happy, believe not ere the last day fall!
* * * * *

CHORUS. [*Strophe.*
O Muse, be near me now, and make
  A strange song for Ilion's sake,
Till a tone of tears be about mine ears
  And out of my lips a music break
  For Troy, Troy, and the end of the years:
    When the wheels of the Greek above me pressed,
    And the mighty horse-hoofs beat my breast;
  And all around were the Argive spears
A towering Steed of golden rein —
  O gold without, dark steel within! —
Ramped in our gates; and all the plain
  Lay silent where the Greeks had been.
And a cry broke from all the folk
Gathered above on Ilion's rock:
"Up, up, O fear is over now!
  To Pallas, who hath saved us living,
To Pallas bear this victory-vow!"
Then rose the old man from his room,
The merry damsel left her loom,
And each bound death about his brow
  With minstrelsy and high thanksgiving!
[*Antistrophe.*
O, swift were all in Troy that day,
  And girt them to the portal-way,
Marvelling at that mountain Thing

Smooth-carven, where the Argives lay,
And wrath, and Ilion's vanquishing:
Meet gift for her that spareth not,
Heaven's yokeless Rider. Up they brought
Through the steep gates her offering:
Like some dark ship that climbs the shore
On straining cables, up, where stood
Her marble throne, her hallowed floor,
Who lusted for her people's blood.
A very weariness of joy
Fell with the evening over Troy:
And lutes of Afric mingled there
With Phrygian songs: and many a maiden,
With white feet glancing light as air,
Made happy music through the gloom:
And fires on many an inward room
All night broad-flashing, flung their glare
On laughing eyes and slumber-laden.
A MAIDEN.
I was among the dancers there
To Artemis, and glorying sang
Her of the Hills, the Maid most fair,
Daughter of Zeus: and, lo, there rang
A shout out of the dark, and fell
Deathlike from street to street, and made
A silence in the citadel:
And a child cried, as if afraid,
And hid him in his mother's veil.
Then stalked the Slayer from his den,
The hand of Pallas served her well!
O blood, blood of Troy was deep
About the streets and altars then:
And in the wedded rooms of sleep,
Lo, the desolate dark alone,
And headless things, men stumbled on.
And forth, lo, the women go,
The crown of War, the crown of Woe,

To bear the children of the foe
  And weep, weep, for Ilion!
* * * * *
[*As the song ceases a chariot is seen approaching from the town, laden with spoils. On it sits a mourning Woman with a child in her arms.*

LEADER.
Lo, yonder on the heapèd crest
   Of a Greek wain, Andromachê,
  As one that o'er an unknown sea
Tosseth; and on her wave-borne breast
Her loved one clingeth, Hector's child,
  Astyanax…. O most forlorn
  Of women, whither go'st thou, borne
'Mid Hector's bronzen arms, and piled
Spoils of the dead, and pageantry
  Of them that hunted Ilion down?
  Aye, richly thy new lord shall crown
The mountain shrines of Thessaly!

ANDROMACHE
    [*Strophe I.*
Forth to the Greek I go,
  Driven as a beast is driven.

HEC. Woe, woe!

AND. Nay, mine is woe:
  Woe to none other given,
   And the song and the crown therefor!

HEC. O Zeus!

AND. He hates thee sore!

HEC. Children!

AND. No more, no more
To aid thee: their strife is striven!

HECUBA.
[*Antistrophe I.*
Troy, Troy is gone!

AND. Yea, and her treasure parted.

HEC. Gone, gone, mine own
Children, the noble-hearted!

AND. Sing sorrow….

HEC. For me, for me!

AND. Sing for the Great City,
That falleth, falleth to be
A shadow, a fire departed.

ANDROMACHE.
[*Strophe 2.*
Come to me, O my lover!

HEC. The dark shroudeth him over,
My flesh, woman, not thine, not thine!

AND. Make of thine arms my cover!

HECUBA.
[*Antistrophe 2.*
O thou whose wound was deepest,
Thou that my children keepest,
Priam, Priam, O age-worn King,
Gather me where thou sleepest.

ANDROMACHE *(her hands upon her heart)*.
[*Strophe 3.*
O here is the deep of desire,

HEC. *(How? And is this not woe?)*

AND. For a city burned with fire;

HEC. *(It beateth, blow on blow.)*

AND. God's wrath for Paris, thy son, that he died not long ago:
Who sold for his evil love
Troy and the towers thereof:
Therefore the dead men lie
Naked, beneath the eye
Of Pallas, and vultures croak
And flap for joy:
So Love hath laid his yoke
On the neck of Troy!

HECUBA.
[*Antistrophe 3.*
O mine own land, my home,

AND. *(I weep for thee, left forlorn,)*

HEC. See'st thou what end is come?

AND. *(And the house where my babes were born.)*

HEC. A desolate Mother we leave, O children, a City of scorn:
Even as the sound of a song
Left by the way, but long
Remembered, a tune of tears
Falling where no man hears,
In the old house, as rain,
For things loved of yore:
But the dead hath lost his pain
And weeps no more.

LEADER.
How sweet are tears to them in bitter stress,

And sorrow, and all the songs of heaviness.

ANDROMACHE.
Mother of him of old, whose mighty spear Smote Greeks like chaff, see'st thou what things are here?

HECUBA.
I see God's hand, that buildeth a great crown
For littleness, and hath cast the mighty down.

ANDROMACHE.
I and my babe are driven among the droves
Of plundered cattle. O, when fortune moves
So swift, the high heart like a slave beats low.

HECUBA.
'Tis fearful to be helpless. Men but now
Have taken Cassandra, and I strove in vain.

ANDROMACHE.
Ah, woe is me; hath Ajax come again?
But other evil yet is at thy gate.

HECUBA.
Nay, Daughter, beyond number, beyond weight
My evils are! Doom raceth against doom.

ANDROMACHE.
Polyxena across Achilles' tomb
Lies slain, a gift flung to the dreamless dead.

HECUBA.
My sorrow!… 'Tis but what Talthybius said:
So plain a riddle, and I read it not.

ANDROMACHE.
I saw her lie, and stayed this chariot;

And raiment wrapt on her dead limbs, and beat
My breast for her.

HECUBA *(to herself)*.
O the foul sin of it!
The wickedness! My child. My child! Again
I cry to thee. How cruelly art thou slain!

ANDROMACHE.
She hath died her death, and howso dark it be,
Her death is sweeter than my misery.

HECUBA.
Death cannot be what Life is, Child; the cup
Of Death is empty, and Life hath always hope.

ANDROMACHE.
O Mother, having ears, hear thou this word
Fear-conquering, till thy heart as mine be stirred
With joy. To die is only not to be;
And better to be dead than grievously
Living. They have no pain, they ponder not
Their own wrong. But the living that is brought
From joy to heaviness, his soul doth roam,
As in a desert, lost, from its old home.
Thy daughter lieth now as one unborn,
Dead, and naught knowing of the lust and scorn
That slew her. And I … long since I drew my
bow
Straight at the heart of good fame; and I know
My shaft hit; and for that am I the more
Fallen from peace. All that men praise us for,
I loved for Hector's sake, and sought to win.
I knew that alway, be there hurt therein
Or utter innocence, to roam abroad
Hath ill report for women; so I trod
Down the desire thereof, and walked my way
In mine own garden. And light words and gay

Parley of women never passed my door.
The thoughts of mine own heart … I craved no more….
Spoke with me, and I was happy. Constantly
I brought fair silence and a tranquil eye
For Hector's greeting, and watched well the way
Of living, where to guide and where obey.
And, lo! some rumour of this peace, being gone
Forth to the Greek, hath cursed me. Achilles' son,
So soon as I was taken, for his thrall
Chose me. I shall do service in the hall
Of them that slew…. How? Shall I thrust aside
Hector's beloved face, and open wide
My heart to this new lord? Oh, I should stand
A traitor to the dead! And if my hand
And flesh shrink from him … lo, wrath and despite
O'er all the house, and I a slave!
One night,
One night … aye, men have said it … maketh tame
A woman in a man's arms…. O shame, shame!
What woman's lips can so forswear her dead,
And give strange kisses in another's bed?
Why, not a dumb beast, not a colt will run
In the yoke untroubled, when her mate is gone —
A thing not in God's image, dull, unmoved
Of reason. O my Hector! best beloved,
That, being mine, wast all in all to me,
My prince, my wise one, O my majesty
Of valiance! No man's touch had ever come
Near me, when thou from out my father's home
Didst lead me and make me thine…. And thou art
dead,
And I war-flung to slavery and the bread
Of shame in Hellas, over bitter seas!
What knoweth she of evils like to these,
That dead Polyxena, thou weepest for?
There liveth not in my life any more
The hope that others have. Nor will I tell

The lie to mine own heart, that aught is well
Or shall be well…. Yet, O, to dream were sweet!

LEADER.
Thy feet have trod the pathway of my feet,
And thy clear sorrow teacheth me mine own.

HECUBA.
Lo, yonder ships: I ne'er set foot on one,
But tales and pictures tell, when over them
Breaketh a storm not all too strong to stem,
Each man strives hard, the tiller gripped, the mast
Manned, the hull baled, to face it: till at last
Too strong breaks the o'erwhelming sea: lo, then
They cease, and yield them up as broken men
To fate and the wild waters. Even so
I in my many sorrows bear me low,
Nor curse, nor strive that other things may be.
The great wave rolled from God hath conquered me.
  But, O, let Hector and the fates that fell
On Hector, sleep. Weep for him ne'er so well,
Thy weeping shall not wake him. Honour thou
The new lord that is set above thee now,
And make of thine own gentle piety
A prize to lure his heart. So shalt thou be
A strength to them that love us, and — God knows,
It may be — rear this babe among his foes,
My Hector's child, to manhood and great aid
For Ilion. So her stones may yet be laid
One on another, if God will, and wrought
Again to a city! Ah, how thought to thought
Still beckons!… But what minion of the Greek
Is this that cometh, with new words to speak?
[*Enter* TALTHYBIUS *with a band of Soldiers. He comes forward slowly and with evident disquiet.*

TALTHYBIUS.
Spouse of the noblest heart that beat in Troy,
Andromache, hate me not! 'Tis not in joy
I tell thee. But the people and the Kings
Have with one voice….

ANDROMACHE.
What is it? Evil things
Are on thy lips!

TALTHYBIUS.
Tis ordered, this child…. Oh,
How can I tell her of it?

ANDROMACHE.
Doth he not go
With me, to the same master?

TALTHYBIUS.
There is none
In Greece, shall e'er be master of thy son.

ANDROMACHE.
How? Will they leave him here to build again
The wreck?…

TALTHYBIUS.
I know not how to tell thee plain!

ANDROMACHE.
Thou hast a gentle heart … if it be ill,
And not good, news thou hidest!

TALTHYBIUS.
'Tis their will
Thy son shall die…. The whole vile thing is said
Now!

ANDROMACHE.
Oh, I could have borne mine enemy's bed!

TALTHYBIUS.
And speaking in the council of the host
Odysseus hath prevailed —

ANDROMACHE.
O lost! lost! lost!…
Forgive me! It is not easy….

TALTHYBIUS.
… That the son
Of one so perilous be not fostered on
To manhood —

ANDROMACHE.
God; may his own counsel fall
On his own sons!

TALTHYBIUS.
… But from this crested wall
Of Troy be dashed, and die…. Nay, let the thing
Be done. Thou shalt be wiser so. Nor cling
So fiercely to him. Suffer as a brave
Woman in bitter pain; nor think to have
Strength which thou hast not. Look about thee here!
Canst thou see help, or refuge anywhere?
Thy land is fallen and thy lord, and thou
A prisoner and alone, one woman; how
Canst battle against us? For thine own good
I would not have thee strive, nor make ill blood
And shame about thee…. Ah, nor move thy lips
In silence there, to cast upon the ships
Thy curse! One word of evil to the host,
This babe shall have no burial, but be tossed
Naked…. Ah, peace! And bear as best thou may,
War's fortune. So thou shalt not go thy way

Leaving this child unburied; nor the Greek
Be stern against thee, if thy heart be meek!

ANDROMACHE *(to the child)*.
Go, die, my best-beloved, my cherished one,
In fierce men's hands, leaving me here alone.
Thy father was too valiant; that is why
They slay thee! Other children, like to die,
Might have been spared for that. But on thy head
His good is turned to evil.
  O thou bed
And bridal; O the joining of the hand,
That led me long ago to Hector's land
To bear, O not a lamb for Grecian swords
To slaughter, but a Prince o'er all the hordes
Enthroned of wide-flung Asia…. Weepest thou?
Nay, why, my little one? Thou canst not know.
And Father will not come; he will not come;
Not once, the great spear flashing, and the tomb
Riven to set thee free! Not one of all
His brethren, nor the might of Ilion's wall.
  How shall it be? One horrible spring … deep,
    deep
Down. And thy neck…. Ah God, so cometh
    sleep!…
And none to pity thee!… Thou little thing
That curlest in my arms, what sweet scents cling
All round thy neck! Belovèd; can it be
All nothing, that this bosom cradled thee
And fostered; all the weary nights, wherethrough
I watched upon thy sickness, till I grew
Wasted with watching? Kiss me. This one time;
Not ever again. Put up thine arms, and climb
About my neck: now, kiss me, lips to lips….
  O, ye have found an anguish that outstrips
All tortures of the East, ye gentle Greeks!
Why will ye slay this innocent, that seeks

No wrong?… O Helen, Helen, thou ill tree
That Tyndareus planted, who shall deem of thee
As child of Zeus? O, thou hast drawn thy breath
From many fathers, Madness, Hate, red Death,
And every rotting poison of the sky!
Zeus knows thee not, thou vampire, draining dry.
Greece and the world! God hate thee and destroy,
That with those beautiful eyes hast blasted Troy,
And made the far-famed plains a waste withal.
  Quick! take him: drag him: cast him from the wall,
If cast ye will! Tear him, ye beasts, be swift!
God hath undone me, and I cannot lift
One hand, one hand, to save my child from death….
O, hide my head for shame: fling me beneath
Your galleys' benches!…
[*She swoons: then half-rising.*
  Quick: I must begone
To the bridal…. I have lost my child, my own!
[*The Soldiers close round her.*

LEADER.
O Troy ill-starred; for one strange woman, one
Abhorrèd kiss, how are thine hosts undone!

TALTHYBIUS *(bending over ANDROMACHE and gradually taking the Child from her)*.
Come, Child: let be that clasp of love
  Outwearied! Walk thy ways with me,
Up to the crested tower, above
  Thy father's wall…. Where they decree
Thy soul shall perish. — Hold him: hold! —
  Would God some other man might ply
These charges, one of duller mould,
  And nearer to the iron than I!

HECUBA.
O Child, they rob us of our own,

Child of my Mighty One outworn:
Ours, ours thou art! — Can aught be done
Of deeds, can aught of pain be borne,
To aid thee? — Lo, this beaten head,
This bleeding bosom! These I spread
As gifts to thee. I can thus much.
Woe, woe for Troy, and woe for thee!
What fall yet lacketh, ere we touch
The last dead deep of misery?
[*The Child, who has started back from* TALTHYBIUS, *is taken up by one of the Soldiers and borne back towards the city, while* ANDROMACHE *is set again on the Chariot and driven off towards the ships.* TALTHYBIUS *goes with the Child.*
* * * * *

CHORUS.
[*Strophe I.*
In Salamis, filled with the foaming
Of billows and murmur of bees,
Old Telamon stayed from his roaming,
Long ago, on a throne of the seas;
Looking out on the hills olive-laden,
Enchanted, where first from the earth
The grey-gleaming fruit of the Maiden
Athena had birth;
A soft grey crown for a city
Belovèd a City of Light:
Yet he rested not there, nor had pity,
But went forth in his might,
Where Heracles wandered, the lonely
Bow-bearer, and lent him his hands
For the wrecking of one land only,
Of Ilion, Ilion only,
Most hated of lands!
[*Antistrophe* I.
Of the bravest of Hellas he made him
A ship-folk, in wrath for the Steeds,

And sailed the wide waters, and stayed him
  At last amid Simoïs' reeds;
And the oars beat slow in the river,
  And the long ropes held in the strand,
And he felt for his bow and his quiver,
    The wrath of his hand.
And the old king died; and the towers
  That Phoebus had builded did fall,
And his wrath, as a flame that devours,
    Ran red over all;
And the fields and the woodlands lay blasted,
  Long ago. Yea, twice hath the Sire
Uplifted his hand and downcast it
On the wall of the Dardan, downcast it
  As a sword and as fire.
[Strophe 2.
In vain, all in vain,
  O thou 'mid the wine-jars golden
    That movest in delicate joy,
    Ganymêdês, child of Troy,
The lips of the Highest drain
  The cup in thine hand upholden:
And thy mother, thy mother that bore thee,
  Is wasted with fire and torn;
    And the voice of her shores is heard,
    Wild, as the voice of a bird,
For lovers and children before thee
  Crying, and mothers outworn.
And the pools of thy bathing are perished,
  And the wind-strewn ways of thy feet:
Yet thy face as aforetime is cherished
Of Zeus, and the breath of it sweet;
Yea, the beauty of Calm is upon it
In houses at rest and afar.
But thy land, He hath wrecked and o'erthrown it
In the wailing of war.
[*Antistrophe* 2.

O Love, ancient Love,
Of old to the Dardan given;
Love of the Lords of the Sky;
How didst thou lift us high
In Ilion, yea, and above
All cities, as wed with heaven!
For Zeus — O leave it unspoken:
But alas for the love of the Morn;
Morn of the milk-white wing,
The gentle, the earth-loving,
That shineth on battlements broken
In Troy, and a people forlorn!
And, lo, in her bowers Tithônus,
Our brother, yet sleeps as of old:
O, she too hath loved us and known us,
And the Steeds of her star, flashing gold,
Stooped hither and bore him above us;
Then blessed we the Gods in our joy.
But all that made them to love us
Hath perished from Troy.

* * * * *

[*As the song ceases, the King* MENELAUS *enters, richly armed and followed by a bodyguard of Soldiers. He is a prey to violent and conflicting emotions.*

MENELAUS.
How bright the face of heaven, and how sweet
The air this day, that layeth at my feet
The woman that I…. Nay: 'twas not for her
I came. 'Twas for the man, the cozener
And thief, that ate with me and stole away
My bride. But Paris lieth, this long day,
By God's grace, under the horse-hoofs of the Greek,
And round him all his land. And now I seek….
Curse her! I scarce can speak the name she bears,
That was my wife. Here with the prisoners
They keep her, in these huts, among the hordes

Of numbered slaves. — The host whose labouring swords
Won her, have given her up to me, to fill
My pleasure; perchance kill her, or not kill,
But lead her home. — Methinks I have foregone
The slaying of Helen here in Ilion….
Over the long seas I will bear her back,
And there, there, cast her out to whatso wrack
Of angry death they may devise, who know
Their dearest dead for her in Ilion. — Ho!
Ye soldiers! Up into the chambers where
She croucheth! Grip the long blood-reeking hair,
And drag her to mine eyes … [*Controlling himself.*
And when there come
Fair breezes, my long ships shall bear her home.
[*The Soldiers go to force open the door of the second hut on the left.*

HECUBA.
Thou deep Base of the World, and thou high Throne
Above the World, whoe'er thou art, unknown
And hard of surmise, Chain of Things that be,
Or Reason of our Reason; God, to thee
I lift my praise, seeing the silent road
That bringeth justice ere the end be trod
To all that breathes and dies.

MENELAUS *(turning)*.
Ha! who is there
That prayeth heaven, and in so strange a prayer?

HECUBA.
I bless thee, Menelaus, I bless thee, If thou wilt slay her! Only fear to see
Her visage, lest she snare thee and thou fall! She snareth strong men's eyes; she snareth tall Cities; and fire from out her eateth up Houses. Such magic hath she, as a cup Of death!… Do I not know her? Yea, and thou, And these that lie around, do they not know? [*The Soldiers return from the hut and stand aside to let* HELEN *pass between them. She comes through them, gentle and unafraid; there is no disorder in her raiment.*

HELEN.
King Menelaus, thy first deed might make
A woman fear. Into my chamber brake
Thine armèd men, and lead me wrathfully.
Methinks, almost, I know thou hatest me.
Yet I would ask thee, what decree is gone
Forth for my life or death?

MENELAUS *(struggling with his emotion)*.
There was not one
That scrupled for thee. All, all with one will
Gave thee to me, whom thou hast wronged, to kill!

HELEN.
And is it granted that I speak, or no,
In answer to them ere I die, to show
I die most wronged and innocent?

MENELAUS.
I seek
To kill thee, woman; not to hear thee speak!

HECUBA.
O hear her! She must never die unheard,
King Menelaus! And give me the word
To speak in answer! All the wrong she wrought
Away from thee, in Troy, thou knowest not.
The whole tale set together is a death
Too sure; she shall not ‘scape thee!

MENELAUS.
’Tis but breath
And time. For thy sake, Hecuba, if she need
To speak, I grant the prayer. I have no heed
Nor mercy — let her know it well — for her!

HELEN.
It may be that, how false or true soe’er

Thou deem me, I shall win no word from thee.
So sore thou holdest me thine enemy.
Yet I will take what words I think thy heart
Holdeth of anger: and in even part
Set my wrong and thy wrong, and all that fell.
[*Pointing to* HECUBA.
She cometh first, who bare the seed and well
Of springing sorrow, when to life she brought
Paris: and that old King, who quenched not
Quick in the spark, ere yet he woke to slay,
The fire-brand's image. — But enough: a day
Came, and this Paris judged beneath the trees
Three Crowns of Life, three diverse Goddesses.
The gift of Pallas was of War, to lead
His East in conquering battles, and make bleed
The hearths of Hellas. Hera held a Throne —
If majesties he craved — to reign alone
From Phrygia to the last realm of the West.
And Cypris, if he deemed her loveliest,
Beyond all heaven, made dreams about my face
And for her grace gave me. And, lo! her grace
Was judged the fairest, and she stood above
Those twain. — Thus was I loved, and thus my
love
Hath holpen Hellas. No fierce Eastern crown
Is o'er your lands, no spear hath cast them down.
O, it was well for Hellas! But for me
Most ill; caught up and sold across the sea
For this my beauty; yea, dishonourèd
For that which else had been about my head
A crown of honour…. Ah, I see thy thought;
The first plain deed, 'tis that I answer not,
How in the dark out of thy house I fled….
There came the Seed of Fire, this woman's seed;
Came — O, a Goddess great walked with him then —
This Alexander, Breaker-down-of-Men,
This Paris, Strength-is-with-him; whom thou,

whom —
O false and light of heart — thou in thy room
Didst leave, and spreadest sail for Cretan seas,
Far, far from me!… And yet, how strange it is!
I ask not thee; I ask my own sad thought,
What was there in my heart, that I forgot
My home and land and all I loved, to fly
With a strange man? Surely it was not I,
But Cypris, there! Lay thou thy rod on her,
And be more high than Zeus and bitterer,
Who o'er all other spirits hath his throne,
But knows her chain must bind him. My wrong done
Hath its own pardon….
One word yet thou hast,
Methinks, of righteous seeming. When at last
The earth for Paris oped and all was o'er,
And her strange magic bound my feet no more,
Why kept I still his house, why fled not I
To the Argive ships?… Ah, how I strove to fly!
The old Gate-Warden could have told thee all,
My husband, and the watchers from the wall;
It was not once they took me, with the rope
Tied, and this body swung in the air, to grope
Its way toward thee, from that dim battlement.
Ah, husband still, how shall thy hand be bent
To slay me? Nay, if Right be come at last,
What shalt thou bring but comfort for pains past,
And harbour for a woman storm-driven:
A woman borne away by violent men:
And this one birthright of my beauty, this
That might have been my glory, lo, it is
A stamp that God hath burned, of slavery!
Alas! and if thou cravest still to be
As one set above gods, inviolate,
'Tis but a fruitless longing holds thee yet.

LEADER.
O Queen, think of thy children and thy land,
And break her spell! The sweet soft speech, the
hand
And heart so fell: it maketh me afraid.

HECUBA.
Meseems her goddesses first cry mine aid
Against these lying lips!… Not Hera, nay,
Nor virgin Pallas deem I such low clay,
To barter their own folk, Argos and brave
Athens, to be trod down, the Phrygian's slave,
All for vain glory and a shepherd's prize
On Ida! Wherefore should great Hera's eyes
So hunger to be fair? She doth not use
To seek for other loves, being wed with Zeus.
And maiden Pallas … did some strange god's face
Beguile her, that she craved for loveliness,
Who chose from God one virgin gift above
All gifts, and fleeth from the lips of love?
Ah, deck not out thine own heart's evil springs
By making spirits of heaven as brutish things
And cruel. The wise may hear thee, and guess all!
And Cypris must take ship-fantastical!
Sail with my son and enter at the gate
To seek thee! Had she willed it, she had sate
At peace in heaven, and wafted thee, and all
Amyclae with thee, under Ilion's wall.
My son was passing beautiful, beyond
His peers; and thine own heart, that saw and conned
His face, became a spirit enchanting thee.
For all wild things that in mortality
Have being, are Aphroditê; and the name
She bears in heaven is born and writ of them.
Thou sawest him in gold and orient vest
Shining, and lo, a fire about thy breast
Leapt! Thou hadst fed upon such little things,

Pacing thy ways in Argos. But now wings
Were come! Once free from Sparta, and there rolled
The Ilian glory, like broad streams of gold,
To steep thine arms and splash the towers! How
small,
How cold that day was Menelaus' hall!
Enough of that. It was by force my son
Took thee, thou sayst, and striving…. Yet not one
In Sparta knew! No cry, no sudden prayer
Rang from thy rooms that night…. Castor was there
To hear thee, and his brother: both true men,
Not yet among the stars! And after, when
Thou camest here to Troy, and in thy track
Argos and all its anguish and the rack
Of war — Ah God! — perchance men told thee 'Now
The Greek prevails in battle': then wouldst thou
Praise Menelaus, that my son might smart,
Striving with that old image in a heart
Uncertain still. Then Troy had victories:
And this Greek was as naught! Alway thine eyes
Watched Fortune's eyes, to follow hot where she
Led first. Thou wouldst not follow Honesty.
Thy secret ropes, thy body swung to fall
Far, like a desperate prisoner, from the wall!
Who found thee so? When wast thou taken? Nay,
Hadst thou no surer rope, no sudden way
Of the sword, that any woman honest-souled
Had sought long since, loving her lord of old?
Often and often did I charge thee; 'Go,
My daughter; go thy ways. My sons will know
New loves. I will give aid, and steal thee past
The Argive watch. O give us peace at last,
Us and our foes!' But out thy spirit cried
As at a bitter word. Thou hadst thy pride
In Alexander's house, and O, 'twas sweet
To hold proud Easterns bowing at thy feet.
They were great things to thee!… And comest thou

now
Forth, and hast decked thy bosom and thy brow,
And breathest with thy lord the same blue air,
Thou evil heart? Low, low, with ravaged hair,
Rent raiment, and flesh shuddering, and within —
O shame at last, not glory for thy sin;
So face him if thou canst!… Lo, I have done.
Be true, O King; let Hellas bear her crown
Of Justice. Slay this woman, and upraise
The law for evermore: she that betrays
Her husband's bed, let her be judged and die.

LEADER.
Be strong, O King; give judgment worthily
For thee and thy great house. Shake off thy long
Reproach; not weak, but iron against the wrong!

MENELAUS.
Thy thought doth walk with mine in one intent.
'Tis sure; her heart was willing, when she went
Forth to a stranger's bed. And all her fair
Tale of enchantment, 'tis a thing of air!…
[*Turning furiously upon* HELEN.
Out, woman! There be those that seek thee yet
With stones! Go, meet them. So shall thy long debt
Be paid at last. And ere this night is o'er
Thy dead face shall dishonour me no more!

HELEN *(kneeling before him and embracing him)*.
Behold, mine arms are wreathed about thy knees;
Lay not upon my head the phantasies
Of Heaven. Remember all, and slay me not!

HECUBA.
Remember them she murdered, them that fought
Beside thee, and their children! Hear that prayer!

MENELAUS.
Peace, agèd woman, peace! ’Tis not for her;
She is as naught to me.
(To the Soldiers) … March on before,
Ye ministers, and tend her to the shore …
And have some chambered galley set for her,
Where she may sail the seas.

HECUBA.
If thou be there,
I charge thee, let not her set foot therein!

MENELAUS.
How? Shall the ship go heavier for her sin?

HECUBA.
A lover once, will alway love again.

MENELAUS.
If that he loved be evil, he will fain
Hate it!… Howbeit, thy pleasure shall be done.
Some other ship shall bear her, not mine own….
Thou counsellest very well…. And when we come
To Argos, then … O then some pitiless doom
Well-earned, black as her heart! One that shall bind
Once for all time the law on womankind
Of faithfulness!… ‘Twill be no easy thing,
God knoweth. But the thought thereof shall fling
A chill on the dreams of women, though they be
Wilder of wing and loathèd more than she!
[*Exit, following* HELEN, *who is escorted by the Soldiers*.
* * * * *

CHORUS.
Some Women.
[*Strophe* I.
And hast thou turned from the Altar of frankincense,
And given to the Greek thy temple of Ilion?

The flame of the cakes of corn, is it gone from hence,
The myrrh on the air and the wreathèd towers gone?
And Ida, dark Ida, where the wild ivy grows,
The glens that run as rivers from the summer-broken snows,
And the Rock, is it forgotten, where the first sunbeam glows,
The lit house most holy of the Dawn?

EURIPIDES
Others.
[*Antistrophe I.*
The sacrifice is gone and the sound of joy,
The dancing under the stars and the night-long prayer:
The Golden Images and the Moons of Troy,
The twelve Moons and the mighty names they bear:
My heart, my heart crieth, O Lord Zeus on high,
Were they all to thee as nothing, thou thronèd in the sky,
Thronèd in the fire-cloud, where a City, near to die,
Passeth in the wind and the flare?
A Woman.
[*Strophe 2.*
Dear one, O husband mine,
Thou in the dim dominions
Driftest with waterless lips,
Unburied; and me the ships
Shall bear o'er the bitter brine,
Storm-birds upon angry pinions,
Where the towers of the Giants shine
O'er Argos cloudily,
And the riders ride by the sea.
Others.
And children still in the Gate
Crowd and cry,
A multitude desolate,
Voices that float and wait
As the tears run dry:
'Mother, alone on the shore
They drive me, far from thee:

Lo, the dip of the oar,
  The black hull on the sea!
Is it the Isle Immortal,
  Salamis, waits for me?
Is it the Rock that broods
Over the sundered floods
Of Corinth, the ancient portal
  Of Pelops' sovranty?'
A Woman.
[*Antistrophe* 2.
Out in the waste of foam,
    Where rideth dark Menelaus,
Come to us there, O white
And jagged, with wild sea-light
And crashing of oar-blades, come,
    O thunder of God, and slay us:
While our tears are wet for home,
While out in the storm go we,
Slaves of our enemy!
Others.
And, God, may Helen be there,
    With mirror of gold,
Decking her face so fair,
Girl-like; and hear, and stare,
    And turn death-cold:
Never, ah, never more
  The hearth of her home to see,
Nor sand of the Spartan shore,
  Nor tombs where her fathers be,
Nor Athena's bronzen Dwelling,
   Nor the towers of Pitanê
For her face was a dark desire
Upon Greece, and shame like fire,
And her dead are welling, welling,
  From red Simoïs to the sea!
* * * * *
[TALTHYBIUS, *followed by one or two Soldiers and bearing the child*

ASTYANAX *dead, is seen approaching.*

LEADER.
Ah, change on change! Yet each one racks
This land with evil manifold;
Unhappy wives of Troy, behold,
They bear the dead Astyanax,
Our prince, whom bitter Greeks this hour
Have hurled to death from Ilion's tower.

TALTHYBIUS.
One galley, Hecuba, there lingereth yet,
Lapping the wave, to gather the last freight
Of Pyrrhus' spoils for Thessaly. The chief
Himself long since hath parted, much in grief
For Pêleus' sake, his grandsire, whom, men say,
Acastus, Pelias' son, in war array
Hath driven to exile. Loath enough before
Was he to linger, and now goes the more
In haste, bearing Andromache, his prize.
'Tis she hath charmed these tears into mine eyes,
Weeping her fatherland, as o'er the wave
She gazed, and speaking words to Hector's grave.
Howbeit, she prayed us that due rites be done
For burial of this babe, thine Hector's son,
That now from Ilion's tower is fallen and dead.
And, lo! this great bronze-fronted shield, the dread
Of many a Greek, that Hector held in fray,
O never in God's name — so did she pray —
Be this borne forth to hang in Pêleus' hall
Or that dark bridal chamber, that the wall
May hurt her eyes; but here, in Troy o'erthrown,
Instead of cedar wood and vaulted stone,
Be this her child's last house…. And in thine hands
She bade me lay him, to be swathed in bands
Of death and garments, such as rest to thee
In these thy fallen fortunes; seeing that she

Hath gone her ways, and, for her master's haste,
May no more fold the babe unto his rest.
  Howbeit, so soon as he is garlanded
And robed, we will heap earth above his head
And lift our sails…. See all be swiftly done,
As thou art bidden. I have saved thee one
Labour. For as I passed Scamander's stream
Hard by, I let the waters run on him,
And cleansed his wounds. — See, I will go forth now
And break the hard earth for his grave: so thou
And I will haste together, to set free
Our oars at last to beat the homeward sea!
[*He goes out with his Soldiers, leaving the body of the Child in* HECUBA'S *arms.*

HECUBA.
Set the great orb of Hector's shield to lie
Here on the ground. 'Tis bitter that mine eye
Should see it…. O ye Argives, was your spear
Keen, and your hearts so low and cold, to fear
This babe? 'Twas a strange murder for brave
  men!
For fear this babe some day might raise again
His fallen land! Had ye so little pride?
While Hector fought, and thousands at his side,
Ye smote us, and we perished; and now, now,
When all are dead and Ilion lieth low,
Ye dread this innocent! I deem it not
Wisdom, that rage of fear that hath no thought….
  Ah, what a death hath found thee, little one!
Hadst thou but fallen fighting, hadst thou known
Strong youth and love and all the majesty
Of godlike kings, then had we spoken of thee
As of one blessed … could in any wise
These days know blessedness. But now thine eyes
Have seen, thy lips have tasted, but thy soul
No knowledge had nor usage of the whole

Rich life that lapt thee round…. Poor little child!
Was it our ancient wall, the circuit piled
By loving Gods, so savagely hath rent
Thy curls, these little flowers innocent
That were thy mother's garden, where she laid
Her kisses; here, just where the bone-edge frayed
Grins white above — Ah heaven, I will not see!
  Ye tender arms, the same dear mould have ye
As his; how from the shoulder loose ye drop
And weak! And dear proud lips, so full of hope
And closed for ever! What false words ye said
At daybreak, when he crept into my bed,
Called me kind names, and promised: 'Grandmother,
When thou art dead, I will cut close my hair
And lead out all the captains to ride by
Thy tomb.' Why didst thou cheat me so? 'Tis I,
Old, homeless, childless, that for thee must shed
Cold tears, so young, so miserably dead.
  Dear God, the pattering welcomes of thy feet,
The nursing in my lap; and O, the sweet
Falling asleep together! All is gone.
How should a poet carve the funeral stone
To tell thy story true? 'There lieth here
A babe whom the Greeks feared, and in their fear
Slew him.' Aye, Greece will bless the tale it
    tells!
  Child, they have left thee beggared of all else
In Hector's house; but one thing shalt thou keep,
This war-shield bronzen-barred, wherein to sleep.
Alas, thou guardian true of Hector's fair
Left arm, how art thou masterless! And there
I see his handgrip printed on thy hold;
And deep stains of the precious sweat, that rolled
In battle from the brows and beard of him,
Drop after drop, are writ about thy rim.
  Go, bring them — such poor garments hazardous
As these days leave. God hath not granted us

Wherewith to make much pride. But all I can,
I give thee, Child of Troy. — O vain is man,
Who glorieth in his joy and hath no fears:
While to and fro the chances of the years
Dance like an idiot in the wind! And none
By any strength hath his own fortune won.
[*During these lines several Women are seen approaching with garlands and raiment in their hands*.

LEADER.
Lo these, who bear thee raiment harvested
From Ilion's slain, to fold upon the dead.
[*During the following scene* HECUBA *gradually takes the garments and wraps them about the Child*.

HECUBA.
O not in pride for speeding of the car
Beyond thy peers, not for the shaft of war
True aimed, as Phrygians use; not any prize
Of joy for thee, nor splendour in men's eyes,
Thy father's mother lays these offerings
About thee, from the many fragrant things
That were all thine of old. But now no more.
One woman, loathed of God, hath broke the door
And robbed thy treasure-house, and thy warm breath
Made cold, and trod thy people down to death!

CHORUS. *Some Women*.
Deep in the heart of me
  I feel thine hand,
Mother: and is it he
Dead here, our prince to be,
  And lord of the land?

HECUBA.
Glory of Phrygian raiment, which my thought
Kept for thy bridal day with some far-sought

Queen of the East, folds thee for evermore.
  And thou, grey Mother, Mother-Shield that bore

THE TROJAN WOMEN
A thousand days of glory, thy last crown
Is here…. Dear Hector's shield! Thou shalt lie
  down
Undying with the dead, and lordlier there
Than all the gold Odysseus' breast can bear,
The evil and the strong!

CHORUS. *Some Women.*
Child of the Shield-bearer,
  Alas, Hector's child!
Great Earth, the All-mother,
Taketh thee unto her
  With wailing wild!
Others.
  Mother of misery,
  Give Death his song!
(HEC. Woe!) Aye and bitterly
(HEC. Woe!) We too weep for thee,
  And the infinite wrong!
[*During these lines* HECUBA, *kneeling by the body, has been performing a funeral rite, symbolically staunching the dead Child's wounds.*

HECUBA.
  I make thee whole;
I bind thy wounds, O little vanished soul.
This wound and this I heal with linen white:
O emptiness of aid!… Yet let the rite
Be spoken. This and…. Nay, not I, but he,
Thy father far away shall comfort thee!
[*She bows her head to the ground and remains motionless and unseeing.*

CHORUS.
Beat, beat thine head:
  Beat with the wailing chime

Of hands lifted in time:
Beat and bleed for the dead.
Woe is me for the dead!

HECUBA.
O Women! Ye, mine own….
[*She rises bewildered, as though she had seen a vision*.

LEADER.
Hecuba, speak!
Oh, ere thy bosom break….

HECUBA.
Lo, I have seen the open hand of God;
And in it nothing, nothing, save the rod
Of mine affliction, and the eternal hate,
Beyond all lands, chosen and lifted great
For Troy! Vain, vain were prayer and incense-swell
And bulls' blood on the altars!… All is well.
Had He not turned us in His hand, and thrust
Our high things low and shook our hills as dust,
We had not been this splendour, and our wrong
An everlasting music for the song
Of earth and heaven!
Go, women: lay our dead
In his low sepulchre. He hath his meed
Of robing. And, methinks, but little care
Toucheth the tomb, if they that moulder there
Have rich encerement. 'Tis we, 'tis we,
That dream, we living and our vanity!
[*The Women bear out the dead Child upon the shield, singing, when presently flames of fire and dim forms are seen among the ruins of the City*.

CHORUS. *Some Women*.
Woe for the mother that bare thee, child,
Thread so frail of a hope so high,
That Time hath broken: and all men smiled
About thy cradle, and, passing by,

Spoke of thy father's majesty.
Low, low, thou liest!
Others.
Ha! Who be these on the crested rock?
Fiery hands in the dusk, and a shock
Of torches flung! What lingereth still,
O wounded City, of unknown ill,
Ere yet thou diest?

TALTHYBIUS *(coming out through the ruined Wall)*.
Ye Captains that have charge to wreck this keep
Of Priam's City, let your torches sleep
No more! Up, fling the fire into her heart!
Then have we done with Ilion, and may part
In joy to Hellas from this evil land.
And ye — so hath one word two faces — stand,
Daughters of Troy, till on your ruined wall
The echo of my master's trumpet call
In signal breaks: then, forward to the sea,
Where the long ships lie waiting.
And for thee,
O ancient woman most unfortunate,
Follow: Odysseus' men be here, and wait
To guide thee…. 'Tis to him thou go'st for thrall.

HECUBA.
Ah, me! and is it come, the end of all,
The very crest and summit of my days?
I go forth from my land, and all its ways
Are filled with fire! Bear me, O aged feet,
A little nearer: I must gaze, and greet
My poor town ere she fall.
Farewell, farewell!
O thou whose breath was mighty on the swell
Of orient winds, my Troy! Even thy name
Shall soon be taken from thee. Lo, the flame
Hath thee, and we, thy children, pass away

To slavery…. God! O God of mercy!… Nay:
Why call I on the Gods? They know, they know,
My prayers, and would not hear them long ago.
  Quick, to the flames! O, in thine agony,
My Troy, mine own, take me to die with thee!
[*She springs toward the flames, but is seized and held by the Soldiers.*

TALTHYBIUS.
Back! Thou art drunken with thy miseries,
Poor woman! — Hold her fast, men, till it please
Odysseus that she come. She was his lot
Chosen from all and portioned. Lose her not!
[*He goes to watch over the burning of the City. The dusk deepens*.

CHORUS. *Divers Women*.
  Woe, woe, woe!
Thou of the Ages, O wherefore fleëst thou,
  Lord of the Phrygian, Father that made us?
  'Tis we, thy children; shall no man aid us?
  'Tis we, thy children! Seëst thou, seëst thou?
Others.
He seëth, only his heart is pitiless;
  And the land dies: yea, she,
She of the Mighty Cities perisheth citiless!
  Troy shall no more be!
Others.
Woe, woe, woe!
  Ilion shineth afar!
Fire in the deeps thereof,
Fire in the heights above,
  And crested walls of War!
Others.
  As smoke on the wing of heaven
  Climbeth and scattereth,
  Torn of the spear and driven,
  The land crieth for death:
O stormy battlements that red fire hath riven,

And the sword's angry breath!
[*A new thought comes to* HECUBA; *she kneels and beats the earth with her hands*.

HECUBA.
[*Strophe*.
O Earth, Earth of my children; hearken! and O
mine own,
Ye have hearts and forget not, ye in the darkness
lying!

LEADER.
Now hast thou found thy prayer, crying to them that are gone.

HECUBA.
Surely my knees are weary, but I kneel above your
head;
Hearken, O ye so silent! My hands beat your bed!

LEADER.
I, I am near thee;
I kneel to thy dead to hear thee,
Kneel to mine own in the darkness; O husband, hear
my crying!

HECUBA.
Even as the beasts they drive, even as the loads they
bear,

LEADER.
(Pain; O pain!)

HECUBA.
We go to the house of bondage. Hear, ye dead, O
hear!

LEADER.
(Go, and come not again!)

HECUBA.
Priam, mine own Priam,
  Lying so lowly,
Thou in thy nothingness,
Shelterless, comfortless,
See'st thou the thing I am?
Know'st thou my bitter stress?

LEADER.
Nay, thou art naught to him!
Out of the strife there came,
Out of the noise and shame,
Making his eyelids dim,
  Death, the Most Holy!
[*The fire and smoke rise constantly higher*.

HECUBA.
[*Antistrophe*.
O high houses of Gods, beloved streets of my birth,
  Ye have found the way of the sword, the fiery and
  blood-red river!

LEADER.
Fall, and men shall forget you! Ye shall lie in the gentle earth.

HECUBA.
The dust as smoke riseth; it spreadeth wide its wing; It maketh me as a shadow, and my City a vanished thing!

LEADER.
Out on the smoke she goeth,
  And her name no man knoweth;
And the cloud is northward, southward; Troy is gone
  for ever!
[*A great crash is heard, and the Wall is lost in smoke and darkness*.

HECUBA.
Ha! Marked ye? Heard ye? The crash of the towers that fall!

LEADER.
All is gone!

HECUBA.
Wrath in the earth and quaking and a flood that sweepeth all,

LEADER.
And passeth on! [*The Greek trumpet sounds*.

HECUBA.
Farewell! — O spirit grey,
  Whatso is coming,
Fail not from under me.
Weak limbs, why tremble ye?
Forth where the new long day
Dawneth to slavery!

CHORUS.
Farewell from parting lips,
Farewell! — Come, I and thou,
Whatso may wait us now,
Forth to the long Greek ships
  And the sea's foaming.
[*The trumpet sounds again, and the Women go out in the darkness.*

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS

Translated by Theodore Alois Buckley

Composed between 414 BC and 412 BC, this play is often described as a romance, forming a tragi-comedy, unlike the more severe tragedies in the Euripidean corpus. The drama concerns the daughter of Agamemnon, Iphigenia, who, years before the time period covered in the play, narrowly avoided death by sacrifice at the hands of her father. At the last moment the goddess Artemis intervened and replaced Iphigenia on the altar with a deer, secretly taking the girl off to Tauris. There she was made a priestess at the temple of Artemis, a position in which she has the gruesome task of ritually sacrificing foreigners that land on King Thoas' shores. Despising her forced religious servitude, she is desperate to contact her family in Greece and let them know she is still alive and wants to return to her homeland.

The play also features Iphigenia's brother Orestes, who has, with assistance from his friend Pylades, killed his mother Clytemnestra to avenge his father Agamemnon. Haunted by the Erinyes for committing matricide, he suffers periodic fits of madness and so has travelled to Tauris in order to steal a sacred statue of Artemis to help free him from his madness. Unknown to him, he will shortly meet his sister, whom he still believes perished years ago.

'Pylades and Orestes Brought as Victims before Iphigenia' by Benjamin West, 1766

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PERSONS REPRESENTED.

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THE ARGUMENT.

Orestes, coming into Tauri in Scythia, in company with Pylades, had been commanded to bear away the image of Diana, after which he was to meet with a respite from the avenging Erinnyes of his mother. His sister Iphigenia, who had been carried away by Diana from Aulis, when on the point of being sacrificed by her father, chances to be expiating a dream that led her to suppose Orestes dead, when a herdsman announces to her the arrival and detection of two strangers, whom she is bound by her office to sacrifice to Diana. On meeting, a mutual discovery takes place, and they plot their escape. Iphigenia imposes on the superstitious fears of Thoas, and, removing them to the sea-coast, they are on the point of making their escape together, when they are surprised, and subsequently detained and driven back by stress of weather. Thoas is about to pursue them, when Minerva appears, and restrains him from doing so, at the same time procuring liberty of return for the Grecian captives who form the chorus.

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS.

IPHIGENIA. Pelops, the son of Tantalus, setting out to Pisa with his swift steeds, weds the daughter of Œnomaus, from whom sprang Atreus; and from Atreus his sons, Menelaus and Agamemnon, from which [latter] I was born, Iphigenia, child of [Clytæmnestra,] daughter of Tyndarus, whom my father, as he imagined, sacrificed to Diana on account of Helen, near the eddies, which Euripus continually whirls to and fro, upturning the dark blue sea with frequent blasts, in the famed recesses of Aulis. For here indeed king Agamemnon drew together a Grecian armament of a thousand ships, desiring that the Greeks might take the glorious prize of victory over Troy, and avenge the outraged nuptials of Helen, for the gratification of Menelaus. But, there being great difficulty of sailing, and meeting with no winds, he came to [the consideration of] the omens of burnt sacrifices, and Calchas speaks thus. O thou who rulest over this Grecian expedition, Agamemnon, thou wilt not lead forth thy ships from the ports of this land, before Diana shall receive thy daughter Iphigenia as a victim; for thou didst vow to sacrifice to the light-bearing Goddess whatsoever the year should bring forth most beautiful. Now your wife Clytæmnestra has brought forth a daughter in your house, referring to me the title of the most beautiful, whom thou must needs sacrifice. And so, by the arts of Ulysses, they drew me from my mother under pretense of being wedded to Achilles. But I wretched coming to Aulis, being seized and raised aloft above the pyre, would have been slain by the sword; but Diana, giving to the Greeks a stag in my stead, stole me away, and, sending me through the clear ether, she settled me in this land of the Tauri, where barbarian Thoas rules the land, o’er barbarians, [Thoas,] who guiding his foot swift as the pinion, has arrived at this epithet [of Thoas, i.e. *the swift*] on account of his fleetness of foot. And she places me in this house as priestess, since which time the Goddess Diana is wont to be pleased with such rites as these, the name of which alone is fair. But, for the rest, I am silent, fearing the Goddess. For I sacrifice even as before was the custom in the city, whatever Grecian man comes to this land. I crop the hair, indeed, but the slaying that may not be told is the care of others within these shrines. But the new visions which the [past] night hath brought with it, I will tell to the sky, if indeed this be any remedy. I seemed in my sleep, removed from this land, to be dwelling in

Argos, and to slumber in my virgin chamber, but the surface of the earth [appeared] to be shaken with a movement, and I fled, and standing without beheld the coping of the house giving way, and all the roof falling stricken to the ground from the high supports. And one pillar alone, as it seemed to me, was left of my ancestral house, and from its capital it seemed to stream down yellow locks, and to receive a human voice, and I, cherishing this man-slaying office which I hold, weeping [began] to besprinkle it, as though about to be slain. But I thus interpret my dream. Orestes is dead, whose rites I was beginning. For male children are the pillars of the house, and those whom my lustral waters sprinkle die. Nor yet can I connect the dream with my friends, for Strophius had no son, when I was to have died. Now, therefore, I being present, will to my absent brother offer the rites of the dead — for this I can do — in company with the attendants whom the king gave to me, Grecian women. But from some cause they are not yet present. I will go within the home wherein I dwell, these shrines of the Goddess.

ORESTES. Look out! Watch, lest there be any mortal in the way.

PYLADES. I am looking out, and keeping watch, turning my eyes every where.

OR. Pylades, does it seem to you that this is the temple of the Goddess, whither we have directed our ship through the seas from Argos?

PYL. It does, Orestes, and must seem the same to thee.

OR. And the altar where Grecian blood is shed?

PYL. At least it has its pinnacles tawny with blood.

OR. And under the pinnacles themselves do you behold the spoils?

PYL. The spoils, forsooth, of slain strangers.

OR. But it behooves one, turning one’s eye around, to keep a careful watch. O Phœbus, wherefore hast thou again led me into this snare by your prophecies, when I had avenged the blood of my father by slaying my

mother? But by successive attacks of the Furies was I driven an exile, an outcast from the land, and fulfilled many diverse bending courses. But coming [to thy oracle] I required of thee how I might arrive at an end of the madness that drove me on, and of my toils [which I had labored through, wandering over Greece.] But thou didst answer that I must come to the confines of the Tauric territory, where thy sister Diana possesses altars, and must take the image of the Goddess, which they here say fell from heaven into these shrines; and that taking it either by stratagem or by some stroke of fortune, having gone through the risk, I should give it to the land of the Athenians — but no further directions were given — and that having done this, I should have a respite from my toils. But I am come hither, persuaded by thy words, to an unknown and inhospitable land. I ask you, then, Pylades, for you are a sharer with me in this toil, what shall we do? For thou beholdest the lofty battlements of the walls. Shall we proceed to the scaling of the walls? How then should we escape notice [if we did so?] Or shall we open the brass-wrought fastenings of the bolts? of which things we know nothing. But if we are caught opening the gates and contriving an entrance, we shall die. But before we die, let us flee to the temple, whither we lately sailed.

PYL. To fly is unendurable, nor are we accustomed [to do so,] and we must not make light of the oracle of the God. But quitting the temple, let us hide our bodies in the caves, which the dark sea splashes with its waters, far away from the city, lest any one beholding the bark, inform the rulers, and we be straightway seized by force. But when the eye of dim night shall come, we must venture, bring all devices to bear, to seize the sculptured image from the temple. But observe the eaves [of the roof,] where there is an empty space between the triglyphs in which you may let yourself down. For good men dare encounter toils, but the cowardly are of no account any where. We have not indeed come a long distance with our oars, so as to return again from the goal.

OR. But one must follow your advice, for you speak well. We must go whithersoever in this land we can conceal our bodies, and lie hid. For the [will] of the God will not be the cause of his oracle falling useless. We must venture; for no toil has an excuse for young men.

[ORESTES *and* PYLADES *retire aside*.]

CHORUS. Keep silence, O ye that inhabit the twain rocks of the Euxine that face each other. O Dictynna, mountain daughter of Latona, to thy court, the gold-decked pinnacles of temples with fine columns, I, servant to the hallowed guardian of the key, conduct my pious virgin foot, changing [for my present habitation] the towers and walls of Greece with its noble steeds, and Europe with its fields abounding in trees, the dwelling of my ancestral home. I am come. What new matter? What anxious care hast thou? Wherefore hast thou led me, led me to the shrines, O daughter of him who came to the walls of Troy with the glorious fleet, with thousand sail, ten thousand spears of the renowned Atrides?

IPHIGENIA. O attendants mine, in what moans of bitter lamentation do I dwell, in the songs of a songless strain unfit for the lyre, alas! alas! in funereal griefs for the ills which befall me, bemoaning my brother, what a vision have I seen in the night whose darkness has passed away! I am undone, undone. No more is my father's house, ah me! no more is our race. Alas! alas! for the toils in Argos! Alas! thou deity, who hast now robbed me of my only brother, sending him to Hades, to whom I am about to pour forth on the earth's surface these libations and this bowl for the departed, and streams from the mountain heifer, and the wine draughts of Bacchus, and the work of the swarthy bees, which are the wonted peace-offerings to the departed. O germ of Agamemnon beneath the earth, to thee as dead do I send these offerings. And do thou receive them, for not before [thine own] tomb do I offer my auburn locks, my tears. For far away am I journeyed from thy country and mine, where, as opinion goes, I wretched lie slaughtered.

CHOR. A respondent strain and an Asiatic hymn of barbarian wailing will I peal forth to thee, my mistress, the song of mourning which, delighting the dead, Hades hymns in measure apart from Pæans. Alas! the light of the sceptre in the Atrides' house is faded away. Alas! alas for my ancestral home! And what government of prosperous kings will there be in Argos? * * * * And labor upon labor comes on * * * * with his winged mares driven around. But the sun, changing from its proper place, [laid aside] its eye of light. And upon other houses woe has come, because of the golden lamb,

murder upon murder, and pang upon pang, whence the avenging Fury of those sons slain of old comes upon the houses of the sons of Tantalus, and some deity hastens unkindly things against thee.

IPH. From the beginning the demon of my mother's zone was hostile to me, and from that night in which the Fates hastened the pangs of childbirth * * * * whom, the first-born germ the wretched daughter of Leda, (Clytæmnestra,) wooed from among the Greeks brought forth, and trained up as a victim to a father's sin, a joyless sacrifice, a votive offering. But in a horse-chariot they brought me to the sands of Aulis, a bride, alas! unhappy bride to the son of Nereus' daughter, alas! And now a stranger I dwell in an unpleasant home on the inhospitable sea, unwedded, childless, without city, without a friend, not chanting Juno in Argos, nor in the sweetly humming loom adorning with the shuttle the image of Athenian Pallas and of the Titans, but imbruing altars with the shed blood of strangers, a pest unsuited to the harp, [of strangers] sighing forth a piteous cry, and shedding a piteous tear. And now indeed forgetfulness of these matters [comes upon] me, but now I mourn my brother dead in Argos, whom I left yet an infant at the breast, yet young, yet a germ in his mother's arms and on her bosom, Orestes [the future] holder of the sceptre in Argos.

CHOR. But hither comes a herdsman, leaving the sea-coast, about to tell thee some new thing.

HERDSMAN. Daughter of Agamemnon and child of Clytæmnestra, hear thou from me a new announcement.

IPH. And what is there astonishing in the present report?

HERDS. Two youths are come into this land, to the dark-blue Symplegades, fleeing into a ship, a grateful sacrifice and offering to Diana. But you can not use too much haste in making ready the lustral waters and the consecrations.

IPH. Of what country? of what land do the strangers bear the name?

HERDS. Greeks, this one thing I know, and nothing further.

IPH. Hast thou not heard the name of the strangers, so as to tell it?

HERDS. One of them was styled Pylades by the other.

IPH. But what was the name of the yoke-fellow of this stranger?

HERDS. No one knows this. For we heard it not.

IPH. But how saw ye them, and chanced to take them?

HERDS. Upon the furthest breakers of the inhospitable sea.

IPH. And what had herdsmen to do with the sea?

HERDS. We came to lave our steers in the dew of the sea.

IPH. Go back again to this point — how did ye catch them, and by what means, for I would fain know this? For they are come after a long season, nor has the altar of the Goddess yet been crimsoned with Grecian blood.

HERDS. After we woodland herdsmen had brought our cattle down to the sea that flows between the Symplegades, there is a certain hollow cave, broken by the frequent lashing of the waves, a retreat for those who hunt for the purple fish. Here some herdsman among us beheld two youths, and he retired back, piloting his step on tiptoe, and said: See ye not? these who sit here are some divine powers. And one of us, being religiously given, uplifted his hand, and addressed them, as he beheld: O son of Leucothea, guardian of ships, Palæmon our lord, be propitious to us, whether indeed ye be the twin sons of Jove (Castor and Pollux) who sit upon our shores, or the image of Nereus, who begot the noble chorus of the fifty Nereids. But another vain one, bold in his lawlessness, scoffed at these prayers, and said that they were shipwrecked seamen who sat upon the cleft through fear of the law, hearing that we here sacrifice strangers. And to most of us he seemed to speak well, and [we resolved] to hunt for the accustomed victims for the Goddess. But meanwhile one of the strangers leaving the rock, stood still, and shook his head up and down, and groaned, with his very fingers quaking, wandering with ravings, and shouts with voice like that of hunter, “Pylades, dost thou behold this? Dost not behold this snake of Hades, how

she would fain slay me, armed against me with horrid vipers? And she breathing from beneath her garments fire and slaughter, rows with her wings, bearing my mother in her arms, that she may cast upon me this rocky mass. Alas! she will slay me. Whither shall I fly?" And one beheld not the same form of countenance, but he uttered in turn the bellowings of calves and howls of dogs, which imitations [of wild beasts] they say the Furies utter. But we flinching, as though about to die, sat mute; and he drawing a sword with his hand, rushing among the calves, lion-like, strikes them on the flank with the steel, driving it into their sides, fancying that he was thus avenging himself on the Fury Goddesses, till that a gory foam was dashed up from the sea. Meanwhile, each one of us, as he beheld the herds being slain and ravaged, armed himself, and inflating the conch shells and assembling the inhabitants — for we thought that herdsmen were weak to fight against well-trained and youthful strangers. And a large number of us was assembled in a short time. But the stranger, released from the attack of madness, drops down, with his beard befouled with foam. But when we saw him fallen opportunely [for us,] each man did his part, with stones, with blows. But the other of the strangers wiped away the foam, and tended his mouth, and spread over him the well-woven texture of his garments, guarding well the coming wounds, and aiding his friend with tender offices. But when the stranger returning to his senses leaped up, he perceived that a hostile tempest and present calamity was close upon them, and he groaned aloud. But we ceased not hurling rocks, each standing in a different place. But then indeed we heard a dread exhortation, "Pylades, we shall die, but that we die most gloriously! Follow me, drawing thy sword in hand." But when we saw the twain swords of the enemy brandished, in flight we filled the woods about the crag. But if one fled, others pressing on pelted them; and if they drove these away, again the party who had just yielded aimed at them with rocks. But it was incredible, for out of innumerable hands no one succeeded in hitting these victims to the Goddess. And we with difficulty, I will not say overcome them by force, but taking them in a circle, beat their swords out of their hands with stones, and they dropped their knees to earth [overcome] with toil. And we brought them to the king of this land, but he, when he beheld them, sent them as quickly as possible to thee for lustral waters and sacrifice. But do thou, O virgin, wish that such strangers may be here as victims, and if thou slayest these strangers, Hellas will atone for thy [intended] murder, paying the penalty of the sacrifice at Aulis.

CHOR. Thou hast told wondrous things concerning him who has appeared, whosoever he be that has come to the inhospitable sea from the Grecian earth.

IPH. Be it so. Do thou go and bring the strangers, but I will take care respecting the matters here. O hapless heart, that once wast mild and full of pity toward strangers, awarding the tear to those of thine own land, when thou didst receive Grecian men into thine hands. But now, because of the dreams by which I am driven wild, thinking that Orestes no longer beholds the sun, ye will find me ill disposed, whoever ye be that come. For this is true, I perceive it, my friends, for the unhappy who themselves fare ill have no good feelings toward those more fortunate. But neither has any wind sent by Jove ever come [hither,] nor ship, which could have brought hither Helen, who destroyed me, and Menelaus, in order that I might be avenged on them, placing an Aulis here to the account of the one there, where the sons of Danaus seized, and would have slain me like as a calf, and the father who begat me was the priest. Ah me! for I can not forget the ills of that time, how oft I stretched out my hands to his beard, and hanging on the knees of him who gave me life, spake words like these: “O father, basely am I, basely am I wedded at thine hands. But my mother, while thou art slaying me, and her Argive ladies are hymning my wedding with their nuptial songs, and all the house resounds with the flute, while I perish by thy hands. Hades in truth was Achilles, not the son of Peleus, whom thou didst name as my husband, and in the chariot didst pilot me by craft unto a bloody wedding.” But I, casting mine eye through my slender woven veil, neither took up with mine hands my brother who is now dead, nor joined my lips to my sister’s, through modesty, as departing to the home of Peleus; and many a salutation I deferred, as though about to come again to Argos. Oh wretched one, if thou hast died! from what glorious state, Orestes, and from how envied a sire’s fortune art thou fallen! But I reproach the devices of the Goddess, who, if any one work the death of a man, or touch with hands a woman newly delivered, or a corpse, restrains him from her altars, as deeming him impure, but yet herself takes pleasure in man-slaying sacrifices. It can not be that the consort of Jove, Latona, hath brought forth so much ignorance. I even disbelieve the banquets of Tantalus set before the Gods, [as that they] should be pleased with feeding on a boy. But I deem

that those in this land, being themselves man-slayers, charge the Goddess with their own baseness, for I think not that any one of the Gods is bad.

CHOR. Ye dark blue, dark blue meetings of the sea, which Io, hurried along by the brize, once passed through to the Euxine wave, having changed the territory of Asia for Europe, — who were they who left fair-watered Eurotas, flourishing in reeds, or the sacred founts of Dirce, and came, and came to the inhospitable land, where the daughter of Jove bedews her altars and column-girt temples with human blood? Of a truth by the surge-dashing oars of fir, worked on both sides, they sailed in a nautical carriage o'er the ocean waves, striving in the emulation after loved wealth in their houses. For darling hope is in dangers insatiate among men, who bear off the weight of riches, wandering in vain speculation on the wave and o'er barbarian cities. But to some there is a mind immoderate after riches, to others they come unsought. How did they pass through the rocks that run together, the ne'er resting beaches of Phineus, [and] the marine shore, running o'er the surge of Amphitrite, — where the choruses of the fifty daughters of Nereus entwine in the dance, — [although] with breezes that fill the sails, the creaking rudders resting at the poop, with southern gales or the breezes of Zephyr, to the bird-haunted land, the white beach, the glorious race-course of Achilles, near the Euxine Sea. Would that, according to my mistress' prayers, Helen, the dear daughter of Leda, might sometime chance to come, quitting the city of Troy, that, having been drenched about the head with the blood-stained lustral dews, she might die by my mistress' hand, paying in turn an equal penalty [for her death.] Most joyfully then would we receive this news, if any one came sailing from the Grecian land, to make the toils of my hapless slavery to cease. And would that in my dreams I might tread in mine home and ancestral city, enjoying the hymns of delight, a joy shared with the prosperous. But hither they come, bound as to their two hands with chains, a new sacrifice for the Goddess. Be silent, my friends, for these first-fruits of the Greeks approach the temples, nor has the herdsman told a false tale. O reverend Goddess, if the city performs these things agreeably to thee, receive the sacrifice which, not hallowed among the Greeks, the custom of this place presents as a public offering.

IPH. Be it so. I must first take care that the rites of the Goddess are as they should be. Let go the hands of the strangers, that being consecrated they

may no longer be in bonds. And, going within the temple, make ready the things which are necessary and usual on these occasions. Alas! Who is the mother who once bore you? And who your father, and your sister, if there be any born? Of what a pair of youths deprived will she be brotherless! For all the dispensations of the Gods creep into obscurity, and no one [absent] knows misfortune, for fortune leads astray to what is hardly known. Whence come ye, O unhappy strangers? After how long a time have ye sailed to this land, and ye will be a long time from your home, ever among the shades!

OR. Why mournest thou thus, and teasest us concerning our future ills, whoever thou art, O lady? In naught do I deem him wise, who, when about to die, with bewailings seeks to overcome the fear of death, nor him who deplores death now near at hand, when he has no hope of safety, in that he joins two ills instead of one, both incurs the charge of folly, and dies none the less. But one must needs let fortune take its course. But mourn us not, for we know and are acquainted with the sacrificial rites of this place.

IPH. Which of ye twain here is named Pylades? This I would fain know first.

OR. This man, if indeed ’tis any pleasure for thee to know this.

IPH. Born citizen of what Grecian state?

OR. And what wouldst thou gain by knowing this, lady?

IPH. Are ye brothers from one mother?

OR. In friendship we are, but we are not related, lady.

IPH. But what name did the father who begot thee give to thee?

OR. In truth we might be styled the unhappy.

IPH. I ask not this. Leave this to fortune.

OR. Dying nameless, I should not be mocked.

IPH. Wherefore dost grudge this, and art thus proud?

OR. My body thou shalt sacrifice, not my name.

IPH. Nor wilt thou tell me which is thy city?

OR. No. For thou seekest a thing of no profit, seeing I am to die.

IPH. But what hinders thee from granting me this favor?

OR. I boast renowned Argos for my country.

IPH. In truth, by the Gods I ask thee, stranger, art thou thence born?

OR. From Mycenæ, that was once prosperous.

IPH. And hast thou set out a wanderer from thy country, or by what hap?

OR. I flee in a certain wise unwilling, willingly.

IPH. Wouldst thou tell me one thing that I wish?

OR. That something, forsooth, may be added to my misfortune.

IPH. And truly thou hast come desired by me, in coming from Argos.

OR. Not by myself, at all events; but if by thee, do thou enjoy it.

IPH. Perchance thou knowest Troy, the fame of which is every where.

OR. Ay, would that I never had, not even seeing it in a dream!

IPH. They say that it is now no more, and has fallen by the spear.

OR. And so it is, nor have you heard what is not the case.

IPH. And is Helen come back to the house of Menelaus?

OR. She is, ay, coming unluckily to one of mine.

IPH. And where is she? For she has incurred an old debt of evil with me also.

OR. She dwells in Sparta with her former consort.

IPH. O hateful pest among the Greeks, not to me only!

OR. I also have received some fruits of her nuptials.

IPH. And did the return of the Greeks take place, as is reported?

OR. How dost thou question me, embracing all matters at once!

IPH. For I wish to obtain this before that thou diest.

OR. Examine me, since thou hast this longing, and I will speak.

IPH. Has a certain seer named Calchas returned from Troy?

OR. He perished, as the story ran, at Mycenæ.

IPH. O revered Goddess, how well it is! And how fares the son of Laertes?

OR. He has not yet returned to his home, but he is alive, as report goes.

IPH. May he perish, never obtaining a return to his country!

OR. Invoke nothing — all his affairs are in a sickly state.

IPH. But is the son of Thetis, the daughter of Nereus, yet alive?

OR. He is not. In vain he held his wedding in Aulis.

IPH. A crafty [wedding] it was, as those who have suffered say.

OR. Who canst thou be? How well dost ken the affairs of Greece!

IPH. I am from thence. While yet a child I was undone.

OR. With reason thou desirest to know the affairs there, O lady.

IPH. But how [fares] the general, who they say is prosperous.

OR. Who? For he whom I know is not of the fortunate.

IPH. A certain king Agamemnon was called the son of Atreus.

OR. I know not — cease from these words, O lady.

IPH. Nay, by the Gods, but speak, that I may be rejoiced, O stranger.

OR. The wretched one is dead, and furthermore hath ruined one.

IPH. Is dead? By what mishap? O wretched me!

OR. But why dost mourn this? Was he a relation of thine?

IPH. I bemoan his former prosperity.

OR. [Ay, well mayest thou,] for he has fallen, slain shamefully by a woman.

IPH. O all grievous she that slew and he that fell!

OR. Cease now at least, nor question further.

IPH. Thus much at least, does the wife of the unhappy man live?

OR. She is no more. The son she brought forth, he slew her.

IPH. O house all troubled! with what intent, then?

OR. Taking satisfaction on her for the death of his father.

IPH. Alas! how well he executed an evil act of justice.

OR. But, though just, he hath not good fortune from the Gods.

IPH. But does Agamemnon leave any other child in his house?

OR. He has left a single virgin [daughter,] Electra.

IPH. What! Is there no report of his sacrificed daughter?

OR. None indeed, save that being dead she beholds not the light.

IPH. Hapless she, and the father who slew her!

OR. She perished, a thankless offering because of a bad woman.

IPH. But is the son of the deceased father at Argos?

OR. He, wretched man, is nowhere and every where.

IPH. Away, vain dreams, ye were then of naught!

OR. Nor are the Gods who are called wise any less false than winged dreams. There is much inconsistency both among the Gods and among mortals. But one thing alone is left, when a man not being foolish, persuaded by the words of seers, has perished, as he hath perished in man's knowledge.

CHOR. Alas! alas! But what of us and our fathers? Are they, or are they not in being, who can tell?

IPH. Hear me, for I am come to a certain discourse, meditating what is at once profitable for you and me. But that which is well is chiefly produced thus, when the same matter pleases all. Would ye be willing, if I were to save you, to go to Argos, and bear a message for me to my friends there, and carry a letter, which a certain captive wrote, pitying me, nor deeming my hand that of a murderess, but that he died through custom, as the Goddess sanctioned such things as just? For I had no one who would go and bear the news back to Argos, and who, being preserved, would send my letters to some one of my friends. But do thou, for thou art, as thou seemest, of no ignoble birth, and knowest Mycenæ and the persons I wish, do thou, I say, be saved, receiving no dishonorable reward, your safety for the sake of trifling letters. But let this man, since the city compels it, be a sacrifice to the Goddess, apart from thee.

OR. Well hast thou spoken the rest, save one thing, O stranger lady, for ’tis a heavy weight upon me that this man should be slain. For I was steersman of the vessel to these ills, but he is a fellow-sailor because of mine own troubles. In no wise then is it right that I should do thee a favor to his destruction, and myself escape from ills. But let it be thus. Give him the letter, for he will send it to Argos, so as to be well for thee, but let him that will slay me. Base is the man, who, casting his friends into calamity, himself is saved. But this man is a friend, who I fain should see the light no less that myself.

IPH. O noblest spirit, how art thou sprung from some generous root, thou truly a friend to thy friends! Such might he be who is left of my brothers! For in good truth, strangers, I am not brotherless, save that I behold him not. But since thou willest thus, let us send this man bearing the letter, but thou wilt die, and some great desire of this chances to possess thee?

OR. But who will sacrifice me, and dare this dreadful deed?

IPH. I; for I have this sacrificial duty from the Goddess.

OR. Unenviable indeed. O damsel, and unblest.

IPH. But we lie under necessity, which one must beware.

OR. Thyself, a female, sacrificing males with the sword?

IPH. Not so; but I shall lave around thy head with the lustral stream.

OR. But who is the slayer, if I may ask this?

IPH. Within the house are they whose office is this.

OR. And what manner of tomb will receive me, when I die?

IPH. The holy flame within, and the dark chasm of the rock.

OR. Alas! Would that a sister’s hand might lay me out.

IPH. A vain prayer hast thou uttered, whoever thou art, O stranger, for she dwells far from this barbarian land. Nevertheless, since thou art an Argive, I will not fail to do thee kindness in what is possible. For on thy tomb will I place much adornment, and with the tawny oil will I cause thy body to be soon consumed, and on thy pyre will I pour the flower-sucked riches of the swarthy bee. But I will go and fetch the letter from the shrines of the Goddess. But do thou not bear ill will against me. Guard them, ye servants, [but] without fetters. Perchance I shall send unexpected tidings to some one of my friends at Argos, whom I chiefly love, and the letter, telling to him that she lives whom he thinks dead, will announce a faithful pleasure.

CHOR. I deplore thee now destined to the gory streams of the lustral waters.

OR. 'Tis piteous, truly; but fare ye well, stranger ladies.

CHOR. But thee, (*to Pylades*) O youth, we honor for thy happy fortune, that at some time thou wilt return to thy country.

PYL. Not to be coveted by friends, when friends are to die.

CHOR. O mournful journeying! Alas! alas! thou art undone. Woe! woe! which is the [victim] to be? For still my mind resolves twain doubtful [ills,] whether with groans I shall bemoan thee (*to Orestes*) or thee (*to Pylades*) first.

OR. Pylades, hast thou, by the Gods, experienced the same feeling as myself?

PYL. I know not. Thou askest me unable to say.

OR. Who is this damsel? With what a Grecian spirit she asked us concerning the toils in Troy, and the return of the Greeks, and Calchas wise in augury, and about Achilles, and how she pitied wretched Agamemnon, and asked me of his wife and children. This stranger lady is some Greek by race; for otherwise she never would have been sending a letter and making these inquiries, as sharing a common weal in the well-doing of Argos.

PYL. Thou hast outstripped me a little, but thou outstrippest me in saying the same things, save in one respect — for all, with whom there is any communication, know the fate of the king. But I was considering another subject.

OR. What? laying it down in common, you will better understand.

PYL. 'Tis base that I should behold the light, while you perish; and, having sailed with you, with you I must needs die also. For I shall incur the imputation of both cowardice and baseness in Argos and the Phocian land with its many dells, and I shall seem to the many, for the many are evil, to have arrived alone in safety to mine home, having deserted thee, or even to have murdered thee, taking advantage of the sickly state of thine house, and to have devised thy fate for the sake of reigning, in order that, forsooth, I might wed thy sister as an heiress. These things, then, I dread, and hold in shame, and it shall not be but I will breathe my last with thee, be slain, and have my body burned with thee, being a friend, and dreading reproach.

OR. Speak words of better omen. I must needs bear my troubles, but when I may [endure] one single trouble, I will not endure twain. For what thou callest bitter and reproachful, that is my portion, if I cause thee to be slain who hast shared my toils. For, as far as I am concerned, it stands not badly with me, faring as I fare at the hands of the Gods, to end my life. But thou art prosperous, and hast a home pure, not sickening, but I [have] one impious and unhappy. And living thou mayest raise children from my sister, whom I gave thee to have as a wife, and my name might exist, nor would my ancestral house be ever blotted out. But go, live, and dwell in my father's house; and when thou comest to Greece and chivalrous Argos, by thy right hand, I commit to thee this charge. Heap up a tomb, and place upon it remembrances of me, and let my sister offer tears and her shorn locks upon my sepulchre. And tell how I died by an Argive woman's hand, sacrificed as an offering by the altar's side. And do thou never desert my sister, seeing my father's connections and home bereaved. And fare thee well! for I have found thee best among my friends. Oh thou who hast been my fellow-huntsman, my mate! Oh thou who hast borne the weight of many of my sorrows! But Phœbus, prophet though he be, has deceived me. For, artfully devising, he has driven me as far as possible from Greece, in shame

of his former prophecies. To whom I, yielding up mine all, and obeying his words, having slain my mother, myself perish in turn.

PYL. Thou shalt have a tomb, and never will I, hapless one, betray thy sister's bed, since I shall hold thee more a friend dead than living. But the oracle of the God has never yet wronged thee, although thou art indeed on the very verge of death. But excessive mischance is very wont, is very wont to present changes, when the matter so falls.

OR. Be silent — the words of Phœbus avail me naught, for the lady is coming hither without the temple.

IPH. Depart ye, and go and make ready the things within for those who superintend the sacrifice. These, O stranger, are the many-folded inclosures of the letter, but hear thou what I further wish. No man is the same in trouble, and when he changes from fear into confidence. But I fear, lest he having got away from this land, will deem my letter of no account, who is about to bear this letter to Argos.

OR. What wouldst thou? Concerning what art thou disturbed?

IPH. Let him make me oath that he will ferry these writings to Argos, to those friends to whom I wish to send them.

OR. Wilt thou in turn make the same assertion to him?

IPH. That I will do, or will not do what thing? say.

OR. That you will release him from this barbarian land, not dying.

IPH. Thou sayest justly; for how could he bear the message?

OR. But will the ruler also grant this?

IPH. Yea. I will persuade him, and will myself embark him on the ship's hull.

OR. Swear, but do thou commence such oath as is holy.

IPH. Thou must say “I will give this [letter] to my friends.”

PYL. I will give this letter to thy friends.

IPH. And I will send thee safe beyond the Cyanean rocks.

PYL. Whom of the Gods dost thou call to witness of thine oath in these words?

IPH. Diana, in whose temple I hold office.

PYL. But I [call upon] the king of heaven, hallowed Jove.

IPH. But if, deserting thine oath, thou shouldst wrong me —

PYL. May I not return? But thou, if thou savest me not —

IPH. May I never living set footprint in Argos.

PYL. Hear now then a matter which we have passed by.

IPH. There will be opportunity hereafter, if matters stand aright.

PYL. Grant me this one exception. If the vessel suffer any harm, and the letter be lost in the storm, together with the goods, and I save my person only, that this mine oath be no longer valid.

IPH. Knowest thou what I will do? for the many things contained in the folds of the letter bear opportunity for many things. I will tell you in words all that you are to convey to my friends, for this plan is safe. If indeed thou preservest the letter, it will itself silently tell the things written, but if these letters be lost at sea, saving thy body, thou wilt preserve my message.

PYL. Thou hast spoken well on behalf of the Gods and of myself. But tell me to whom at Argos I must needs bear these epistles, and what hearing from thee, I must tell.

IPH. Bear word to Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, (*reading*) “she that was sacrificed at Aulis gives this commission, Iphigenia alive, but no longer

alive as far as those in Argos are concerned."

OR. But where is she? Does she come back again having died?

IPH. She, whom you see. Do not confuse me with speaking. (*Continues reading*) "Bear me to Argos, my brother, before I die, remove me from this barbarian land and the sacrifices of the Goddess, in which I have the office of slaying strangers."

OR. Pylades, what shall I say? where shall we be found to be?

IPH. (*still reading*) "Or I will be a cause of curses upon thine house, Orestes," (*with great stress upon the name and turning to Pylades*,) "that thou, twice hearing the name, mayest know it."

PYL. O Gods!

IPH. Why callest thou upon the Gods in matters that are mine?

PYL. 'Tis nothing. Go on. I was wandering to another subject. Perchance, inquiring of thee, I shall arrive at things incredible.

IPH. (*continues reading*) "Say that the Goddess Diana saved me, giving in exchange for me a hind, which my father sacrificed, thinking that it was upon me that he laid the sharp sword, and she placed me to dwell in this land." This is the burden of my message, these are the words written in my letter.

PYL. O thou who hast secured me in easy oaths, and hast sworn things fairest, I will not delay much time, but I will firmly accomplish the oath I have sworn. Behold, I bear and deliver to thee a letter, O Orestes, from this thy sister.

OR. I receive it. And letting go the opening of the letter, I will first seize a delight not in words (*attempts to embrace her*). O dearest sister mine, in amazement, yet nevertheless embracing thee with a doubting arm, I go to a source of delight, hearing things marvelous to me.

CHOR. Stranger, thou dost not rightly pollute the servant of the Goddess, casting thine arm around her garments that should ne'er be touched.

OR. O fellow-sister born of one sire, Agamemnon, turn not from me, possessing a brother whom you never thought to possess.

IPH. I [possess] thee my brother? Wilt not cease speaking? Both Argos and Nauplia are frequented by him.

OR. Unhappy one! thy brother is not there.

IPH. But did the Lacedæmonian daughter of Tyndarus beget thee?

OR. Ay, to the grandson of Pelops, whence I am sprung.

IPH. What sayest thou? Hast thou any proof of this for me?

OR. I have. Ask something relative to my ancestral home.

IPH. Thou must needs then speak, and I learn.

OR. I will first speak from hearsay from Electra, this. Thou knowest the strife that took place between Atreus and Thyestes?

IPH. I have heard of it, when it was waged concerning the golden lamb.

OR. Dost thou then remember weaving [a representation of] this on the deftly-wrought web?

IPH. O dearest one. Thou art turning thy course near to my own thoughts.

OR. And [dost thou remember] a picture on the loom, the turning away of the sun?

IPH. I wove this image also in the fine-threaded web.

OR. And didst thou receive a bath from thy mother, sent to Aulis?

IPH. I know it: for the wedding, though good, did not take away my recollection.

OR. But what? [Dost thou remember] to have given thine hair to be carried to thy mother?

IPH. Ay, as a memorial for the tomb in place of my body.

OR. But the proofs which I have myself beheld, these will I tell, viz. the ancient spear of Pelops in my father's house, which brandishing in his hand, he [Pelops] won Hippodameia, having slain Ænomaus, which is hidden in thy virgin chamber.

IPH. O dearest one, no more, for thou art dearest. I hold thee, Orestes, one darling son far away from his father-land, from Argos, O thou dear one!

OR. And I [hold] thee that wast dead, as was supposed. But tears, yet tearless, and groans together mingled with joy, bedew thine eyelids, and mine in like manner.

IPH. This one, this, yet a babe I left, young in the arms of the nurse, ay, young in our house. O thou more fortunate than my words can tell, what shall I say? This matter has turned out beyond marvel or calculation.

OR. [Say this.] May we for the future be happy with each other!

IPH. I have experienced an unaccountable delight, dear companions, but I fear lest it flit from my hands, and escape toward the sky. O ye Cyclopean hearths, O Mycenæ, dear country mine. I am grateful to thee for my life, and grateful for my nurture, in that thou hast trained for me this brother light in my home.

OR. In our race we are fortunate, but as to calamities, O sister, our life is by nature unhappy.

IPH. But I wretched remember when my father with foolish spirit laid the sword upon my neck.

OR. Ah me! For I seem, not being present, to behold you there.

IPH. Without Hymen, O my brother, when I was being led to the fictitious nuptial bed of Achilles. But near the altar were tears and lamentations. Alas! alas, for the lustral waters there!

OR. I mourn aloud for the deed my father dared.

IPH. I obtained a fatherless, a fatherless lot. But one calamity follows upon another.

OR. [Ay,] if thou hadst lost thy brother, O hapless one, by the intervention of some demon.

IPH. O miserable for my dreadful daring! I have dared horrid, I have dared horrid things. Alas! my brother. But by a little hast thou escaped an unholy destruction, stricken by my hands. But what will be the end after this? What fortune will befall me? What retreat can I find for thee away from this city? can I send you out of the reach of slaughter to your country Argos, before that my sword enter on the contest concerning thy blood? This is thy business, O hapless soul, to discover, whether over the land, not in a ship, but by the gust of your feet thou wilt approach death, passing through barbarian hordes, and through ways not to be traversed? Or [wilt thou pass] through the Cyanean creek, a long journey in the flight of ships. Wretched, wretched one! Who then or God, or mortal, or [unexpected event,] having accomplished a way out of inextricable difficulties, will show forth to the sole twain Atrides a release from ills?

CHOR. Among marvels and things passing even fable are these things which I shall tell as having myself beheld, and not from hearsay.

PYL. It is meet indeed that friends coming into the presence of friends, Orestes, should embrace one another with their hands, but, having ceased from mournful matters, it behooves you also to betake you to those measures by which we, obtaining the glorious name of safety, may depart from this barbarian earth. For it is the part of wise men, not wandering from their present chance, when they have obtained an opportunity, to acquire further delights.

OR. Thou sayest well. But I think that fortune will take care of this with us. For if a man be zealous, it is likely that the divine power will have still greater power.

IPH. Do not restrain or hinder me from your words, not first to know what fortune of life Electra has obtained, for this were pleasant to me [to hear.]

OR. She is partner with this man, possessing a happy life.

IPH. And of what country is he, and son of what man born?

OR. Strophius the Phocian is styled his father.

IPH. And he is of the daughter of Atreus, a relative of mine?

OR. Ay, a cousin, my only certain friend.

IPH. Was he not in being, when my father sought to slay me?

OR. He was not, for Strophius was childless some time.

IPH. Hail! O thou spouse of my sister.

OR. Ay, and my preserver, not relation only.

IPH. But how didst thou dare the terrible deeds in respect to your mother?

OR. Let us be silent respecting my mother— 'twas in avenging my father.

IPH. And what was the reason for her slaying her husband?

OR. Let go the subject of my mother. Nor is it pleasant for you to hear.

IPH. I am silent. But Argos now looks up to thee.

OR. Menelaus rules: I am an exile from my country.

IPH. What, did our uncle abuse our house unprospering?

OR. Not so, but the fear of the Erinnyes drives me from my land.

IPH. For this then wert thou spoken of as being frantic even here on the shore.

OR. We were beheld not now for the first time in a hapless state.

IPH. I perceive. The Goddesses goaded thee on because of thy mother.

OR. Ay, so as to cast a bloody bit upon me.

IPH. For wherefore didst thou pilot thy foot to this land?

OR. I came, commanded by the oracles of Phœbus —

IPH. To do what thing? Is it one to be spoken of or kept in silence?

OR. I will tell you, but these are the beginning for me of many woes. After these evil things concerning my mother, on which I keep silence, had been wrought, I was driven an exile by the pursuits of the Erinnyes, when Loxias sent my foot to Athens, that I might render satisfaction to the deities that must not be named. For there is a holy council, that Jove once on a time instituted for Mars on account of some pollution of his hands. And coming thither, at first indeed no one of the strangers received me willingly, as being abhorred by the Gods, but they who had respect to me, afforded me a stranger's meal at a separate table, being under the same house roof, and silently devised in respect to me, unaddressed by them, how I might be separated from their banquet and cup, and, having filled up a share of wine in a separate vessel, equal for all, they enjoyed themselves. And I did not think fit to rebuke my guests, but I grieved in silence, and did not seem to perceive [their conduct,] deeply groaning, because I was my mother's slayer. But I hear that my misfortunes have been made a festival at Athens, and that this custom still remains, that the people of Pallas honor the Libation Vessel. But when I came to the hill of Mars, and stood in judgment, I indeed occupying one seat, but the eldest of the Erinnyes the other, having spoken and heard respecting my mother's death, Phœbus saved me by bearing witness, but Pallas counted out for me the equal votes with her hand, and I came off victor in the bloody trial. As many then as sat

[in judgment,] persuaded by the sentence, determined to hold their dwelling near the court itself. But as many of the Erinnyes as did not yield obedience to the sentence passed, continually kept driving me with unsettled wanderings, until I again returned to the holy ground of Phœbus, and lying stretched before the adyts, hungering for food, I swore that I would break from life by dying on the spot, unless Phœbus, who had undone, should preserve me. Upon this Phœbus, uttering a voice from the golden tripod, sent me hither to seize the heaven-sent image, and place it in the land of Athens. But that safety which he marked out for me do thou aid in. For if we can lay hold on the image of the Goddess, I both shall cease from my madness, and embarking thee in the bark of many oars, I shall settle thee again in Mycenæ. But, O beloved one, O sister mine, preserve my ancestral home, and preserve me, since all my state and that of the Pelopids is undone, unless we seize on the heavenly image of the Goddess.

CHOR. Some dreadful wrath of the Gods hath burst forth, and leads the seed of Tantalus through troubles.

IPH. I entertained the desire to reach Argos, and behold thee, my brother, even before thou camest. But I wish, as you do, both to save thee, and to restore again our sickening ancestral home from troubles, in no wise wrath with him who would have slain me. For I should both release my hand from thy slaughter, and preserve mine house. But I fear how I shall be able to escape the notice of the Goddess and the king, when he shall find the stone pedestal bared of the image. And how shall I escape death? What account can I give? But if indeed these matters can be effected at once, and thou wilt bear away the image, and lead me in the fair-pooped ship, the risk will be a glorious one. But separated from this I perish, but you, arranging your own affairs, would obtain a prosperous return. Yet in no wise will I fly, not even if I needs must perish, having preserved thee. In no wise, I say; for a man who dies from among his household is regretted, but a woman is of little account.

OR. I would not be the murderer both of thee and of my mother. Her blood is enough, and being of the same mind with you, [with you] I should wish, living or dying, to obtain an equal lot. †But I will lead thee, even though I myself fall here, to my house, or, remaining with thee, will die.† But hear

my opinion. If this had been disagreeable to Diana, how would Loxias have answered, that I should remove the image of the Goddess to the city of Pallas, and behold thy face? For, putting all these matters together, I hope to obtain a return.

IPH. How then can it happen that neither you die, and that we obtain what we wish? For it is in this respect that our journey homeward is at fault, but the will is not wanting.

OR. Could we possibly destroy the tyrant?

IPH, Thou tellest a fearful thing, for strangers to slay their receivers.

OR. But if it will preserve thee and me, one must run the risk.

IPH. I could not — yet I approve your zeal.

OR. But what if you were secretly to hide me in this temple?

IPH. In order, forsooth, that, taking advantage of darkness, we might be saved?

OR. For night is the time for thieves, the light for truth.

IPH. But within are the sacred keepers, whom we can not escape.

OR. Alas! we are undone. How can we then be saved?

IPH. I seem to have a certain new device.

OR. Of what kind? Make me a sharer in your opinion, that I also may learn.

IPH. I will make use of thy ravings as a contrivance.

OR. Ay, cunning are women to find out tricks.

IPH. I will say that thou, being slayer of thy mother, art come from Argos.

OR. Make use of my troubles, if you can turn them to account.

IPH. I will say that it is not lawful to sacrifice thee to the Goddess.

OR. Having what pretext? For I partly suspect.

IPH. As not being pure, but I will [say that I will] give what is holy to sacrifice.

OR. How then the more will the image of the Goddess be obtained?

IPH. I [will say that I] will purify thee in the fountains of the sea.

OR. The statue, in quest of which, we have sailed, is still in the temple.

IPH. And I will say that I must wash that too, as if you had laid hands on it.

OR. Where then is the damp breaker of the sea of which you speak?

IPH. Where thy ship rides at anchor with rope-bound chains.

OR. But wilt thou, or some one else, bear the image in their hands?

IPH. I, for it is lawful for me alone to touch it.

OR. But in what part of this contrivance will our friend Pylades be placed?

IPH. He will be said to bear the same pollution of hands as thyself.

OR. And wilt thou do this unknown to, or with the knowledge of the king?

IPH. Having persuaded him by words, for I could not escape notice.

OR. And truly the well-rowed ship is ready for sailing.

IPH. You must take care of the rest, that it be well.

OR. There lacks but one thing, namely, that these women who are present preserve our secret. But do thou beseech them, and find words that will persuade. A woman in truth has power to move pity. But all the rest will perchance fall out well.

IPH. O dearest women, I look to you, and my affairs rest in you, as to whether they turn out well, or be of naught, and I be deprived of my country, my dear brother, and dearest sister. And let this first be the commencement of my words. We are women, a race well inclined to one another, and most safe in keeping secret matters of common interest. Do ye keep silence for us, and labor out our escape. Honorable is it for the man who possesses a faithful tongue. But behold how one fortune holds the three most dear, either a return to our father-land, or to die. But, being preserved, that thou also mayest share my fortune, I will restore thee safe to Greece. But, by thy right hand, thee, and thee [*addressing the women of the chorus in succession*] I beseech, and thee by thy beloved cheek, and thy knees, and those most dear at home, mother, and father, and children, to whom there are such. What say ye? Who of you will, or will not [speak!] these things. For if ye assent not to my words, I am undone, and my wretched sister.

CHOR. Be of good cheer, dear mistress, and think only of being saved, since on my part all shall be kept secret, the mighty Jove be witness! in the things thou enjoinest.

IPH. May your words profit ye, and may ye be blest. 'Tis thy part now, and thine [to the different women] to enter the house, as the ruler of this land will straightway come, inquiring concerning the sacrifice of the strangers, whether it is over. O revered Goddess, who in the recesses of Aulis didst save me from the dire hand of a slaying father, now also save me and these, or the voice of Loxias will through thee be no longer truthful among mortals. But do thou with good will quit the barbarian land for Athens, for it becomes thee not to dwell here, when you can possess a blest city.

CHORUS. Thou bird, that by the rocky cliffs of the sea, halcyon, dost chant thy mournful elegy, a sound well understood by the skilled, namely, that thou art ever bemoaning thine husband in song, I, a wingless bird, compare my dirge with thine, longing for the assemblies of the Greeks, longing for Lucina, who dwells along the Cynthian height, and near the palm with its luxuriant foliage, and the rich-springing laurel, and the holy shoot of the deep blue olive, the dear place of Latona's throes, and the lake that rolls its waters in a circle, where the melodious swan honors the muses. O ye many tricklings of tears which fell upon my cheeks, when, our towers being

destroyed, I traveled in ships beneath the oars and the spears of the foes. And through a bartering of great price I came a journey to a barbarian land, where I serve the daughter of Agamemnon, the priestess of the Goddess, and the sheep-slaughtering altars, envying her who has all her life been unfortunate; for she bends not under necessity, who is familiar with it. Unhappiness is wont to change, but to fare ill after prosperity is a heavy life for mortals. And thee indeed, O mistress, an Argive ship of fifty oars will conduct home, and the wax-bound reed of mountain Pan with Syrinx tune cheer on the oarsmen, and prophet Phœbus, plying the tones of his seven-stringed lyre, with song will lead thee prosperously to the rich land of Athens. But leaving me here thou wilt travel by the dashing oars. And the halyards by the prow, will stretch forth the sails to the air, above the beak, the sheet lines of the swift-journeying ship. Would that I might pass through the glittering course, where the fair light of the sun wends its way, and over my own chamber might rest from rapidly moving the pinions on my shoulders. And would that I might stand in the dance, where also [I was wont to stand,] a virgin sprung from honorable nuptials, wreathing the dances of my companions at the foot of my dear mother, bounding to the rivalry of the graces, to the wealthy strife respecting [beauteous] hair, pouring my variously-painted garb and tresses around, I shadowed my cheeks.

[*Enter* THOAS.]

THOAS. Where is the Grecian woman who keeps the gate of this temple? Has she yet begun the sacrifice of the strangers, and are the bodies burning in the flame within the pure recesses?

CHOR. Here she is, O king, who will tell thee clearly all.

TH. Ah! Why art thou removing in your arms this image of the Goddess from its seat that may not be disturbed, O daughter of Agamemnon?

IPH. O king, rest there thy foot in the portico.

TH. But what new matter is in the house, Iphigenia?

IPH. I avert the ill — for holy do I utter this word.

TH. What new thing art thou prefacing? speak clearly.

IPH. O king, no pure offerings hast thou hunted out for me.

TH. What hath taught you this? or dost thou speak it as matter of opinion?

IPH. The image of the Goddess hath again turned away from her seat.

TH. Of its own accord, or did an earthquake turn it?

IPH. Of its own accord, and it closed its eyes.

TH. But what is the cause? is it pollution from the strangers?

IPH. That very thing, naught else, for they have done dreadful things.

TH. What, did they slay any of the barbarians upon the shore?

IPH. They came possessing the stain of domestic murder.

TH. What? for I am fallen into a longing to learn this.

IPH. They put an end to a mother's life by conspiring sword.

TH. Apollo! not even among barbarians would any one have dared this.

IPH. By persecutions they were driven out of all Greece.

TH. Is it then on their account that thou bearest the image without?

IPH. Ay, under the holy sky, that I may remove it from blood stains.

TH. But how didst thou discover the pollution of the strangers?

IPH. I examined them, when the image of the Goddess turned away.

TH. Greece hath trained thee up wise, in that thou well didst perceive this.

IPH. And now they have cast out a delightful bait for my mind.

TH. By telling thee any charming news of those at Argos?

IPH. That my only brother Orestes fares well.

TH. So that, forsooth, thou mightest preserve them because of their pleasant news!

IPH. And that my father lives and fares well.

TH. But thou hast with reason attended to the interest of the Goddess.

IPH. Ay, because hating all Greece that destroyed me.

TH. What then shall we do, say, concerning the two strangers?

IPH. We needs must respect the established law.

TH. Are not the lustral waters and thy sword already engaged?

IPH. First I would fain lave them in pure cleansings.

TH. In the fountains of waters, or in the dew of the sea?

IPH. The sea washes out all the ills of men.

TH. They would certainly fall in a more holy manner before the Goddess.

IPH. And my matters would be in a more fitting state.

TH. Does not the wave dash against the very temple?

IPH. There is need of solitude, for we have other things to do.

TH. Lead them whither thou wilt, I crave not to see things that may not be told.

IPH. The image of the Goddess also must be purified by me.

TH. If indeed the stain of the matricide hath fallen on it.

IPH. For otherwise I should not have removed it from its pedestal.

TH. Just piety and foresight! How reasonably doth all the city marvel at thee!

IPH. Knowest thou then what must be done for me?

TH. ’Tis thine to explain this.

IPH. Cast fetters upon the strangers.

TH. Whither could they escape from thee?

IPH. Greece knows nothing faithful.

TH. Go for the fetters, attendants.

IPH. Ay, and let them bring the strangers hither.

TH. This shall be.

IPH. Having enveloped their heads in robes.

TH. Against the scorching of the sun?

IPH. And send thou with me of thy followers —

TH. These shall accompany thee.

IPH. And send some one to signify to the city —

TH. What hap?

IPH. That all remain in their homes.

TH. Lest they encounter homicide?

IPH. For such things are unclean.

TH. Go thou, and order this.

IPH. That no one come into sight.

TH. Thou carest well for the city.

IPH. Ay, and more particularly friends must not be present.

TH. This you say in reference to me.

IPH. But do thou, abiding here before the temple of the Goddess —

TH. Do what?

IPH. Purify the house with a torch.

TH. That it may be pure when thou comest back to it?

IPH. But when the strangers come out,

TH. What must I do?

IPH. Place your garment before your eyes.

TH. Lest I contract contagion?

IPH. But if I seem to tarry very long,

TH. What limit of this shall I have?

IPH. Wonder at nothing.

TH. Do thou rightly the business of the Goddess at thy leisure.

IPH. And may this purification turn out as I wish!

TH. I join in your prayer.

IPH. I now see these strangers coming out of the house, and the adornments of the Goddess, and the young lambs, in order that I may wash out foul slaughter by slaughter, and the shining light of lamps, and the other things,

as many as I ordered as purifications for the strangers and the Goddess. But I proclaim to the strangers to get out of the way of this pollution, if any gate-keeper of the temples keeps pure hands for the Gods, or is about to join in nuptial alliance, or is pregnant, flee, get out of the way, lest this pollution fall on any. O thou queen, virgin daughter of Jove and Latona, if I wash away the blood-pollution from these men, and sacrifice where 'tis fitting, thou wilt occupy a pure house, and we shall be prosperous. But although I do not speak of the rest, I nevertheless signify my meaning to the Gods who know most things, and to thee, O Goddess.

CHORUS. Of noble birth is the offspring of Latona, whom once on a time in the fruitful valleys of Delos, Phœbus with his golden locks, skilled on the lyre, (and she who rejoices in skill of the bow,) his mother bore while yet an infant from the sea-side rock, leaving the renowned place of her delivery, destitute of waters, the Parnassian height haunted by Bacchus, where the ruddy-visaged serpent, with spotted back, † brazen † beneath the shady laurel with its rich foliage, an enormous prodigy of the earth, guarded the subterranean oracle. Him thou, O Phœbus, while yet an infant, while yet leaping in thy dear mother's arms, didst slay, and entered upon thy divine oracles, and thou sittest on the golden tripod, on the throne that is ever true, distributing to mortals prophecies from the divine adyts beneath the Castalian streams, dwelling hard by, occupying a dwelling in the middle of the earth. But when, having gone against Themis, daughter of earth, he expelled her from the divine oracles, earth begot dark phantoms of dreams, which to many mortals explain what first, what afterward, what in future will happen, during their sleep in the couches of the dusky earth. But † the earth † deprived Phœbus of the honor of prophecies, through anger on her daughter's account, and the swift-footed king, hastening to Olympus, stretched forth his little hand to the throne of Jove. [beseeching him] to take away the earth-born wrath of the Goddess, † and the nightly responses. † But he laughed, because his son had come quickly to him, wishing to obtain the wealthy office, and he shook his hair, and put an end to the nightly dreams, and took away nightly divination from mortals, and again conferred the honor on Loxias, and confidence to mortals from the songs of oracles [proclaimed] on this throne, thronged to by many strangers.

[*Enter* A MESSENGER.]

MESS. O ye guardians of the temple and presidents of the altars, where in this land has king Thoas gone? Do ye, opening the well-fastened gates, call the ruler of this land outside the house.

CHOR. But what is it, if I may speak when I am not bidden?

MESS. The two youths have escaped, and are gone by the contrivances of Agamemnon's daughter, endeavoring to fly from this land, and taking the sacred image in the bosom of a Grecian ship.

CHOR. Thou tellest an incredible story, but the king of this country, whom you wish to see, is gone, having quitted the temple.

MESS. Whither? For he needs must know what has been done.

CHOR. We know not. But go thou and pursue him to wheresoever, having met with him, thou mayest recount this news.

MESS. See, how faithless is the female race! and ye are partners in what has been done.

CHOR. Art thou mad? What have we to do with the flight of the strangers? Will you not go as quickly as possible to the gates of the rulers?

MESS. Not at least before some distinct informer tell me this, whether the ruler of the land is within or not within. Ho there! Open the fastenings, I speak to those within, and tell the master that I am at the gates, bearing a weight of evil news.

THOAS. (*coming out*) Who makes this noise near the temple of the Goddess, hammering at the door, and sending fear within?

MESS. These women told me falsely, (and tried to drive me from the house,) that you were away, while you really were in the house.

TH. Expecting or hunting after what gain?

MESS. I will afterward tell of what concerns them, but hear the present, immediate matter. The virgin, she that presided over the altars here,

Iphigenia, has gone out of the land with the strangers, having the sacred image of the Goddess; but the expiations were pretended.

TH. How sayest thou? possessed by what breath of calamity?

MESS. In order to preserve Orestes, for at this thou wilt marvel.

TH. What [Orestes]? Him, whom the daughter of Tyndarus bore?

MESS. Him whom she consecrated to the Goddess at these altars.

TH. Oh marvel! How can I rightly call thee by a greater name?

MESS. Do not turn thine attention to this, but listen to me; and having perceived and heard, clearly consider what pursuit will catch the strangers.

TH. Speak, for thou sayest well, for they do not flee by the way of the neighboring sea, so as to be able to escape my fleet.

MESS. When we came to the sea-shore, where the vessel of Orestes was anchored in secret, to us indeed, whom thou didst send with her, bearing fetters for the strangers, the daughter of Agamemnon made signs that we should get far out of the way, as she was about to offer the secret flame and expiation, for which she had come. But she, holding the fetters of the strangers in her hands, followed behind them. And these matters were suspicious, but they satisfied your attendants, O king. But at length, in order forsooth that she might seem to us to be doing something, she screamed aloud, and chanted barbarian songs like a sorceress, as if washing out the stain of murder. But after we had remained sitting a long time, it occurred to us whether the strangers set at liberty might not slay her, and take to flight. And through fear lest we might behold what was not fitting, we sat in silence, but at length the same words were in every body's mouth, that we should go to where they were, although not permitted. And upon this we behold the hull of the Grecian ship, [the rowing winged with well-fitted oars,] and fifty sailors holding their oars in the tholes, and the youths, freed from their fetters, standing [on the shore] astern of the ship. But some held in the prow with their oars, and others from the epotides let down the anchor, and others hastily applying the ladders, drew the stern-cables

through their hands, and giving them to the sea, let them down to the strangers. But we unsparing [of the toil,] when we beheld the crafty stratagem, laid hold of the female stranger and of the cables, and tried to drag the rudders from the fair-prowed ship from the steerage-place. But words ensued: “On what plea do ye take to the sea, stealing from this land the images and priestess? Whose son art thou, who thyself, who art carrying this woman from the land?” But he replied, “Orestes, her brother, that you may know, the son of Agamemnon, I, having taken this my sister, whom I had lost from my house, am bearing her off.” But naught the less we clung to the female stranger, and compelled them by force to follow us to thee, upon which arose sad smitings of the cheeks. For they had not arms in their hands, nor had we; but fists were sounding against fists, and the arms of both the youths at once were aimed against our sides and to the liver, so that we at once were exhausted and worn out in our limbs. But stamped with horrid marks we fled to a precipice, some having bloody wounds on the head, others in the eyes, and standing on the heights, we waged a safer warfare, and pelted stones. But archers, standing on the poop, hindered us with their darts, so that we returned back. And meanwhile — for a tremendous wave drove the ship against the land, and there was alarm [on board] lest she might dip her sheet-line — Orestes, taking his sister on his left shoulder, walked into the sea, and leaping upon the ladder, placed her within the well-banked ship, and also the image of the daughter of Jove, that fell from heaven. And from the middle of the ship a voice spake thus, “O mariners of the Grecian ship, seize on your oars, and make white the surge, for we have obtained the things on account of which we sailed o’er the Euxine within the Symplegades.” But they shouting forth a pleasant cry, smote the brine. The ship, as long indeed as it was within the port, went on; but, passing the outlet, meeting with a strong tide, it was driven back. For a terrible gale coming suddenly, drives [the bark winged with well-fitted oars] poop-wise, but they persevered, kicking against the wave, but an ebbing tide brought them again aground. But the daughter of Agamemnon stood up and prayed, “O daughter of Latona, bring me, thy priestess, safe into Greece from a barbarian land, and pardon the stealing away of me. Thou also, O Goddess, lovest thy brother, and think thou that I also love my kindred.” But the sailors shouted a pæan in assent to the prayers of the girl, applying on a given signal the point of the shoulders, bared from their hands, to the oars. But more and more the vessel kept nearing the rocks, and one indeed

leaped into the sea with his feet, and another fastened woven nooses. And I was immediately sent hither to thee, to tell thee, O king, what had happened there. But go, taking fetters and halters in your hands, for, unless the wave shall become tranquil, there is no hope of safety for the strangers. For the ruler of the sea, the revered Neptune, both favorably regards Troy, and is at enmity with the Pelopidæ. And he will now, as it seems, deliver up to thee and the citizens the son of Agamemnon, to take him into your hands, and his sister, who is detected ungratefully forgetting the Goddess in respect to the sacrifice at Aulis.

CHOR. O hapless Iphigenia, with thy brother wilt thou die, again coming into the hands of thy masters.

TH. O all ye citizens of this barbarian land, will ye not, casting bridles on your horses, run to the shore, and receive the casting on of the Grecian ship? But hastening, by the favor of the Goddess, will ye not hunt down the impious men, and some of you haul the swift barks down to the sea, that by sea, and by horse-coursings on the land seizing them, we may either hurl them down the broken rock, or impale their bodies upon stakes. But you women, the accomplices in these plots, I will punish hereafter, when I have leisure, but now, having such a present duty, we will not remain idle.

[MINERVA *appears*.]

MIN. Whither, whither sendest thou this troop to follow [the fugitives,] king Thoas? List to the words of me, Minerva. Cease pursuing, and stirring on the onset of your host. For by the destined oracles of Loxias Orestes came hither, fleeing the wrath of the Erinnyes, and in order to conduct his sister's person to Argos, and to bear the sacred image into my land, by way of respite from his present troubles. Thus are our words for thee, but as to him, Orestes, whom you wish to slay, having caught him in a tempest at sea, Neptune has already, for my sake, rendered the surface of the sea waveless, piloting him along in the ship. But do thou, Orestes, learning my commands, (for thou hearest the voice of a Goddess, although not present,) go, taking the image and thy sister. And when thou art come to heaven-built Athens, there is a certain sacred district in the farthest bounds of Atthis, near the Carystian rock, which my people call Alœ — here, having built a temple, do thou enshrine the image named after the Tauric land and thy

toils, which thou hast labored through, wandering over Greece, under the goad of the Erinnyes. But mortals hereafter shall celebrate her as the Tauric Goddess Diana. And do thou ordain this law, that, when the people celebrate a feast in grateful commemoration of thy release from slaughter, let them apply the sword to the neck of a man, and let blood flow on account of the holy Goddess, that she may have honor. But, O Iphigenia, thou must needs be guardian of the temple of this Goddess at the hallowed ascent of Brauron; where also thou shalt be buried at thy death, and they shall offer to you the honor of rich woven vestments, which women, dying in childbed, may leave in their houses. But I command thee to let these Grecian women depart from the land on account of their disinterested disposition, I, having saved thee also on a former occasion, by determining the equal votes in the Field of Mars, Orestes, and that, according to the same law, he should conquer, whoever receive equal suffrages. But, O son of Agamemnon, do thou remove thy sister from this land, nor be thou angered, Thoas.

TH. Queen Minerva, whosoever, on hearing the words of the Gods, is disobedient, thinks not wisely. But I will not be angry with Orestes, if he has carried away the image of the Goddess with him, nor with his sister. For what credit is there in contending with the potent Gods? Let them depart to thy land with the image of the Goddess, and let them prosperously enshrine the effigy. But I will also send these women to blest Greece, as thy mandate bids. And I will stop the spear which I raised against the strangers, and the oars of the ships, as this seems fit to thee, O Goddess.

MIN. I commend your words, for fate commands both thee and the Gods [themselves.] Go, ye breezes, conduct the vessel of Agamemnon's son to Athens. And I will journey with you, to guard the hallowed image of my sister.

CHOR. Go ye, happy because of your preserved fortune. But, O Athenian Pallas, hallowed among both immortals and mortals, we will do even as thou biddest. For I have received a very delightful and unhoped-for voice in my hearing. O thou all hallowed Victory, mayest thou possess my life, and cease not to crown it.

ION

Translated by Robert Potter

Composed between 414 and 412 BC, this romantic drama follows the orphan Ion in the discovery of his divine origins. The story concerns Creusa, daughter of Erechtheus, who was a noble native of Athens. Years ago, the god Apollo seduced her in a cave and she gave birth to his son, whom she believed she had then killed by exposure. Keeping this a secret, many years later she was unable to have a child with her husband Xuthus, a Thessalian and son of Aeolus, and so they travelled to Delphi to seek advice from the oracle. However, as the play opens and Creusa arrives, she meets Ion, who introduces himself as an orphan slave, brought up by the priestess of Apollo and in time the true discovery of Ion's identity is revealed.

The Oracle at Delphi, the main setting of the play

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ION

(SCENE:-Before the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. The sun is about to rise. MERCURY enters.)

MERCURY Atlas, that on his brazen shoulders rolls
Yon heaven, the ancient mansion of the gods,
Was by a goddess sire to Maia; she
To supreme Jove bore me, and call'd me Hermes;
Attendant on the king, his high behests
I execute. To Delphi am I come,
This land where Phoebus from his central throne
Utters to mortals his high strain, declaring
The present and the future; this is the cause;
Greece hath a city of distinguish'd glory,
Which from the goddess of the golden lance
Received its name; Erechtheus was its king;
His daughter, call'd Creusa, to the embrace
Of nuptial love Apollo strain'd perforce,
Where northward points the rock beneath the heights
Crown'd with the Athenian citadel of Pallas,
Call'd Macrai by the lords of Attica.
Her growing burden, to her sire unknown
(Such was the pleasure of the god), she bore,
Till in her secret chamber to a son
The rolling months gave birth: to the same cave,
Where by the enamour'd god she was compress'd,
Creusa bore the infant: there for death
Exposed him in a well-compacted ark
Of circular form, observant of the customs
Drawn from her great progenitors, and chief
From Erichthonius, who from the Attic earth
Deriv'd his origin: to him as guards
Minerva gave two dragons, and in charge
Consign'd him to the daughters of Aglauros:
This rite to the Erechthidae hence remains,

Mid serpents wreathed in ductile gold to nurse
Their children. What of ornament she had
She hung around her son, and left him thus
To perish. But to me his earnest prayer
Phoebus applied, “To the high-lineaged sons
Of glorious Athens go, my brother; well
Thou know’st the city of Pallas; from the cave
Deep in the hollow rock a new-born babe,
Laid as he is, and all his vestments with him;
Bring to thy brother to my shrine, and place
At the entrance of my temple; of the rest
(For, know, the child is mine) I will take care.”
To gratify my brother thence I bore
The osier-woven ark, and placed the boy
Here at the temple’s base, the wreathed lid
Uncovering, that the infant might be seen.
It chanced, as the orient sun the steep of heav’n
Ascended, to the god’s oracular seat
The priestess entering, on the infant cast
Her eye, and marvelled, deeming that some nymph
Of Delphi at the fane had dared to lay
The secret burden of her womb: this thought
Prompts her to move it from the shrine: but soon
To pity she resign’d the harsh intent;
The impulse of the god secretly acting
In favour of the child, that in his temple
It might abide; her gentle hand then took it,
And gave it nurture; yet conceived she not
That Phoebus was the sire, nor who the mother
Knew aught, nor of his parents could the child
Give information. All his youthful years
Sportive he wandered round the shrine, and there
Was fed: but when his firmer age advanced
To manhood, o’er the treasures of the god
The Delphians placed him, to his faithful care
Consigning all; and in this royal dome
His hallow’d life he to this hour hath pass’d.

Meantime Creusa, mother of the child,
To Xuthus was espoused, the occasion this:-
On Athens from Euboean Chalcis roll'd
The waves of war; be join'd their martial toil,
And with his spear repell'd the foe; for this
To the proud honour of Creusa's bed
Advanc'd; no native, in Achaea sprung
From Aeolus, the son of Jove. Long time
Unbless'd with children, to the oracular shrine
Of Phoebus are they come, through fond desire
Of progeny: to this the god hath brought
The fortune of his son, nor, as was deem'd,
Forgets him; but to Xuthus, when he stands
This sacred seat consulting, will he give
That son, declared his offspring; that the child,
When to Creusa's house brought back, by her
May be agnized; the bridal rites of Phoebus
Kept secret, that the youth may claim the state
Due to his birth, through all the states of Greece
Named Ion, founder of the colonies
On the Asiatic coast. The laurell'd cave
Now will I visit, there to learn what fortune
Is to the boy appointed, for I see
This son of Phoebus issuing forth to adorn
The gates before the shrine with laurel boughs.
First of the gods I hail him by the name
Of Ion, which his fortune soon will give him.
(MERCURY vanishes. ION and the attendants of the temple enter.)

ION *(chanting)* Now flames this radiant chariot of the sun
High o'er the earth, at whose ethereal fire
The stars into the sacred night retreat:
O'er the Parnassian cliffs the ascending wheels
To mortals roll the beams of day; the wreaths
Of incense-breathing myrrh mount to the roof
Of Phoebus' fane; the Delphic priestess now
Assumes her seat, and from the hallow'd tripod

Pronounces to the Greeks the oracular strains
Which the god dictates. Haste, ye Delphic train,
Haste to Castalia's silver-streaming fount;
Bathed in its chaste dews to the temple go;
There from your guarded mouths no sound be heard
But of good omen, that to those who crave
Admission to the oracle, your voice
May with auspicious words expound the answers.
My task, which from my early infancy
Hath been my charge, shall be with laurel boughs
And sacred wreaths to cleanse the vestibule
Of Phoebus, on the pavement moistening dews
To rain, and with my bow to chase the birds
Which would defile the hallow'd ornaments.
A mother's fondness, and a father's care
I never knew: the temple of the god
Claims then my service, for it nurtured me.
(The attendants leave. ION busies himself before the temple as he continues to sing.)
Haste, thou verdant new-sprung bough,
Haste, thy early office know;
Branch of beauteous laurel come,
Sweep Apollo's sacred dome,
Cropp'd this temple's base beneath,
Where the immortal gardens breathe,
And eternal dews that round
Water the delicious ground,
Bathe the myrtle's tresses fair.
Lightly thus, with constant care,
The pavement of the god I sweep,
When over the Parnassian steep
Flames the bright sun's mounting ray;
This my task each rising day.
Son of Latona, Paean, Paean, hail!
Never, O never may thy honours fail!
Grateful is my task, who wait
Serving, Phoebus, at thy gate;

Honouring thus thy hallow'd shrine,
Honour for the task is mine.
Labouring with unwilling hands,
Me no mortal man commands:
But, immortal gods, to you
All my pleasing toil is due.
Phoebus is to me a sire;
Grateful thoughts my soul inspire;
Nurtured by thy bounty here,
Thee, Apollo, I revere;
As a father's I repeat.
Son of Latona, Paean, Paean, hail!
Never, O never may thy honours fail!
Now from this labour with the laurel bough
I cease; and sprinkling from the golden vase
The chaste drops which Castalia's fountain rolls,
Bedew the pavement. Never may I quit
This office to the god; or, if I quit it,
Be it, good Fortune, at thy favouring call!
But see, the early birds have left their nests,
And this way from Parnassus wing their flight.
Come not, I charge you, near the battlements,
Nor near the golden dome. Herald of Jove,
Strong though thy beak beyond the feather'd kind,
My bow shall reach thee. Towards the altar, see,
A swan comes sailing: elsewhere wilt thou move
Thy scarlet-tinctured foot? or from my bow
The lyre of Phoebus to thy notes attuned
Will not protect thee; farther stretch thy wings;
Go, wanton, skim along the Delian lake,
Or wilt thou steep thy melody in blood.
Look, what strange bird comes onwards; wouldst thou fix
Beneath the battlements thy straw-built nest?
My singing bow shall drive thee hence; begone,
Or to the banks of Alpheus, gulfy stream,
Or to the Isthmian grove; there hatch thy young;
Mar not these pendent ornaments, nor soil

The temple of the god: I would not kill you:
‘Twere pity, for to mortal man you bear
The message of the gods; yet my due task
Must be perform’d, and never will I cease
My service to the god who nurtured me.

(The CHORUS enters. The following lines between ION and the CHORUS are chanted responsively as they gaze admiringly at the decorations on the temple.)

CHORUS The stately column, and the gorgeous dome
Raised to the gods, are not the boast alone
Of our magnificent Athens; nor the statues
That grace her streets; this temple of the god,
Son of Latona, beauteous to behold,
Beams the resplendent light of both her children.

ION Turn thine eyes this way; look, the son of Jove
Lops with his golden scimitar the heads
Of the Lernean Hydra: view it well.

CHORUS I see him.

ION And this other standing nigh, Who snatches from the fire the blazing brand.

CHORUS What is his name? the subject, on the web
Design’d, these hands have wrought in ductile gold.

ION The shield-supporting Iolaus, who bears
The toils in common with the son of Jove.
View now this hero; on his winged steed
The triple-bodied monster’s dreadful force
He conquers through the flames his jaws emit.

CHORUS I view it all attentively.

ION Observe
The battle of the giants, on the walls
Sculptured in stone.

CHORUS Let us note this, my friends.

ION See where against Enceladus she shakes
Her gorgon shield.

CHORUS I see my goddess, Pallas.

ION Mark the tempestuous thunder's flaming bolt
Launch'd by the hand of Jove.

CHORUS The furious Mimas
Here blazes in the volley'd fires: and there
Another earth-born monster falls beneath
The wand of Bacchus wreathed with ivy round,
No martial spear. But, as 'tis thine to tend
This temple, let me ask thee, is it lawful,
Leaving our sandals, its interior parts
To visit?

ION Strangers, this is not permitted.

CHORUS Yet may we make inquiries of thee?

ION Speak;
What wouldst thou know?

CHORUS Whether this temple's site
Be the earth's centre?

ION Ay, with garlands hung,
And gorgons all around.

CHORUS So fame reports.

ION If at the gate the honey'd cake be offer'd,
Would you consult the oracle, advance
To the altar: till the hallow'd lamb has bled
In sacrifice, approach not the recess.

CHORUS I am instructed: what the god appoints
As laws, we wish not to transgress: without
Enough of ornament delights our eyes.

ION Take a full view of all; that is allow'd.

CHORUS To view the inmost shrine was our lord's order.

ION Who are you call'd? Attendants on what house?

CHORUS Our lords inhabit the magnific domes
Of Pallas.-But she comes, of whom thou askest.
(CREUSA and attendants enter.)

ION Lady, whoe'er thou art, that liberal air
Speaks an exalted mind: there is a grace,
A dignity in those of noble birth,
That marks their high rank. Yet I marvel much
That from thy closed lids the trickling tear
Water'd thy beauteous cheeks, soon as thine eye
Beheld this chaste oracular seat of Phoebus.
What brings this sorrow, lady? All besides,
Viewing the temple of the god, are struck
With joy; thy melting eye o'erflows with tears.

CREUSA Not without reason, stranger, art thou seized
With wonder at my tears: this sacred dome
Awakes the sad remembrance of things past.
I had my mind at home, though present here.
How wretched is our sex! And, O ye gods,
What deeds are yours! Where may we hope for right,
If by the injustice of your power undone?

ION Why, lady, this inexplicable grief?

CREUSA It matters not; my mind resumes its firmless:
I say no more; cease thy concern for me.

ION But say, who art thou? whence? what country boasts
Thy birth? and by what name may we address thee?

CREUSA Creusa is my name, drawn from Erechtheus
My high-born lineage; Athens gave me birth.
Illustrious is thy state; thy ancestry
So noble that I look with reverence on thee.

CREUSA Happy indeed is this, in nothing farther.

ION But tell me, is it true what fame has blazon'd?

CREUSA What wouldst thou ask? Stranger, I wish to know.

ION Sprung the first author of thy line from the earth?

CREUSA Ay, Erichthonius; but my race avails not.

ION And did Minerva raise him from the earth?

CREUSA Held in her virgin hands: she bore him not.

ION And gave him as the picture represents?

CREUSA Daughters of Cecrops these, charged not to see him.

ION The virgins ope'd the interdicted chest?

CREUSA And died, distaining with their blood the rock.

ION But tell me, is this truth, or a vain rumour?

CREUSA What wouldst thou ask? I am not scant of time.

ION Thy sisters did Erechtheus sacrifice?

CREUSA He slew the virgins, victims for their country.

ION And thou of all thy sisters saved alone?

CREUSA I was an infant in my mother's arms.

ION And did the yawning earth swallow thy father?

CREUSA By Neptune's trident smote; and so he perish'd.

ION And Macrai call you not the fatal place?

CREUSA Why dost thou ask? What thoughts hast thou recall'd?,

ION Does Phoebus, do his lightnings honour it?

CREUSA Honour! Why this? Would I had never seen it!

ION Why? Dost thou hate the place dear to the god?

CREUSA No: but for some base deed done in the cave.

ION But what Athenian, lady, wedded thee?

CREUSA Of Athens none, but one of foreign birth.

ION What is his name? Noble he needs must be.

CREUSA Xuthus, by Aeolus derived from Jove.

ION How weds a stranger an Athenian born?

CREUSA Euboea is a state neighbouring on Athens.

ION A narrow sea flows, I have heard, between.

CREUSA Joining the Athenian arms, that state he wasted.

ION Confederate in the war, thence wedded thee?

CREUSA The dowral meed of war, earn’d by his spear.

ION Comest thou with him to Delphi, or alone?

CREUSA With him, gone now to the Trophonian shrine.

ION To view it, or consult the oracle?

CREUSA Both that and this, anxious for one response.

ION For the earth’s fruits consult you, or for children?

CREUSA Though wedded long, yet childless is our bed.

ION Hast thou ne’er borne a child, that thou hast none?

CREUSA My state devoid of children Phoebus knows.

ION Bless’d in all else, luckless in this alone.

CREUSA But who art thou? Bless’d I pronounce thy mother.

ION Call’d as I am the servant of the god.

CREUSA Presented by some state, or sold to this?

ION I know not aught save this, I am the god’s.

CREUSA And in my turn, stranger, I pity thee.

ION As knowing not my mother, or my lineage.

CREUSA Hast thou thy dwelling here, or in some house?

ION The temple is my house, ev’n when I sleep.

CREUSA A child brought hither, or in riper years?

ION An infant, as they say, who seem to know.

CREUSA What Delphian dame sustain’d thee at her breast?

ION I never knew a breast. She nourish’d me.

CREUSA Who, hapless youth? Diseased, I find disease.

ION The priestess: as a mother I esteem her.

CREUSA Who to these manly years gave thee support?

ION The altars, and the still-succeeding strangers.

CREUSA Wretched, whoe’er she be, is she that bore thee.

ION I to some woman am perchance a shame.

CREUSA Are riches thine? Thou art well habited.

ION Graced with these vestments by the god I serve.

CREUSA Hast thou made no attempt to trace thy birth?

ION I have no token, lady, for a proof.

CREUSA Ah, like thy mother doth another suffer.

ION Who? tell me: shouldst thou help me, what a joy

CREUSA One for whose sake I come before my husband.

ION Say for what end, that I may serve thee, lady.

CREUSA To ask a secret answer of the god.

ION Speak it: my service shall procure the rest.

CREUSA Hear then the tale: but Modesty restrains me.

ION Ah, let her not; her power avails not here.

CREUSA My friend then says that to the embrace of Phoebus-

ION A woman and a god! Say not so, stranger.

CREUSA She bore a son: her father knew it not.

ION Not so: a mortal's baseness he disdains.

CREUSA This she affirms; and this, poor wretch, she suffer'd.

ION What follow'd, if she knew the god's embrace?

CREUSA The child, which hence had birth, she straight exposed.

ION This exposed child, where is he? doth he live?

CREUSA This no one knows; this wish I to inquire.

ION If not alive, how probably destroyed?

CREUSA Torn, she conjectures, by some beast of prey.

ION What ground hath she on which to build that thought?

CREUSA Returning to the place she found him not.

ION Observed she drops of blood distain the path?

CREUSA None, though with anxious heed she search'd around.

ION What time hath pass'd since thus the child was lost?

CREUSA Were he alive, his youth were such as thine.

ION The god hath done him wrong: the unhappy mother-

CREUSA Hath not to any child been mother since.

ION What if in secret Phoebus nurtures him!

CREUSA Unjust to enjoy alone a common right.

ION Ah me! this cruel fate accords with mine.

CREUSA For thee too thy unhappy mother mourns.

ION Ah, melt me not to griefs I would forget!

CREUSA I will be silent: but impart thy aid.

ION Seest thou what most the inquiry will suppress?

CREUSA And to my wretched friend what is not ill?

ION How shall the god what he would hide reveal?

CREUSA As placed on the oracular seat of Greece.

ION The deed must cause him shame: convict him not.

CREUSA To the poor sufferer ’tis the cause of grief.

ION It cannot be; for who shall dare to give
The oracle? With justice would the god,
In his own dome affronted, pour on him
Severest vengeance, who should answer thee.
Desist then, lady: it becomes us ill,
In opposition to the god, to make
Inquiries at his shrine; by sacrifice
Before their altars, or the flight of birds,
Should we attempt to force the unwilling gods
To utter what they wish not, ‘twere the excess
Of rudeness; what with violence we urge
‘Gainst their consent would to no good avail us:
What their spontaneous grace confers on us,
That, lady, as a blessing we esteem.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS How numberless the ills to mortal man,
And various in their form! One single blessing
By any one through life is scarcely found.

CREUSA Nor here, nor there, O Phoebus, art thou just
To her; though absent, yet her words are present.
Nor didst thou save thy son, whom it became thee
To save; nor, though a prophet, wilt thou speak
To the sad mother who inquires of thee;
That, if he is no more, to him a tomb
May rise; but, if he lives, that he may bless
His mother's eyes. But even thus behooves us
To omit these things, if by the god denied
To know what most I wish.-But, for I see
The noble Xuthus this way bend, return'd
From the Trophonian cave; before my husband
Resume not, generous stranger, this discourse,
Lest it might cause me shame that thus I act
In secret, and perchance lead on to questions
I would not have explain'd. Our hapless sex
Oft feel our husbands' rigour: with the bad
The virtuous they confound, and treat us harshly.
(XUTHUS and his retinue enter.)

XUTHUS With reverence to the god my first address
I pay: Hail, Phoebus! Lady, next to thee:
Absent so long, have I not caused thee fear?

CREUSA Not much: as anxious thoughts 'gan rise, thou'rt come.
But, tell me, from Trophonius what reply
Bearest thou; what means whence offspring may arise?

XUTHUS Unmeet he held it to anticipate
The answer of the god: one thing he told me.
That childless I should not return, nor thou,
Home from the oracle.

CREUSA Goddess revered,
Mother of Phoebus, be our coming hither
In lucky hour; and our connubial bed
Be by thy son made happier than before!

XUTHUS It shall be so. But who is president here?

ION Without, that charge is mine; within, devolved
On others, stranger, seated near the tripod;
The chiefs of Delphi these, chosen by lot.

XUTHUS 'Tis well: all that I want is then complete.
Let me now enter: for the oracle
Is given, I hear, in common to all strangers
Before the shrine; on such a day, that falls
Propitious thus, the answer of the god
Would I receive: meanwhile, these laurel boughs
Bear round the altars; lady, breathe thy prayers
To every god, that from Apollo's shrine
I may bring back the promise of a son.
(XUTHUS, after giving the laurel boughs to CREUSA, enters the temple.)

CREUSA It shall, it shall be so. Should Phoebus now
At least be willing to redress the fault
Of former times, he would not through the whole
Be friendly to us: yet will I accept
What he vouchsafes us, for he is a god.
(CREUSA departs to the shrines in the outer precinct of the temple.)

ION Why does this stranger always thus revile
With obscure speech the god? Is it through love
Of her, for whom she asks? or to conceal
Some secret of importance? But to me
What is the daughter of Erechtheus? Naught
Concerns it me. Then let me to my task,
And sprinkle from the golden vase the dew.
Yet must I blame the god, if thus perforce
He mounts the bed of virgins, and by stealth

Becomes a father, leaving then his children
To die, regardless of them. Do not thou
Act thus; but, as thy power is great, respect
The virtues; for whoe'er, of mortal men,
Dares impious deeds, him the gods punish: how
Is it then just that you, who gave the laws
To mortals, should yourselves transgress those laws?,
If *(though it is not thus, yet will I urge
The subject)*,-if to mortals you shall pay
The penalty of forced embraces, thou,
Neptune, and Jove, that reigns supreme in heaven,
Will leave your temples treasureless by paying
The mulcts of your injustice: for unjust
You are, your pleasures to grave temperance
Preferring: and to men these deeds no more
Can it be just to charge as crimes, these deeds
If from the gods they imitate: on those
Who gave the ill examples falls the charge.
(ION goes out.)

CHORUS *(singing)* Thee prompt to yield thy lenient aid,
And sooth a mother's pain:
And thee, my Pallas, martial maid,
I call: O, hear the strain!
Thou, whom the Titan from the head of Jove,
Prometheus, drew, bright Victory, come,
Descending from thy golden throne above;
Haste, goddess, to the Pythian dome,
Where Phoebus, from his central shrine,
Gives the oracle divine,
By the raving maid repeated,
On the hallow'd tripod seated:
O haste thee, goddess, and with thee
The daughter of Latona bring;
A virgin thou, a virgin she,
Sisters to the Delphian king;
Him, virgins, let your vows implore,

That now his pure oracular power
Will to Erechtheus' ancient line declare
The blessing of a long-expected heir!
To mortal man this promised grace
Sublimest pleasure brings,
When round the father's hearth a race
In blooming lustre springs.
The wealth, the honours, from their high-drawn line
From sire to son transmitted down,
Shall with fresh glory through their offspring shine,
And brighten with increased renown:
A guard, when ills begin to lower,
Dear in fortune's happier hour;
For their country's safety waking,
Firm in fight the strong spear shaking;
More than proud wealth's exhaustless store,
More than a monarch's bride to reign,
The dear delight, to virtue's lore
Careful the infant mind to train.
Doth any praise the childless state?
The joyless, loveless life I hate;
No; my desires to moderate wealth I bound,
But let me see my children smile around.
Ye rustic seats, Pan's dear delight;
Ye caves of Macrai's rocky height,
Where oft the social virgins meet,
And weave the dance with nimble feet;
Descendants from Aglauros they
In the third line, with festive play,
Minerva's hallow'd fane before
The verdant plain light-tripping o'er,
When thy pipe's quick-varying sound
Rings, O Pan, these caves around;
Where, by Apollo's love betray'd,
Her child some hapless mother laid,
Exposed to each night-prowling beast,
Or to the ravenous birds a feast;

For never have I heard it told,
Nor wrought it in historic gold,
That happiness attends the race,
When gods with mortals mix the embrace.
(ION re-enters.)

ION Ye female train, that place yourselves around
This incense-breathing temple's base, your lord
Awaiting, hath he left the sacred tripod
And oracle, or stays he in the shrine,
Making inquiries of his childless state?

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Yet in the temple, stranger, he remains.

ION But he comes forth; the sounding doors announce
His near approach; behold, our lord is here.
(XUTHUS enters from the temple. He rushes to greet ION.)

XUTHUS Health to my son! This first address is proper.

ION I have my health: be in thy senses thou,
And both are well.

XUTHUS O let me kiss thy hand,
And throw mine arms around thee.

ION Art thou, stranger,
Well in thy wits? or hath the god's displeasure
Bereft thee of thy reason?

XUTHUS Reason bids,
That which is dearest being found, to wish
A fond embrace.

ION Off, touch me not; thy hands
Will mar the garlands of the god.

XUTHUS My touch
Asserts no pledge: my own, and that most dear,
I find.

ION Wilt thou not keep thee distant, ere
Thou hast my arrow in thy heart?

XUTHUS Why fly me,
When thou shouldst own what is most fond of thee?

ION I am not fond of curing wayward strangers,
And madmen.

XUTHUS Kill me, raise my funeral pyre;
But, if thou kill me, thou wilt kill thy father.

ION My father thou! how so? it makes me laugh
To hear thee.

XUTHUS This my words may soon explain.

ION What wilt thou say to me?

XUTHUS I am thy father,
And thou my son.

ION Who declares this?

XUTHUS The god,
That nurtured thee, though mine.

ION Thou to thyself
Art witness.

XUTHUS By the oracle inform’d.

ION Misled by some dark answer.

XUTHUS Well I heard it.

ION What were the words of Phoebus?

XUTHUS That who first
Should meet me-

ION How?-what meeting?

XUTHUS As I pass'd.
Forth from the temple.

ION What the event to him?

XUTHUS He is my son.

ION Born so, or by some other
Presented?

XUTHUS Though a present, born my son.

ION And didst thou first meet me?

XUTHUS None else, my son.

ION This fortune whence?

XUTHUS At that we marvel both.

ION Who is my mother?

XUTHUS That I cannot say.

ION Did not the god inform thee?

XUTHUS Through my joy,
For this I ask'd not.

ION Haply from the earth
I sprung, my mother.

XUTHUS No, the earth no sons
Produces.

ION How then am I thine?

XUTHUS I know not.
To Phoebus I appeal.

ION Be this discourse
Chang'd to some other.

XUTHUS This delights me most.

ION Hast thou e'er mounted an unlawful bed?

XUTHUS In foolishness of youth.

ION Was that before
Thy marriage with the daughter of Erechtheus?

XUTHUS Since never.

ION Owe I then my birth to that?

XUTHUS The time agrees.

ION How came I hither then?

XUTHUS I can form no conjecture.

ION Was I brought
From some far distant part?

XUTHUS That fills my mind
With doubtful musing.

ION Didst thou e'er before
Visit the Pythian rock?

XUTHUS Once, at the feast
Of Bacchus.

ION By some public host received?

XUTHUS Who with the Delphian damsels-

ION To the orgies
Led thee, or how?

XUTHUS And with the Maenades
Of Bacchus-

ION In the temperate hour, or warm
With wine?

XUTHUS Amid the revels of the god.

ION From thence I date my birth.

XUTHUS And fate, my son,
Hath found thee.

ION How then came I to the temple?

XUTHUS Perchance exposed.

ION The state of servitude
Have I escaped.

XUTHUS Thy father now, my son,
Receive.

ION Indecent were it in the god
Not to confide.

XUTHUS Thy thoughts are just.

ION What else
Would we?

XUTHUS Thou seest what thou oughtst to see.

ION Am I the son then of the son of Jove?

XUTHUS Such is thy fortune.

ION Those that gave me birth
Do I embrace?

XUTHUS Obedient to the god.

ION My father, hail!

XUTHUS That dear name I accept
With joy.

ION This present day-

XUTHUS Hath made me happy.

ION O my dear mother, when shall I behold
Thy face? Whoe'er thou art, more wish I now
To see thee than before; but thou perchance
Art dead, and nothing our desires avail.

LEADER We in the blessing of our house rejoice.
Yet wish we that our mistress too were happy
In children, and the lineage of Erechtheus.

XUTHUS Well hath the god accomplish'd this, my son,
Discovering thee, well hath he joined thee to me;
And thou hast found the most endearing ties,
To which, before this hour, thou wast a stranger.
And the warm wish, which thou hast well conceived,
Is likewise mine, that thou mayst find thy mother;
I from what woman thou derivest thy birth.

This, left to time, may haply be discover’d.
Now quit this hallow’d earth, the god no more
Attending, and to mine accord thy mind,
To visit Athens, where thy father’s sceptre,
No mean one, waits thee, and abundant wealth:
Nor, though thou grieve one parent yet unknown,
Shalt thou be censured as ignobly born,
Or poor: no, thou art noble, and thy state
Adorn’d with rich possessions. Thou art silent.
Why is thine eye thus fixed upon the ground?
Why on thy brow that cloud? The smile of joy
Vanish’d, thou strikest thy father’s heart with fear.

ION Far other things appear when nigh, than seen
At distance. I indeed embrace my fortune,
In thee my father found. But hear what now
Wakes sad reflections. Proud of their high race
Are your Athenians, natives of the land,
Not drawn from foreign lineage: I to them
Shall come unwelcome, in two points defective,
My father not a native, and myself
Of spurious birth: loaded with this reproach,
If destitute of power, I shall be held
Abject and worthless: should I rush among
The highest order of the state, and wish
To appear important, inferior ranks
Will hate me; aught above them gives disgust.
The good, the wise, men form’d to serve the state,
Are silent, nor at public honours aim
Too hastily: by such, were I not quiet
In such a bustling state, I should be deem’d
Ridiculous, and proverb’d for a fool.
Should I attain the dignity of those,
Whose approved worth hath raised them to the height
Of public honours, by such suffrage more
Should I be watch’d; for they that hold in states
Rule and pre-eminence, bear hostile minds

To all that vie with them. And should I come
To a strange house a stranger, to a woman
Childless herself, who that misfortune shared
Before with thee, now sees it her sole lot,
And feels it bitterly, would she not hate me,
And that with justice? When I stand before them.
With what an eye would she, who hath no child,
Look on thy child? In tenderness to her,
Thy wife, thou must forsake me, or embroil
Thy house in discord, if thou favour me.
What murderous means, what poisonous drugs for men
Have women with inventive rage prepared!
Besides, I have much pity for thy wife,
Now growing old without a child, that grief
Unmerited, the last of her high race,
The exterior face indeed of royalty,
So causelessly commended, bath its brightness;
Within, all gloom: for what sweet peace of mind,
What happiness is his, whose years are pass'd
In comfortless suspicion, and the dread
Of violence? Be mine the humble blessings
Of private life, rather than be a king,
From the flagitious forced to choose my friends,
And hate the virtuous through the fear of death.
Gold, thou mayst tell me, hath o'er things like these
A sovereign power, and riches give delight:
I have no pleasure in this noisy pomp,
Nor, while I guard my riches, in the toil:
Be mine a modest mean that knows not care.
And now, my father, hear the happy state
I here enjoy'd; and first, to mortal man
That dearest blessing, leisure, and no bustle
To cause disturbance: me no ruffian force
Shoved from the way: it is not to be borne,
When every insolent and worthless wretch
Makes you give place. The worship of the god
Employ'd my life, or *(no unpleasing task)*

Service to men well pleased: the parting guest
I bade farewell-welcomed the new-arrived.
Thus something always new made every hour
Glide sweetly on; and to the human mind
That dearest wish, though some regard it not,
To be, what duty and my nature made me,
Just to the god: revolving this, my father,
I wish not for thy Athens to exchange
This state; permit me to myself to live;
Dear to the mind pleasures that arise
From humble life, as those which greatness brings.

LEADER Well hast thou said, if those whom my soul holds
Most dear shall in thy words find happiness.

XUTHUS No more of this discourse; learn to be happy.
It is my will that thou begin it here,
Where first I found thee, son: a general feast
Will I provide, and make a sacrifice,
Which at thy birth I made not: at my table
Will I receive thee as a welcome guest,
And cheer thee with the banquet, then conduct the
To Athens with me as a visitant,
Not as my son: for, mid my happiness,
I would not grieve my wife, who hath no child.

ION But I will watch the occasions time may bring,
And so present thee, and obtain her leave
That thou mayst hold the sceptre which I bear.
Ion I name thee, as befits thy fortune,
As first thou met'st me from the hallow'd shrine
As I came forth; assemble then thy friends,
Invite them all to share the joyful feast,
Since thou art soon to leave the Delphic state.
And you, ye females, keep, I charge you, keep
This secret; she that tells my wife shall die.

ION Let us then go; yet one thing to my fortune
Is wanting: if I find not her that bore me,
Life hath no joy. Might I indulge a wish,
It were to find her an Athenian dame,
That from my mother I might dare to assume
Some confidence; for he whose fortune leads him
To a free state proud of their unmix'd race,
Though call'd a citizen, must close his lips
With servile awe, for freedom is not his.
(XUTHUS and ION go out.)

CHORUS *(singing)* Yes, sisters, yes, the streaming eye,
The swelling heart I see, the bursting sigh,
When thus rejoicing in his son
Our queen her royal lord shall find,
And give to grief her anguish'd mind,
Afflicted, childless, and alone.
What means this voice divine,
Son of Latona, fate-declaring power?
Whence is this youth, so fondly graced,
That to ripe manhood, from his infant hour,
Hath in thy hallow'd courts been plac'd
And nurtured at thy shrine?
Thy dark reply delights not me;
Lurking beneath close fraud I see:
Where will this end? I fear, I fear-
'Tis strange, and strange events must hence ensue:
But grateful sounds it to his ear,
The youth, that in another's state
(Who sees not that my words are true?)
Enjoys the fraud, and triumphs in his fate.
Say, sisters, say, with duteous zeal
Shall we this secret to our queen reveal?
She, to her royal lord resign'd,
With equal hope, with equal care,
Form'd her his joys, his griefs to share,
And gave him an her willing mind.

But joys are his alone;
While she, poor mourner, with a weight of woes,
To hoary age advancing, bends;
He the bright smile of prosperous fortune knows.
Ev'n thus, unhonour'd by his friends,
Plac'd on another's throne,
Mischance and ruin on him wait,
Who fails to guard its happy state.
Him may mischance and ruin seize,
Who round my lov'd queen spreads his wily trains.
No god may his oblation please,
No favouring flame to him ascend!
To her my faith, my zeal remains,
Known to her ancient royal house a friend.
Now the father and the new-found son
The festive table haste to spread,
Where to the skies Parnassus lifts his head,
And deep beneath the hanging stone
Forms in its rudely-rifted side
A cavern wild and wide;
Where Bacchus, shaking high his midnight flames,
In many a light fantastic round
Dances o'er the craggy ground,
And revels with his frantic dames.
Ne'er to my city let him come,
This youth: no, rather let him die,
And sink into an early tomb!
With an indignant eye
Athens would view the stranger's pride
Within her gates triumphant ride:
Enough for her the honour'd race that springs
From old Erechtheus and her line of kings.
(CREUSA and her aged TUTOR enter.)

CREUSA Thou venerable man, whose guiding voice
My father, while he lived, revered, advance
Up to the oracular seat thy aged steps;

That, if the royal Phoebus should pronounce
Promise of offspring, thou with me mayst share
The joy; for pleasing is it when with friends
Good fortune we receive; if aught of ill
(Avert it, Heaven!) befalls, a friend's kind eye
Beams comfort; thee, as once thou didst revere
My father, though thy queen, I now revere.

TUTOR In thee, my child, the nobleness of manners
Which graced thy royal ancestors yet lives;
Thou never wilt disgrace thy high-born lineage.
Lead me, then, lead me to the shrine, support me:
High is the oracular seat, and steep the ascent;
Be thou assistant to the foot of age.

CREUSA Follow; be heedful where thou set thy steps.

TUTOR I am: my foot is slow, my heart hath wings.

CREUSA Fix thy staff firm on this loose-rolling ground.

TUTOR That hath no eyes; and dim indeed my sight.

CREUSA Well hast thou said; on cheerful then, and faint not.

TUTOR I have the will, but o'er constraint no power.

CREUSA Ye females, on my richly-broider'd works
Faithful attendants, say, respecting children,
For which we came, what fortune hath my lord
Borne hence? if good, declare it: you shall find
That to no thankless masters you give joy.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS O fortune!

CREUSA To thy speech this is a proem
Not tuned to happiness.

LEADER Unhappy fortune!
But why distress me for the oracle
Given to our lords? Be that as fate requires
In things which threaten death, what shall we do?

CREUSA What means this strain of woe? Whence are these fears?

LEADER What! shall we speak, or bury this in silence?

CREUSA Speak, though thy words bring wretchedness to me.

LEADER It shall be spoken, were I twice to die.
To thee, my queen, it is not given to clasp
In thy fond arms a child, or at thy breast
To hold it.

TUTOR O my child, would I were dead!

CREUSA Yes, this is wretchedness indeed, a grief
That makes life joyless.

TUTOR This is ruin to us.

CREUSA Unhappy me! this is a piercing grief,
That rends my heart with anguish.

TUTOR Groan not yet.

CREUSA Yet is the affliction present.

TUTOR Till we learn-

CREUSA To me what tidings?

TUTOR If a common fate
Await our lord, partaker of thy griefs,
Or thou alone art thus unfortunate.

LEADER To him, old man, the god hath given a son,
And happiness is his unknown to her.

CREUSA To ill this adds the deepest ill, a grief
For me to mourn.

TUTOR Born of some other woman
Is this child yet to come, or did the god
Declare one now in being?

LEADER One advanced
To manhood's prime he gave him: I was present.

CREUSA What hast thou said? Thy words denounce to me
Sorrows past speech, past utterance.

TUTOR And to me.

CREUSA How was this oracle accomplish'd? Tell me
With clearest circumstance: who is this youth?

LEADER Him as a son Apollo gave, whom first,
Departing from the god, thy lord should meet.

CREUSA O my unhappy fate! I then am left
Childless to pass my life, childless, alone,
Amid my lonely house! Who was declared?
Whom did the husband of this wretch first meet?
How meet him? Where behold him? Tell me all.

LEADER Dost thou, my honoured mistress, call to mind
The youth that swept the temple? This is he.

CREUSA O, through the liquid air that I could fly,
Far from the land of Greece, ev'n to the stars
Fix'd in the western sky! Ah me, what grief,
What piercing grief is mine I

TUTOR Say, by what name
Did he address his son, if thou hast heard it?
Or does it rest in silence, yet unknown?

LEADER Ion, for that he first advanced to meet him.

TUTOR And of what mother?

LEADER That I could not learn:
Abrupt was his departure *(to inform the*
Of all I know, old man) to sacrifice,
With hospitable rites, a birthday feast;
And in the hallow'd cave, from her apart,
With his new son to share the common banquet.

TUTOR Lady, we by thy husband are betrayed,
For I with thee am grieved, with contrived fraud
Insulted, from thy father's house cast forth.
I speak not this in hatred to thy lord,
But that I love thee more: a stranger he
Came to the city and thy royal house,
And wedded thee, all thy inheritance
Receiving, by some other woman now
Discover'd to have children privately:
How privately I'll tell thee: when he saw
Thou hadst no child, it pleased him not to bear
A fate like thine; but by some favourite slave,
His paramour by stealth, he hath a son.
Him to some Delphian gave he, distant far,
To educate; who to this sacred house
Consign'd, as secret here, received his nurture.
He knowing this, and that his son advanced
To manhood, urged thee to attend him hither,
Pleading thy childless state. Nor hath the god
Deceived thee: he deceived thee, and long since
Contrived this wily plan to rear his son,
That, if convicted, he might charge the god,
Himself excusing: should the fraud succeed,

He would observe the times when he might safely
Consign to him the empire of thy land.
And this new name was at his leisure form'd,
Ion, for that he came by chance to meet him.
I hate those ill-designing men, that form
Plans of injustice, and then gild them over
With artificial ornament: to me
Far dearer is the honest simple friend,
Than one whose quicker wit is train'd to ill.
And to complete this fraud, thou shalt be urged
To take into thy house, to lord it there,
This low-born youth, this offspring of a slave.
Though ill, it had been open, had he pleaded
Thy want of children, and, thy leave obtain'd,
Brought to thy house a son that could have boasted
His mother noble; or, if that displeased thee,
He might have sought a wife from Aeolus.
Behooves thee then to act a woman's part,
Or grasp the sword, or drug the poison'd bowl,
Or plan some deep design to kill thy husband,
And this his son, before thou find thy death
From them: if thou delay, thy life is lost:
For when beneath one roof two foes are met,
The one must perish. I with ready zeal
Will aid thee in this work, and kill the youth,
Entering the grot where he prepares the feast;
Indifferent in my choice, so that I pay
What to my lords I owe, to live or die.
If there is aught that causes slaves to blush,
It is the name; in all else than the free
The slave is nothing worse, if he be virtuous.
I too, my honour'd queen, with cheerful mind
Will share thy fate, or die, or live with honour.

CREUSA *(chanting)* How, o my soul, shall I be silent, how
Disclose this secret? Can I bid farewell
To modesty? What else restrains my tongue?

To how severe a trial am I brought!
Hath not my husband wrong'd me? Of my house
I am deprived, deprived of children; hope
Is vanish'd, which my heart could not resign,
With many an honest wish this furtive bed
Concealing, this lamented bed concealing.
But by the star-bespangled throne of Jove,
And by the goddess high above my rocks
Enshrined, by the moist banks that bend around
The hallow'd lake by Triton form'd, no longer
Will I conceal this bed, but ease my breast,
The oppressive load discharged. Mine eyes drop tears,
My soul is rent, to wretchedness ensnared
By men, by gods, whom I will now disclose,
Unkind betrayers of the beds they forced.
O thou, that wakest on thy seven-string'd lyre
Sweet notes, that from the rustic lifeless horn
Enchant the ear with heavenly melody,
Son of Latona, thee before this light
Will I reprove. Thou camest to me, with gold
Thy locks all glittering, as the vermeil flowers
I gather'd in my vest to deck my bosom
With the spring's glowing hues; in my white hand
Thy hand enlocking, to the cavern'd rock
Thou led'st me; naught avail'd my cries, that call'd
My mother; on thou led'st me, wanton god,
Immodestly, to Venus paying homage.
A son I bare thee, O my wretched fate!
Him *(for I fear'd my mother)* in thy cave
I placed, where I unhappy was undone
By thy unhappy love. Woe, woe is me!
And now my son and thine, ill-fated babe,
Is rent by ravenous vultures; thou, meanwhile,
Art to thy lyre attuning strains of joy.
Set of Latona, thee I call aloud
Who from thy golden seat, thy central throne,
Utterest thine oracle: my voice shall reach

Thine ear: ungrateful lover, to my husband,
No grace requiting, thou hast given a son
To bless his house; my son and thine, unown'd,
Perish'd a prey to birds; the robes that wrapp'd
The infant's limbs, his mother's work, lost with him.
Delos abhors thee, and the laurel boughs
With the soft foliage of the palm o'erhung,
Grasping whose round trunk with her hands divine,
Latona thee, her hallow'd offspring, bore.

LEADER Ah, what a mighty treasury of ills
Is open'd here, a copious source of tears!

TUTOR Never, my daughter, can I sate my eyes
With looking on thy face: astonishment
Bears me beyond my senses. I had stemm'd
One tide of evils, when another flood
High-surging overwhelm'd me from the words
Which thou hast utter'd, from the present ills
To an ill train of other woes transferr'd.
What say'st thou? Of what charge dost thou implead
The god? What son hast thou brought forth? Where placed him
A feast for vultures? Tell me all again.

CREUSA Though I must blush, old man, yet I will speak.

TUTOR I mourn with generous grief at a friend's woes.

CREUSA Hear then: the northward-pointing cave thou knowest,
And the Cecropian rocks, which we call Macrai.

TUTOR Where stands a shrine to Pan, and altars nigh.

CREUSA There in a dreadful conflict I engaged.

TUTOR What! my tears rise ready to meet thy words.

CREUSA By Phoebus drawn reluctant to his bed.

TUTOR Was this, my daughter, such as I suppose?

CREUSA I know not: but if truth, I will confess it.

TUTOR Didst thou in silence mourn this secret ill?

CREUSA This was the grief I now disclose to thee.

TUTOR This love of Phoebus how didst thou conceal?

CREUSA I bore a son. Hear me, old man, with patience.

TUTOR Where? who assisted? or wast thou alone?

CREUSA Alone, in the same cave where compress'd.

TUTOR Where is thy son, that childless now no more

CREUSA Dead, good old man, to beasts of prey exposed.

TUTOR Dead! and the ungrateful Phoebus gives no aid?

CREUSA None: in the house of Pluto a young guest.

TUTOR Whose hands exposed him? Surely not thine own.

CREUSA Mine, in the shades of night, wrapp'd in his vests.

TUTOR Hadst thou none with thee conscious to this deed?

CREUSA My misery, and the secret place alone.

TUTOR How durst thou in a cavern leave thy son?

CREUSA How? uttering many sad and plaintive words.

TUTOR Ah, cruel was thy deed, the god more cruel.

CREUSA Hadst thou but seen him stretch his little hands!

TUTOR Seeking the breast, or reaching to thine arms?

CREUSA To this, deprived of which he suffer'd wrong.

TUTOR And what induced thee to expose thy child?

CREUSA Hope that the god's kind care would save his son.

TUTOR How are the glories of thy house destroy'd!

CREUSA Why, thine head cover'd, dost thou pour these tears?

TUTOR To see thee and thy father thus unhappy.

CREUSA This is the state of man: nothing stands firm.

TUTOR No longer then, my child, let grief oppress us.

CREUSA What should I do? In misery all is doubt.

TUTOR First on the god that wrong'd thee be avenged.

CREUSA How shall a mortal 'gainst a god prevail?

TUTOR Set this revered oracular shrine on fire.

CREUSA I fear: ev'n now I have enough of ills.

TUTOR Attempt what may be done then; kill thy husband.

CREUSA The nuptial bed I reverence, and his goodness.

TUTOR This son then, which is now brought forth against thee.

CREUSA How? Could that be, how warmly should I wish it.

TUTOR Thy train hath swords: instruct them to the deed.

CREUSA I go with speed: but where shall it be done?

TUTOR In the hallow’d tent, where now he feasts his friends.

CREUSA An open murder, and with coward slaves!

TUTOR If mine displease, propose thou some design.

CREUSA I have it, close and easy to achieve.

TUTOR In both my faithful services are thine.

CREUSA Hear then: not strange to thee the giants’ war.

TUTOR When they in Phlegra fought against the gods.

CREUSA There the earth brought forth the Gorgon, horrid monster.

TUTOR In succour of her sons to annoy the gods?

CREUSA Ev’n so: her Pallas slew, daughter of Jove.

TUTOR What fierce and dreadful form did she then wear?

CREUSA Her breastplate arm’d with vipers wreathed around.

TUTOR A well-known story; often have I heard it.

CREUSA Her spoils before her breast Minerva wore.

TUTOR The aegis; so they call the vest of Pallas.

CREUSA So named, when in the war she join’d the gods.

TUTOR But how can this, my child, annoy thy foes?

CREUSA Thou canst not but remember Erichthonius.

TUTOR Whom first of thy high race the earth brought forth.

CREUSA To him while yet an infant Pallas gave-

TUTOR What? Thy slow preface raises expectation.

CREUSA Two drops of blood that from the Gorgon fell.

TUTOR And on the human frame what power have these?

CREUSA The one works death, the other heals disease.

TUTOR In what around the infant's body hung?

CREUSA Enclosed in gold: he gave them to my father.

TUTOR At his decease then they devolved to thee?

CREUSA Ay, and I wear it as a bracelet; look.

TUTOR Their double qualities how temper'd, say.

CREUSA This drop, which from her hollow vein distill'd,-

TUTOR To what effect applied? What is its power?

CREUSA Medicinal, of sovereign use to life.

TUTOR The other drop, what faculties hath that?

CREUSA It kills, the poison of the Gorgon dragons.

TUTOR And dost thou bear this gore blended in one?

CREUSA No, separate; for with ill good mixes not.

TUTOR O my dear child, thou hast whate'er we want.

CREUSA With this the boy shall die, and thou shalt kill him.

TUTOR Where? How? 'Tis thine to speak, to dare be mine.

CREUSA At Athens, when he comes beneath my roof.

TUTOR I like not this; what I proposed displeased.

CREUSA Dost thou surmise what enters now my thoughts?

TUTOR Suspicion waits thee, though thou kill him not.

CREUSA Thou hast judged well: a stepdame's hate is proverb'd.

TUTOR Then kill him here; thou mayst disown the deed.

CREUSA My mind ev'n now anticipates the pleasure.

TUTOR Thus shalt thou meet thy husband's wiles with wiles

CREUSA This shalt thou do: this little golden casket
Take from my hand, Minerva's gift of old;
To where my husband secretly prepares
The sacrifice, bear this beneath thy vest.
That supper ended, when they are to pour
Libations to the gods, thou mayst infuse
In the youth's goblet this: but take good heed,
Let none observe thee; drug his cup alone
Who thinks to lord it in my house: if once
It pass his lips, his foot shall never reach
Illustrious Athens: death awaits him here.
(She gives him the casket.)

TUTOR Go thou then to the hospitable house
Prepared for thy reception: be it mine,
Obedient to thy word to do this deed.
Come then, my aged foot, be once more young
In act, though not in years, for past recall
That time is fled: kill him, and bear him forth.
Well may the prosperous harbour virtuous thought;
But when thou wouldst avenge thee on thy foes,
There is no law of weight to hinder thee.
(They both go out.)

CHORUS *(singing)* Daughter of Ceres, Trivia hear, Propitious regent of each public way
Amid the brightness of the day, Nor less when night's dark hour engenders fear;
The fulness of this goblet guide
To check with death this stripling's pride, For whom my queen this fatal draught prepares,
Tinged with the Gorgon's venom'd gore: That seat, which mid Erechtheus' royal heirs
His pride claims, it shall claim no more: Never may one of alien blood disgrace The imperial honours of that high-born race!
Should not this work of fate succeed, Nor the just vengeance of my queen prevail;
Should this apt time of daring fail, And hope, that flatters now, desert the deed;
Slaughter shall other means afford,
The strangling cord, the piercing sword; For rage from disappointed rage shall flow,
And try each. various form of death; For never shall my queen this torment know;
Ne'er while she draws this vital breath, Brook in her house that foreign lords should shine, Clothed with the splendours of her ancient line.
Thou whom the various hymn delights, Then thy bright choir of beauteous dames among,
Dancing the stream's soft brink along, Thou seest the guardian of thy mystic rites,
Thy torch its midnight vigils keep,
Thine eye meantime disdaining sleep; While with thee dances Jove's star-spangled plain.
And the moon dances up the sky: Ye nymphs, that lead to grots your frolic train,
Beneath the gulfy founts that lie: Thou gold-crown'd queen, through night's dark regions fear'd,
And thou, her mother, power revered, How should I blush to see this youth unknown! This Delphic vagrant, hope to seize the throne.
You, who the melting soul to move, In loose, dishonest airs the Muse employ

To celebrate love's wanton joy, The joy of unallow'd, unholy love,
See how our pure and modest law
Can lavish man's lewd deeds o'erawe! Ye shameless bards, revoke each wanton air;
No more these melting measures frame; Bid the chaste muse in Virtue's cause declare,
And mark man's lawless bed with shame! Ungrateful is this Jove-descended lord;
For, his wife's childless bed abhorr'd, Lewdly he courts the embrace of other dames, And with a spurious son his pride inflames.
(An ATTENDANT of CREUSA enters.)

ATTENDANT Athenian dames, where shall I find our queen,
The daughter of Erechtheus? Seeking her,
This city have I walked around in vain.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS And for what cause, my fellow-slave? What means
Thy hasty foot? What tidings dost thou bring?

ATTENDANT We are discover'd; and the rulers here
Seek her, that she may die o'erwhelm'd with stones.

LEADER Ah me! what wouldst thou say? Are our designs
Of secret ruin to this youth disclosed?

ATTENDANT They are; and know, the worst of ills await you.

LEADER How were our dark devices brought to light?

ATTENDANT The god, that justice might receive no stain
Caused it to triumph o'er defeated wrong.

LEADER How? as a suppliant, I conjure thee, tell me
Of this inform'd, if we must die, more freely
Wish we to die than see the light of heaven.

ATTENDANT Soon as the husband of Creusa left
The god's oracular shrine, this new-found son
He to the feast, and sacrifice prepared
To the high gods, led with him. Xuthus then
Went where the hallow'd flame of Bacchus mounts,
That on each rock's high point the victim's blood
Might flow, a grateful offering for his son
Thus recognised, to whom he gave in charge,
"Stay thou, and with the artist's expert aid
Erect the sheltering tent: my rites perform'd
To the kind gods that o'er the genial bed
Preside, should I be there detain'd too long,
Spread the rich table to my present friends."
This said, he led the victims to the rocks.
Meanwhile with reverent heed the son 'gan rear
On firm supporters the wide tent, whose sides
No masonry require, yet framed to exclude
The mid-day sun's hot beams, or his last rays
When sinking in the west: the lengthen'd lines
Equally distant comprehend a square
Of twice five thousand feet *(the skilful thus
Compute it)*, space to feast *(for so he will'd)*
All Delphi: from the treasures of the god
He took the sacred tapestry, and around
Hung the rich shade, on which the admiring eye
Gazes with fix'd delight: first over head,
Like a broad pennon spread the extended woof,
Which from the Amazonian spoils the son
Of Jove, Alcides, hallow'd to the god;
In its bright texture interwov'n a sky
Gathering the stars in its ethereal round,
While downwards to the western wave the sun
His steeds declines, and to his station high
Draws up the radiant flame of Hesperus.
Meanwhile the Night robed in her sable stole,
Her unreign'd car advances; on her state
The stars attend; the Pleiads mounting high,

And with his glittering sword Orion arm’d;
Above, Arcturus to the golden pole
Inclines; full-orb’d the month-dividing moon
Takes her bright station, and the Hyades
Marked by the sailor: distant in the rear,
Aurora ready to relume the day,
And put the stars to flight. The sides were graced
With various textures of the historic woof,
Barbaric arguments; in gallant trim
Against the fleet of Greece the hostile fleet
Rides proudly on. Here monstrous forms portray’d
Human and brutal mix’d: the Thracian steeds
Are seized, the hinds, and the adventurous chase
Of savage lions: figured nigh the doors,
Cecrops, attended by his daughter’s, roll’d
His serpent train: in the ample space within
He spread the festal table, richly deck’d
With golden goblets. Now the herald walk’d
His round, each native that inclined to grace
The feast inviting: to the crowded tent
They hasten, crown’d with garlands, and partake
The exquisite repast. The pleasured sense
Now satiate, in the midst an old man stood,
Officious in his ministry, which raised
Much mirth among the guests; for from the urns
He fill’d the lavers, and with fragrant myrrh
Incensed the place; the golden bowls he claim’d
His charge. When now the jocund pipes ‘gan breathe
Harmonious airs, and the fresh goblet stood
Ready to walk its round, the old man said,
“Away with these penurious cups, and bring
Capacious bowls; so shall you quickly bathe
Your spirits in delight.” With speed were brought
Goblets of gold and silver: one he took
Of choicer frame; and, seemingly intent
To do his young lord honour, the full vase
Gave to his hands, but in the wine infused

A drug of poisonous power, which, it is said,
His queen supplied, that the new son no more
Might view the light of heav'n; but unobserved
He mix'd it. As the youth among the rest
Pour'd the libation, 'mid the attendant slaves
Words of reproach one utter'd: he, as train'd
Within the temple and with expert seers,
Deem'd them of evil omen, and required
Another goblet to be filled afresh-
The former a libation to the god,
He cast upon the ground, instructing all
To pour, like him, the untasted liquor down.
Silence ensued: the sacred bowls we fill
With wines of Byblos; when a troop of doves
Came fluttering in, for undisturb'd they haunt
The dome of Phoebus: in the floating wine
They dipp'd their bills to drink, then raised their heads,
Gurgling it down their beauteous-plumed throats.
Harmless to all the spilt wine, save to her
That lighted where the youth had pour'd his bowl:
She drank, and straight convulsive shiverings seized
Her beauteous plumes; around in giddy rings
She whirl'd, and in a strange and mournful note
Seem'd to lament: amazement seized the guests,
Seeing the poor bird's pangs: her heart heaved thick,
And stretching out her scarlet legs, she died.
Rending his robes, the son of Phoebus given
Sprung from the table, and aloud exclaim'd,-
"What wretch design'd to kill me? Speak, old man:
Officious was thy ministry; the bowl
I from thy hand received." Then straight he seized
His aged arm, and to the question held him,
As in the fact discover'd: he thus caught,
Reluctant and constrain'd, own'd the bold deed,
The deadly goblet by Creusa drugg'd.
Forth from the tent, the guests attending, rush'd
The youth announced by Phoebus, and amid

The Pythian regents says,-"O hallow'd land!
This stranger dame, this daughter of Erechtheus
Attempts my life by poison." Then decreed
The Delphian lords *(nor did one voice dissent)*
That she should die, my mistress, from the rock
Cast headlong, as the deed was aim'd against
A sacred life, and impiously presumed
This hallow'd place with murder to profane.
Demanded by the state, she this way bends
Her wretched steps. Unhappy to this shrine
She came through fond desire of children; here,
Together with her hopes, her life is lost.

CHORUS *(singing)* None, there is none, from death no flight,
To me no refuge; our dark deed
Betray'd, betray'd to open light;
The festive bowl, with sprightly wine that flow'd
Mix'd with the Gorgon's viperous blood,
An offering to the dead decreed,
All is betray'd to light: and I,
Cast headlong from the rock, must die.
What flight shall save me from this death,
Borne on swift pinions through the air,
Sunk to the darksome cave beneath,
Or mounted on the rapid car?
Or shall the flying bark unfurl its sails?
Alas, my queen, no flight avails,
Save when some god's auspicious power
Shall snatch us from the dangerous hour.
Unhappy queen, what pangs shall rend thy heart!
Shall we, who plann'd the deathful deed,
Be caught within the toils we spread,
While justice claims severe her chast'ning part?
(CREUSA rushes in.)

CREUSA I am pursued, ye faithful females, doom'd
To death: the Pythian council hath decreed it:

My life is forfeited.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Unhappy lady,
We know the dreadful ills that close thee round.

CREUSA Ah, whither shall I fly? From instant death
Scarce hath my foot sped hither, from my foes
By stealth escaping.

LEADER Whither wouldst thou fly,
But to this altar?

CREUSA What will that avail me?

LEADER To kill a suppliant there the law forbids.

CREUSA But by the law I perish.

LEADER If their hands
Had seized thee.

CREUSA Dreadful contest, with drawn swords
They hastily advance.

LEADER Now take thy seat
At the altar: shouldst thou die ev'n there, thy blood
Will call the vengeance of the god on those
That spilt it: but our fortune we must bear.
(She takes refuge at the altar as ION, guards, and Delphians enter.)

ION Bull-visaged sire Cephisus, what a viper
Hast thou produced? a dragon from her eyes
Glaring pernicious flame. Each daring deed
Is hers: less venomous the Gorgon's blood,
With which she purposed to have poison'd me.
Seize her, that the Parnassian rocks may tease
Those nice-adjusted ringlets of her hair,
As down the craggy precipice she bounds.

Here my good genius saved me, e'er I came
To Athens, there beneath my stepdame's wiles
To fall; amid my friends thy fell intents
Have I unravell'd, what a pest to me,
Thy hate how deadly: had thy toils inclosed me
In thine own house, thou wouldst at once have sent me
With complete ruin to the shades below.
But nor the altar nor Apollo's shrine
Shall save thee. Pity, might her voice be heard,
Would rather plead for me and for my mother,
She absent, yet the name remains with me.
Behold that sorceress; with what art she wove
Wile after wile; the altar of the god
Impress'd her not with awe, as if secure.
No vengeance waited her unhallow'd deeds.

CREUSA I charge thee, kill me not, in my own right,
And in the god's, whose suppliant here I stand.

ION What right hast thou to plead Apollo's name?

CREUSA My person hallow'd to the god I offer.

ION Yet wouldst thou poison one that is the god's.

CREUSA Thou wast no more Apollo's, but thy father's.

ION I have been, of a father's wealth I speak.

CREUSA And now I am: thou hast that claim no more.

ION But thou art impious: pious were my deeds.

CREUSA As hostile to my house, I would have kill'd thee.

ION Did I against thy country march in arms?

CREUSA And more; thou wouldst have fired Erechtheus' house.

ION What torch, what brands, what flames had I prepared?

CREUSA There wouldst thou fix, seizing my right by force.

ION The land which he possess’d, my father gave me.

CREUSA What claim hath there the race of Aeolus?

ION He was its guardian, not with words but arms.

CREUSA Its soldier then; an inmate, not its lord.

ION Wouldst thou, through fear of what might happen, kill me?

CREUSA Lest death should be my portion, if not thine.

ION Childless thou enviest that my father found me.

CREUSA And wilt thou make a childless house thy spoil?

ION Devolves my father then no share to me?

CREUSA His shield, his spear; be those thine heritage.

ION Come from the altar, quit that hallow’d seat.

CREUSA Instruct thy mother, whosoe’er she be.

ION Shalt thou unpunish’d meditate my death?

CREUSA Within this shrine if thou wilt murder me.

ION What pleasure mid these sacred wreaths to die?

CREUSA We shall grieve one, by whom we have been grieved.

ION Strange, that the god should give these laws to men,
Bearing no stamp of honour, nor design’d
With provident thought: it is not meet to place

The unrighteous at his altars; worthier far
To be chased thence; nor decent that the vile
Should with their touch pollute the gods: the good,
Oppress'd with wrongs, should at those hallow'd seats
Seek refuge: ill beseems it that the unjust
And just alike should seek protection there.
(As ION and his followers are about to tear CREUSA from the altar, the PRIESTESS of Apollo enters from the temple.)

PRIESTESS Forbear, my son, leaving the oracular seat,
I pass this pale, the priestess of the god,
The guardian of the tripod's ancient law,
Call'd to this charge from all the Delphian dames.

ION Hail, my loved mother, dear, though not my parent.

PRIESTESS Yet let me have the name, 'tis grateful to me.

ION Hast thou yet heard their wily trains to kill me?

PRIESTESS I have; but void of mercy thou dost wrong.

ION Should I not ruin those that sought my life?

PRIESTESS Stepdames to former sons are always hostile.

ION And I to stepdames ill intreated thus.

PRIESTESS Be not, this shrine now leaving for thy country.

ION How, then, by thy monition should I act?

PRIESTESS Go with good omens, pure to Athens go.

ION All must be pure that kill their enemies.

PRIESTESS So do not thou: attentive mark my words.

ION Speak: from good will whate'er thou say'st must flow.

PRIESTESS Seest thou the vase I hold beneath mine arm?

ION I see an ancient ark entwined with wreaths.

PRIESTESS In this long since an infant I received thee.

ION What say'st thou? New is thy discourse and strange.

PRIESTESS In silence have I kept them: now I show them.

ION And why conceal'd, as long since thou received'st me?

PRIESTESS The god would have thee in his shrine a servant.

ION Is that no more his will? How shall I know it?

PRIESTESS Thy father shown, he sends thee from this land.

ION Hast thou preserved these things by charge, or how?

PRIESTESS It was the god that so disposed my thought.

ION With what design? Speak, finish thy discourse.

PRIESTESS Ev'n to this hour to keep what then I found.

ION What gain imports this to me, or what loss?

PRIESTESS There didst thou lie wrapp'd in thy infant vests.

ION Thou hast produced whence I may find my mother.

PRIESTESS Since now the god so wills, but not before.

ION This is a day of bless'd discoveries.

PRIESTESS Now take them: o'er all Asia, and the bounds
Of Europe hold thy progress: thou shalt know
These tokens. To do pleasure to the god,

I nurtured thee, my son; now to thy hand
Restore what was his will I should receive
Unbidden, and preserve: for what intent
It was his will, I have not power to say.
That I had these, or where they were conceal'd,
No mortal knew. And now farewell: the love
I bear thee equals what a parent feels.
Let thy inquiries where they ought begin;
First, if some Delphian virgin gave thee birth,
And in this shrine exposed thee; next, if one
Of Greece. From me, and from the god, who feels
An interest in thy fortune, thou hast all.
(She goes into the temple after giving ION the ark.)

ION Ah me! the moist tear trickles from mine eye,
When I reflect that she who gave me birth,
By stealth espoused, may with like secrecy
Have sold me, to my infant lips her breast
Denied: but in the temple of the god
Without a name, a servile life I led.
All from the god was gracious, but from fortune
Harsh; for the time when in a mother's arms
I in her fondness should have known some joy
Of life, from that sweet care was I estranged,
A mother's nurture: nor less wretched she,
Thus forced to lose the pleasure in her son.
But I will take this vase, and to the god
Bear it, a hallow'd offering; that from thence
I may find nothing which I would not find.
Should she, that gave me being, chance to be
A slave, to find her were a greater ill,
Than to rest silent in this ignorance.
O Phoebus, in thy temple hang I this.
What am I doing? War I not against
The pleasure of the god, who saved for me
These pledges of my mother? I must dare,
And open these: my fate cannot be shunn'd.

(He opens the ark.)
Ye sacred garlands, what have you so long
Conceal'd: ye bands, that keep these precious relics?
Behold the cover of this circular vase;
Its freshness knows no change, as if a god
So will'd; this osier-woven ark yet keeps
Its soundness undecay'd; yet many a year,
Since it contain'd this treasured charge, has pass'd.

CREUSA What an unhoped-for sight do I behold!

ION I thought thou long hadst known to keep thee silent.

CREUSA Silence is mine no more; instruct not me;
For I behold the ark, wherein of old
I laid thee, O my son, an infant babe;
And in the caves of Cecrops, with the rocks
Of Macrai roof'd, exposed thee: I will quit
This altar, though I run on certain death.

ION Seize her; for by the impulse of the god
She leaves the sculptured altar: bind her bands.

CREUSA Instantly kill me, so that I embrace
This vase, and thee, and these thy conceal'd pledges.

ION Is not this strange? I take thee at thy word.

CREUSA Not strange: a friend thou by thy friends art found.

ION Thy friend! Yet wouldst thou kill me secretly.

CREUSA My son: if that to parents is most dear.

ION Forbear thy wiles; I shall refute them well.

CREUSA Might I but to come to what I wish, my son!

ION Is this vase empty, or contains it aught?

CREUSA Thy infant vests, in which I once exposed thee.

ION And wilt thou name them to me, ere thou see them?

CREUSA If I recount them not, be death my meed.

ION Speak then: thy confidence hath something strange.

CREUSA A tissue, look, which when a child I wrought.

ION What is it? Various are the works of virgins.

CREUSA A slight, unfinish'd essay of the loom.

ION What figure wrought? Thou shalt not take me thus.

CREUSA A Gorgon central in the warp enwoven-

ION What fortune haunts me, O supreme of gods!

CREUSA And like an aegis edged with serpents round.

ION Such is the woof, and such the vest I find.

CREUSA Thou old embroidery of my virgin bands!

ION Is there aught else besides this happy proof?

CREUSA Two dragons, an old work, their jaws of gold.

ION The gift of Pallas, who thus nurtures children?

CREUSA Emblems of Erichthonius of old times.

ION Why? for what use? Explain these works of gold.

CREUSA For ornaments to grace the infant's neck.

ION See, here they are; the third I wish to know.

CREUSA A branch of olive then I wreathed around thee,
Pluck'd from that tree which from Minerva's rock
First sprung; if it be there, it still retains
Its verdure: for the foliage of that olive,
Fresh in immortal beauty, never fades.

ION O my dear mother! I with joy behold thee.
With transport 'gainst thy cheek my cheek recline.
(They embrace.)

CREUSA My son, my son, far dearer to thy mother
Than yon bright orb *(the god will pardon me)*,
Do I then hold thee in my arms, thus found
Beyond my hopes, when in the realms below,
I thought thy habitation 'mong the dead?

ION O my dear mother, in thy arms I seem
As one that had been dead to life return'd.

CREUSA Ye wide-expanded rays of heavenly light,
What notes, what high-raised strains shall tell my joy?
This pleasure whence, this unexpected transport?

ION There was no blessing farther from my thoughts
Than this, my mother, to be found thy son.

CREUSA I tremble yet.

ION And hast thou yet a fear,
Holding me, not to hold me?

CREUSA Such fond hopes
Long time have I renounced. Thou hallow'd matron,
From whom didst thou receive my infant child?
What bless'd hand brought him to Apollo's shrine?

ION It was the god's appointment: may our life
To come be happy, as the past was wretched.

CREUSA Not without tears, my son, wast thou brought forth;
Nor without anguish did my hands resign thee.
Now breathing on thy cheek I feel a joy
Transporting me with heartfelt ecstasies.

ION The words expressive of thy joys speak mine.

CREUSA Childless no more, no more alone, my house
Now shines with festive joy; my realms now own
A lord; Erechtheus blooms again; no more
His high-traced lineage sees night darkening round,
But glories in the sun's refulgent beams.

ION Now let my father, since he's present here,
Be partner of the joy which I have given you.

CREUSA What says my son?

ION Such, such as I am proved.

CREUSA What mean thy words? Far other is thy birth.

ION Ah me! thy virgin bed produced me base.

CREUSA Nor bridal torch, my son, nor bridal dance
Had graced my nuptial rites, when thou wast born.

ION Then I'm a wretch, a base-born wretch: say whence.

CREUSA Be witness, thou by whom the Gorgon died,-

ION What means this adjuration?

CREUSA Who hast fix'd
High o'er my cave thy seat amid the rocks
With olive clothed.

ION Abstruse thy words, and dark.

CREUSA Where on the cliffs the nightingale attunes
Her songs, Apollo-

ION Why Apollo named?

CREUSA Led me in secret to his bed.

ION Speak on;
Thy words import some glorious fortune to me.

CREUSA Thee in the tenth revolving month, my son,
A secret pang to Phoebus did I bear.

ION Thy words, if true, are grateful to my soul.

CREUSA These swathing bands, thy mother's virgin work,
Wove by my flying shuttle, round thy body
I roll'd; but from thy lips my breast withheld,
A mother's nouriture, nor bathed thy bands
In cleansing lavers; but to death exposed thee,
Laid in the dreary cave, to birds of prey
A feast, rent piecemeal by their ravenous beaks.

ION Cruel, my mother, was thy deed.

CREUSA By fear
Constrain'd, my son, I cast thy life away;
Unwillingly I left thee there to die.

ION And from my hands unholy were thy death.

CREUSA Dreadful was then my fortune, dreadful here,
Whirl'd by the eddying blast from misery there
To misery here, and back again to joy:
Her boisterous winds are changed; may she remain
In this repose: enough of ills are past:
After the storm soft breathes a favouring gale.

LEADER From this example, mid the greatest ills
Never let mortal man abandon hope.

ION O thou, that hast to thousands wrought a change
Of state ere this, involving them in ills,
And raising them to happiness again;
Fortune, to what a point have I been carried,
Ready to kill my mother, horrid thought!
But in the sun's bright course each day affords
Instruction. Thee, my mother, have I found,
In that discovery bless'd; nor hath my birth
Aught I can blame: yet one thing would I say
To thee alone:-walk this way: to thine ear
In secret would I whisper this, and throw
The veil of darkness o'er each circumstance.
Take heed, my mother, lest thy maiden fault
Seeks in these secret nuptials to conceal
Its fault, then charges on the god the deed;
And, fearing my reproach, to Phoebus gives
A son, to Phoebus whom thou didst not bear.

CREUSA By her, who 'gainst the giants in her car
Fought by the side of Jove, victorious Pallas,
No one of mortal race is father to thee,
But he who brought thee up, the royal Phoebus.

ION Why give his son then to another father?
Why say that I was born the son of Xuthus?

CREUSA Not born the son of Xuthus; but he gives thee,
Born from himself *(as friend to friend may give)*
His son, and heir adopted to his house.

ION True is the god, his tripod else were vain.
Not without cause then is my mind perplex'd.

CREUSA Hear what my thoughts suggest: to work thee good
Apollo placed thee in a noble house.

Acknowledged his, the rich inheritance
Could not be thine, nor could a father's name;
For I conceal'd my nuptials, and had plann'd
To kill thee secretly: for this the god
In kindness gives thee to another father.

ION My mind is prompt to entertain such thoughts;
But, entering at his shrine will I inquire
If from a mortal father I am sprung,
Or from Apollo.-Ha! what may this be?
What god above the hallow'd dome unveils
His radiant face that shines another sun?
Haste, let us fly: the presence of the gods
'Tis not for mortals to behold, and live.
(MINERVA appears from above.)

MINERVA Fly not; in me no enemy you fly;
At Athens friendly to you, and no less
Here. From that land I come, so named from me,
By Phoebus sent with speed: unmeet he deems it
To show himself before you, lest with blame
The past be mention'd; this he gave in charge,
To tell thee that she bore thee, and to him,
Phoebus thy father; he to whom he gave thee,
Not as to the author of thy being gives thee,
But to the inheritance of a noble house.
This declaration made, lest thou shouldst die,
Kill'd by thy mother's wily trains, or she
By thee, these means to save you he devised.
These things in silence long conceal'd, at Athens
The royal Phoebus would have made it known
That thou art sprung from her, thy father he:
But to discharge my office, and unfold
The oracle of the god, for which you yoked
Your chariots, hear: Creusa, take thy son,
Go to the land of Cecrops: let him mount
The royal throne; for, from Erechtheus sprung,

That honour is his due, the sovereignty
Over my country: through the states of Greece
Wide his renown shall spread; for from his root
Four sons shall spring, that to the land, the tribes,
The dwellers on my rock, shall give their names.
Geleon the first, Hopletes, Argades,
And from my aegis named Aegicores:
Their sons in fate's appointed time shall fix
Their seats along the coast, or in the isles
Girt by the Aegean sea, and to my land
Give strength; extending thence the opposite plains
Of either continent shall make their own,
Europe and Asia, and shall boast their name
Ionians, from the honour'd Ion call'd.
To thee by Xuthus shall a son be born,
Dorus, from whom the Dorian state shall rise
To high renown; in the Pelopian land,
Another near the Rhian cliffs, along
The sea-wash'd coast, his potent monarchy
Shall stretch, Achaeus; and his subject realms
Shall glory in their chief's illustrious name.
Well hath Apollo quitted him in all:
First, without pain he caused thee bear a son.
That from thy friends thou mightst conceal his birth;
After the birth, soon as his infant limbs
Thy hands had clothed, to Mercury he gave
The charge to take the babe, and in his arms
Convey him hither; here with tenderness
He nurtured him, nor suffer'd him to perish.
Guard now the secret that he is thy son,
That his opinion Xuthus may enjoy
Delighted: thou too hast thy blessings, lady.
And now, farewell: from this relief from ills
A prosperous fortune I to both announce.

ION O Pallas, daughter of all-powerful Jove!
Not with distrust shall we receive thy words:

I am convinced that Phoebus is my father,
My mother she, not unassured before.

CREUSA Hear me too, now: Phoebus I praise, before
Unpraised; my son he now restores, of whom
Till now I deem'd him heedless. Now these gates
Are beauteous to mine eyes; his oracles
Now grateful to my soul, unpleasant late.
With rapture on these sounding rings my hands
Now hang; with rapture I address the gates.

MINERVA This I approve, thy former wayward thoughts
Resign'd, with honour that thou name the god.
Slow are the gifts of Heaven, but found at length
Not void of power.

CREUSA My son, let us now go
To Athens.

MINERVA Go; myself will follow you.

CREUSA A noble guard, and friendly to the state.

MINERVA But seat him high on thy paternal throne.

CREUSA A rich possession, and I glory in him.
(MINERVA disappears.)

CHORUS *(singing)* Son of Latona and all-powerful Jove,
Apollo, hail! Though fortune's blackest storms
Rage on his house, the man whose pious soul
Reveres the gods, assumes a confidence,
And justly: for the good at length obtain
The meed of virtue; but the unholy wretch
(Such is his nature) never can be happy.

HELEN

Translated by E. P. Coleridge

First produced in 412 BC for the Dionysia in a trilogy that also contained Euripides' lost *Andromeda*, this drama was written immediately following the Sicilian Expedition in which Athens had suffered a huge defeat. At the same time sophism was beginning to question traditional values and religious beliefs, causing much unrest in Athens.

About thirty years before this play, Herodotus argued in his *Histories* that the fabled Helen had never in fact arrived at Troy, but was in Egypt during the entire Trojan War. Euripides' drama *Helen* tells a variation of this story, beginning under the premise that rather than running off to Troy with Paris, Helen was actually taken away to Egypt by the gods. The Helen who escaped with Paris, betraying her husband and her country and initiating the ten-year conflict, was actually a phantom double of Helen. After Paris was promised the most beautiful woman in the world by Aphrodite and he judged her fairer than her fellow goddesses Athena and Hera, Hera ordered Hermes to replace Helen, Paris' assumed prize, with a counterfeit. Therefore, the real Helen has been languishing in Egypt for years, while the Greeks and Trojans alike curse her for her supposed infidelity.

‘Helen of Troy’ by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

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HELEN

(SCENE:-Before the palace of THEOCLYMENUS in Egypt. It is near the mouth of the Nile. The tomb of Proteus, the father of THEOCLYMENUS is visible. HELEN is discovered alone before the tomb.)

HELEN
Lo! These are the fair virgin streams of Nile, the river that waters Egypt's tilth, fed by pure melting snow instead of rain from heaven. Proteus during his life-time was king of this land, dwelling in the isle of Pharos, and ruling o'er Egypt; and he took to wife one of the daughters of the sea, Psamathe, after she left the embraces of Aeacus. Two children she bare in this his palace, a son Theoclymenus, who hath passed his life in duteous service to the gods, and likewise a noble daughter, her mother's pride, called Eido in her infancy, but when she reached her youthful prime, the age for wedded joys, renamed Theonoe; for well she knew whate'er the gods design, both present and to come, for she had won this guerdon from her grandsire Nereus. Nor is my fatherland unknown to fame, e'en Sparta, or my sire Tyndareus; for a legend tells how Zeus winged his way to my mother Leda's breast, in the semblance of a bird, even a swan, and thus as he fled from an eagle's pursuit, achieved by guile his amorous purpose, if this tale be true. My name is Helen, and I will now recount the sorrows I have suffered. To a hollow vale on Ida came three goddesses to Paris, for beauty's prize contending, Hera and Cypris, and the virgin child of Zeus, eager to secure his verdict on their loveliness. Now Cypris held out my beauty,-if aught so wretched deserves that name,-as a bride before the eyes of Paris, saying he should marry me; and so she won the day; wherefore the shepherd of Ida left his steading, and came to Sparta, thinking to win me for his bride. But Hera, indignant at not defeating the goddesses, brought to naught my marriage with Paris, and gave to Priam's princely son not Helen, but a phantom endowed with life, that she made in my image out of the breath of heaven; and Paris thought that I was his, although I never was,-an idle fancy! Moreover, the counsels of Zeus added further troubles unto these; for upon the land of Hellas and the hapless Phrygians he brought a war, that he might lighten mother-earth of her myriad hosts of men, and to the bravest of the sons of Hellas bring renown. So I was set up as a prize for

all the chivalry of Hellas, to test the might of Phrygia, yet not I, but my name alone; for Hermes caught me up in the embracing air, and veiled me in a cloud; for Zeus was not unmindful of me; and he set me down here in the house of Proteus, judging him to be the most virtuous of all mankind; that so I might preserve my marriage with Menelaus free from taint. Here then I abide, while my hapless lord has gathered an army, and is setting out for the towers of Ilium to track and recover me. And there by Scamander's streams hath many a life breathed out its last, and all for me; and I, that have endured all this, am accursed, and seem to have embroiled all Hellas in a mighty war by proving a traitress to my husband. Why, then, do I prolong my life? Because I heard Hermes declare, that I should yet again make my home on Sparta's glorious soil, with my lord,-for Hermes knew I never went to Ilium,-that so I might never submit to any other's wooing. Now as long as Proteus gazed upon yon glorious sun, I was safe from marriage; but when o'er him the dark grave closed, the dead man's son was eager for my hand. But I, from regard to my former husband, am throwing myself down in suppliant wise before this tomb of Proteus, praying him to guard my husband's honour, that, though through Hellas I bear a name dishonoured, at least my body here may not incur disgrace.

(TEUCER enters.)

TEUCER
Who is lord and master of this fenced palace? The house is one I may compare to the halls of Plutus, with its royal bulwarks and towering buildings. Ha! great gods! what sight is here? I see the counterfeit of that fell murderous dame, who ruined me and all the Achaeans. May Heaven show its loathing for thee, so much dost thou resemble Helen! Were I not standing on a foreign soil, with this well-aimed shaft had worked thy death, thy reward for resembling the daughter of Zeus.

HELEN
Oh! why, poor man, whoe'er thou art, dost thou turn from me, loathing me for those troubles Helen caused?

TEUCER I was wrong; I yielded to my anger more than I ought; my reason was, the hate all Hellas bears to that daughter of Zeus. Pardon me, lady, for the words I uttered.

HELEN
Who art thou? whence comest thou to visit this land?

TEUCER
One of those hapless Achaeans am I, lady.

HELEN
No wonder then that thou dost bate Helen. But say, who art thou? Whence comest? By what name am I to call thee?

TEUCER
My name is Teucer; my sire was Telamon, and Salamis is the land that

nurtured me.

HELEN
Then why art thou visiting these meadows by the Nile?

TEUCER A wanderer I, an exile from my native land.

HELEN
Thine must be a piteous lot; who from thy country drives thee out?

TEUCER
My father Telamon. Couldst find a nearer and a dearer?

HELEN
But why? This case is surely fraught with woe.

TEUCER
The death of Ajax my brother at Troy was my ruin.

HELEN
How so? surely ’twas not thy sword that stole his life away?

TEUCER
He threw himself on his own blade and died.

HELEN
Was he mad? for who with sense endowed would bring himself to this?

TEUCER
Dost thou know aught of Achilles. son of Peleus?

HELEN
He came, so I have heard, to woo Helen once.

TEUCER
When he died, he left his arms for his comrades to contest.

HELEN
Well, if he did, what harm herein to Ajax?

TEUCER
When another won these arms, to himself he put an end.

HELEN
Art thou then a sufferer by woes that he inflicted?

TEUCER
Yes, because I did not join him in his death.

HELEN
So thou camest, sir stranger, to Ilium’s famous town?

TEUCER
Aye, and, after helping to sack it, myself did learn what ruin meant.

HELEN
Is Troy already fired and utterly by flames consumed?

TEUCER
Yea, so that not so much as one vestige of her walls is now to be seen.

HELEN
Woe is thee, poor Helen! thou art the cause of Phrygia’s ruin.

TEUCER
And of Achaea's too. Ah! 'tis a tale of grievous misery!

HELEN
How long is it since the city was sacked?

TEUCER
Nigh seven fruitful seasons have come and gone.

HELEN
And how much longer did ye abide in Troy?

TEUCER
Many a weary month, till through ten full years the moon had held her course.

HELEN
And did ye capture that Spartan dame?

TEUCER
Menelaus caught her by the hair, and was for dragging her away.

HELEN
Didst thou thyself behold that unhappy one? or art thou speaking from hearsay?

TEUCER
As plain as I now see thee, I then saw her.

HELEN
Consider whether ye were but indulging an idle fancy sent by heaven.

TEUCER
Bethink thee of some other topic; no more of her!

HELEN
Are you so sure this fancy was reliable?

TEUCER
With these eyes I saw her face to face, if so be I see thee now.

HELEN
Hath Menelaus reached his home by this time with his wife?

TEUCER
No; he is neither in Argos, nor yet by the streams of Eurotas.

HELEN
Ah me! here is evil news for those to whom thou art telling it.

TEUCER ’Tis said he disappeared with his wife.

HELEN
Did not all the Argives make the passage together?

TEUCER
Yes: but a tempest scattered them in every direction.

HELEN
In what quarter of the broad ocean?

TEUCER
They were crossing the Aegean in mid channel.

HELEN
And after that, doth no man know of Menelaus’ arrival?

TEUCER
No; none; but through Hellas is he reported to be dead.

HELEN
Then am I lost. Is the daughter of Thestius alive?

TEUCER
Dost speak of Leda? She is dead; aye, dead and gone.

HELEN
Was it Helen's shame that caused her death?

TEUCER
Aye, 'tis said she tied the noose about her noble neck.

HELEN
Are the sons of Tyndareus still alive or not?

TEUCER
Dead, and yet alive: 'tis a double story.

HELEN
Which is the more credible report? Woe is me for my sorrows!

TEUCER
Men say that they are gods in the likeness of stars.

HELEN
That is happy news; but what is the other rumour?

TEUCER
That they by self-inflicted wounds gave up the ghost because of their sister's shame. But enough of such talk! I have no wish to multiply my griefs. The reason of my coming to this royal palace was a wish to see that famous prophetess Theonoe. Do thou the means afford, that I from her may obtain an oracle how I shall steer a favourable course to the sea-girt shores of Cyprus; for there Apollo hath declared my home shall be, giving to it the name of Salamis, my island home, in honour of that fatherland across the main.

HELEN
That shall the voyage itself explain, sir stranger; but do thou leave these shores and fly, ere the son of Proteus, the ruler of this land, catch sight of thee. Now is he away with his trusty hounds tracking his savage quarry to the death; for every stranger that he catcheth from the land of Hellas doth he slay. His reason never ask to know; my lips are sealed; for what could word of mine avail thee?

TEUCER
Lady, thy words are fair. Heaven grant thee a fair requital for this kindness! For though in form thou dost resemble Helen, thy soul is not like hers, nay, very different. Perdition seize her! May she never reach the streams of Eurotas! But thine be joy for evermore, lady!

(TEUCER departs. The CHORUS OF CAPTIVE GREEK WOMEN enter. They sing responsively with HELEN.)

HELEN
Ah me! what piteous dirge shall I strive to utter, now that I am beginning my strain of bitter lamentation? What Muse shall I approach with tears or songs of death or woe? Ah me! ye Sirens, Earth's virgin daughters, winged maids, come, oh! come to aid my mourning, bringing with you the Libyan flute or pipe, to waft to Persephone's ear a tearful plaint, the echo of my sorrow, with grief for grief, and mournful chant for chant, with songs of death and doom to match my lamentation, that in return she may receive from me, besides my tears, dirges for the departed dead beneath her gloomy roof!

CHORUS
Beside the deep-blue water I chanced to be hanging purple robes along the tendrils green and on the sprouting reeds, to dry them in the sun-god's golden blaze, when lo! I heard a sound of woe, a mournful wail, the voice of one crying aloud in her anguish; yea, such a cry of woe as Naiad nymph might send ringing o'er the hills, while to her cry the depths of rocky grots re-echo her screams at the violence of Pan.

HELEN
Woe! woe! ye maids of Hellas, booty of barbarian sailors! one hath come, an Achaean mariner, bringing fresh tears to me, the news of Ilium's overthrow, how that it is left to the mercy of the foeman's flame, and all for me the murderess, or for my name with sorrow fraught. While for anguish at my deed of shame, hath Leda sought her death by hanging; and on the deep, to weary wandering doomed my lord hath met his end; and Castor and his brother, twin glory of their native land, are vanished from men's sight, leaving the plains that shook to their galloping steeds, and the course beside reed-fringed Eurotas, where those youthful athletes strove.

CHORUS
Ah, misery! Alas! for thy grievous destiny! Woe for thy sad lot, lady! Ah! ’twas a day of sorrow meted out for thee when Zeus came glancing through the sky on snowy pinions like a swan and won thy mother’s heart. What evil is not thine? Is there a grief in life that thou hast not endured? Thy mother is dead; the two dear sons of Zeus have perished miserably, and thou art severed from thy country’s sight, while through the towns of men a rumour runs, consigning thee, my honoured mistress, to a barbarian’s bed; and ‘mid the ocean waves thy lord hath lost his life, and never, never more shalt thou fill with joy thy father’s halls or Athena’s temple of the “Brazen House.”

HELEN
Ah! who was that Phrygian, who was he, that felled that pine with sorrow fraught for Ilium, and for those that came from Hellas? Hence it was that Priam’s son his cursed barque did build, and sped by barbarian oars sailed unto my home, in quest of beauty, woman’s curse, to win me for his bride; and with him sailed the treacherous queen of Love, on slaughter bent, with death alike for Priam’s sons, and Danai too. Ah me! for my hard lot! Next, Hera, stately bride of Zeus, seated on her golden throne, sent the son of Maia, swift of foot, who caught me up as I was gathering fresh rose-buds in the folds of my robe, that I might go to the “Brazen House,” and bore me through the air to this loveless land, making me an object of unhappy strife ‘twixt Hellas and the race of Priam. And my name is but a sound without reality beside the streams of Simois.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS
Well I know thou hast a bitter lot to bear; still ’tis best to bear as lightly as we may the ills that life is heir to.

HELEN
Good friends, to what a fate am I united? Did not my mother bear me to be a monster to the world? For no woman, Hellene or barbarian, gives birth to babes in eggs inclosed, as they say Leda bare me to Zeus. My life and all I do is one miracle, partly owing to Hera, and partly is my beauty to blame. Would God I could rub my beauty out like a picture, and assume hereafter in its stead a form less comely, and oh! that Hellas had forgotten the evil

fate that now I bear, and were now remembering my career of honour as surely as they do my deeds of shame. Now, if a man doth turn his eyes to a single phase of fortune, and meets ill-usage at heaven's hands, 'tis hard no doubt; but still it can be borne; but I in countless troubles am involved. First, although I never sinned, my good name is gone. And this is a grief beyond the reality, if a man incurs blame for sins that are not his. Next, have the gods removed me from my native land, to dwell with men of barbarous ways, and reft of every friend, I arn become a slave though free by birth; for amongst barbarians all are slaves but one. And the last anchor that held my fortunes, the hope that my husband would return one day, and rid me of my woes, is now no more, lost since the day he died. My mother too is dead, and I am called her murderess, unjustly it is true, but still that injustice is mine to bear; and she that was the glory of my house, my darling child, is growing old and grey, unwedded still; and those twin brethren, called the sons of Zeus, are now no more. But 'tis fortune, not my own doing, that hath crushed me with sorrow and slain me. And this is the last evil of all; if ever I come to my native land. they will shut me up in prison, thinking me that Helen of Ilium, in quest of whom Menelaus came thither. Were my husband still alive, we might have recognized each other, by having recourse to tokens which ourselves alone would know. But now this may not be, nor is there any chance of his escape. Why then do I prolong my life? What fortune have I still in store? Shall I choose marriage as an alternative of evils, and dwell with a barbarian lord, seated at his sumptuous board? No! when a husband she loathes is mated with a woman, even life is loathly to her. Best for her to die; but how shall I die a noble death? The dangling noose is an uncomely end; even slaves consider it disgrace; to stab oneself hath something fair and. noble in it; 'tis a small thing that moment of ridding the flesh of life. Yes, it must be; I am plunged so deep in misery; for that beauty, which to other women is a boon, to me hath been a very bane.

LEADER
Helen, never believe that the stranger, whoe'er he was that came, has spoken naught but truth.

HELEN
Yet he said so clearly that my lord was dead.

LEADER
There is much that falsehood seems to make quite clear.

HELEN
The word of truth hath a very different sound to falsehood.

LEADER
Thou art inclined to misfortune, rather than to luck.

HELEN
Fear girds me with terrors as with a garment, and takes me in her train.

LEADER
What friends hast thou within the palace?

HELEN
All are my friends here save him who seeks to wed-me.

LEADER
Thy action then is clear; leave thy seat at the tomb.

HELEN
To what words or advice art thou leading up?

LEADER
Go in and question the daughter of the ocean Nereid, who knoweth all things, even Theonoe, whether thy husband is still alive, or whether he hath left the light of day; and when thou knowest for certain, be glad or sorrowful, as fits thy fortune. But before thou hast right knowledge, what shall sorrow avail thee? Nay, hearken to me; leave this tomb and seek the maiden's company, that she may tell thee the truth, for from her shalt thou learn all. If thou abide here in this seat, what prospect hast thou? And I will myself go in with thee, and with thee inquire of the maiden's oracles; for 'tis a woman's bounden duty to share a sister's trouble.

(The following lines are chanted responsively by HELEN and the CHORUS.)

HELEN
Kind friends, I welcome your advice. Come in, come in, that ye may learn the result of my struggle within the palace.

CHORUS
Thy invitation comes to very willing ears.

HELEN
Woe for this heavy day! Ah me! what mournful tidings shall hear?

CHORUS
Dear mistress mine, be not a prophetess of sorrow, forestalling lamentation.

HELEN
What is the fate of my poor husband? Doth he still behold the light turning towards the sun-god's chariot and the stars in their courses? Or among the dead, beneath the earth, is he to death consigned?

CHORUS
Of the future take a brighter view, whatever shall betide.

HELEN
On thee I call, and thee adjure, Eurotas green with river-reeds, to tell me if this rumour of my husband's death be true.

CHORUS
What boots this meaningless appeal?

HELEN
About my neck will I fasten the deadly noose from above, or drive the murderous knife with self-aimed thrust deep into my throat to sever it, striving to cut my flesh, a sacrifice to those goddesses three and to that son of Priam, who in days gone by would wake the music of his pipe around his steading.

CHORUS
Oh may sorrow be averted otherwhither, and thou be blest!

HELEN
Woe is thee, unhappy Troy! Thou through deeds not done by the art ruined, and hast suffered direst woe; for the gift that Cypris gave to me, hath caused a sea of blood to flow, and many an eye to weep, with grief on grief and tear on tear. All this hath Ilium suffered and mothers have lost their children; and virgin sisters of the slain have cut off their tresses by the swollen tide of Phrygian Scamander. And the land of Hellas hath lifted her voice of woe and broken forth in wailing, smiting on her head, and making tender cheeks to stream with gore beneath the rending nail. Ah blest maid Callisto, who long ago in Arcady didst find favour with Zeus, in the semblance of beast four-footed, how much happier was thy lot than my mother's, for thou hast changed the burden of thy grief and now with savage eye art weeping o'er thy shaggy monster-shape; aye, and hers was a happier lot, whom on a day Artemis drove from her choir, changed to a hind with horns of gold, the fair Titanian maid, daughter of Merops, because of her beauty; but my fair form hath proved the curse of Dardan Troy and doomed Achaea's sons.

(HELEN and the CHORUS go into the palace. After the doors have closed upon them, MENELAUS enters. He is alone and clad in rags.)

MENELAUS
Ah! Pelops, easy victor long ago o'er thy rival Oenomaus in the chariot-race on Pisa's plain, would thou hadst ended thy career amongst the gods that day thou wert beguiled into making a banquet for them, or ever thou hadst begotten my father Atreus, to whom were born by Aerope his wife, Agamemnon and myself Menelaus, an illustrious pair; and herein I make no idle boast, for 'twas a mighty host, I trow, that I their leader carried o'er the sea to Troy, using no violence to make them follow me, but leading all the chivalry of Hellas by voluntary consent. And some of these must we number 'mid the slain, and some to their joy have 'scaped the sea, bearing to their homes again names long reckoned dead. But I, poor wretch, go wandering o'er grey Ocean's swell a weary space, long as that which saw me sick the towers of Ilium; and for all my longing to reach my country I am not counted worthy of this boon by heaven, but to Libya's desert cheerless roadsteads have I sailed, to each and all of them; and whensoe'er I draw me near my native land, the storm-wind drives me back again, and never yet have favouring breezes filled my sails, to let me reach my

fatherland. And now a wretched, shipwrecked mariner, my friends all lost, am I cast up upon this shore; and my ship is shattered in a thousand pieces against the rocks; and its keel was wrested from its cunning fastenings; thereon did I with difficulty escape, most unexpectedly, and Helen also, for her had I rescued from Troy and had with me. But the name of this country and its people I know not; for I blushed to mingle with the crowd to question them, anxious for very shame to hide my misfortunes which reduce me to these sorry rags. For when a man of high degree meets with adversity, he feels the strangeness of his fallen state more keenly than a sufferer of long standing. Dire want is wasting me; for I have neither food, nor raiment to gird myself withal; behold the facts before you to judge from-I am clad in tatters cast up from the ship; while all the robes I once did wear, glorious attire and ornaments, bath the sea swallowed; and in a cavern's deep recesses have I hidden my wife, the cause of all my trouble, and have come hither, after straitly charging the survivors of my friends to watch her. Alone am I come, seeking for those there left some help, if haply I may find it after careful search. So when I saw this palace girt with towering walls and stately gates of some prosperous lord, I drew nigh; for I have hope to obtain somewhat for my sailors from this wealthy house, whereas from houses which have no store, the inmates for all their goodwill could furnish naught. Ho! there, who keeps the gate and will come forth to bear my tale of woe into the house?

(A PORTRESS comes out of the palace in answer to his call.)

PORTRESS
Who stands before the door? Begone from the housel stand not at the court-yard gate, annoying my masters! otherwise shalt thou die, for thou art a Hellene born. and with them have we no dealings.

MENELAUS
Mother, herein sayest thou rightly on all points. 'Tis well; I will obey; but moderate thy words.

PORTRESS
Away! stranger, my orders are to admit no Hellene to this palace.

MENELAUS
Ha! do not seek to push me hence, or thrust me away by violence.

PORTRESS
Thou dost not heed my words, and therefore hast thyself to blame.

MENELAUS
Carry my message to thy master in the palace.

PORTRESS
Some one would rue it, methinks, were I to take thy message.

MENELAUS I come as a shipwrecked man and a stranger, whom heaven protects.

PORTRESS
Well, get thee to some other house than this.

MENELAUS
Nay, but I will pass into the house; so listen to me.

PORTRESS
Let me tell thee thou art unwelcome, and soon wilt be forcibly ejected.

MENELAUS
Ah me! where are now those famous troops of mine?

PORTRESS
Elsewhere maybe thou wert a mighty man; thou art not here.

MENELAUS O fortune! I have not deserved such insult.

PORTRESS
Why are thy eyes with tear-drops wet? Why so sad?

MENELAUS ’Tis the contrast with my fortunes erst so blest.

PORTRESS
Hence! then, and give thy friends those tears.

MENELAUS
What land is this? whose is the palace?

PORTRESS
Proteus lives here. It is the land of Egypt.

MENELAUS
Egypt? Woe is me! to think that hither I have sailed!

PORTRESS
Pray, what fault hast thou to find with the race of Nile?

MENELAUS ’Twas no fault I found; my own disasters I lament.

PORTRESS
There be plenty in evil case; thou art not the only one.

MENELAUS
Is the king, of whom thou speakest, here within?

PORTRESS
There is his tomb; his son rules in his stead.

MENELAUS
And where may he be? abroad, or in the house?

PORTRESS
He is not within. To Hellas is he a bitter foe.

MENELAUS
His reason, pray, for this enmity? the results whereof I have experienced.

PORTRESS
Beneath this roof dwells the daughter of Zeus, Helen.

MENELAUS
What mean’st thou? what is it thou hast said? Repeat, I pray, thy

words.

PORTRESS
The daughter of Tyndareus is here, who erst in Sparta dwelt.

MENELAUS
Whence came she? What means this business?

PORTRESS
She came from Lacedaemon hither.

MENELAUS
When? Surely I have never been robbed of my wife from the cave!

PORTRESS
Before the Achaeans went to Troy, sir stranger. But get thee hence; for somewhat hath chanced within, whereat the whole palace is in an uproar. Thou comest most unseasonably; and if my master catch thee, death will be thy stranger's gift. This say I, because to Hellas I am well disposed, albeit I gave thee harsh answers for fear of my master.

(The PORTRESS goes back into the palace.)

MENELAUS
What can I think or say? For after my previous troubles, this is a fresh piece of ill-luck I hear, if, indeed, after recovering my wife from Troy and bringing her hither, and putting her for safety in the cave, I am then to find another woman living here with the same name as my wife. She called her the begotten child of Zeus. Can there be a man that hath the name of Zeus by the banks of Nile? The Zeus of heaven is only one, at any rate. Where is there a Sparta in the world save where Eurotas glides between his reedy banks? The name of Tyndareus is the name of one alone. Is there any land of the same name as Lacedaemon or Troy? I know not what to say; for naturally there are many in the wide world that have the same names, cities and women too; there is nothing, then, to marvel at. Nor yet again will I fly from the alarm a servant raises; for there is none so cruel of heart as to refuse me food when once he hears my name. All have heard of Ilium's burning, and I, that set it ablaze, am famous now throughout the world, I, Menelaus. I therefore wait the master of this house. There are two issues I must watch; if he prove somewhat stern of heart, I will to my wreck and

there conceal myself; but if he show any sign of pity, I will ask for help in this my present strait. This is the crowning woe in all my misery, to beg the means of life from other princes, prince though I be myself; still needs must I. Yea, this is no saying of mine, but a word of wisdom, “Naught in might exceedeth dread necessity.”

(HELEN and the CHORUS enter from the palace. They do not notice MENELAUS.)

CHORUS *(singing)* I have heard the voice of the maiden inspired. Clear is the answer she hath vouchsafed within yon palace, declaring that Menelaus is not yet dead and buried, passed to the land of shades, where darkness takes the place of light; but on the stormy main is wearing out his life, nor yet hath reached the haven of his country, a wanderer dragging out a piteous existence, reft of every friend, setting foot in every corner of the world, as he voyageth home from Troy.

HELEN
Lo! once again I seek the shelter of this tomb, with Theonoe’s sweet tidings in my ears; she that knoweth all things of a truth; for she saith my lord is yet alive and in the light of day, albeit he is roaming to and fro after many a weary voyage, and hither shall he come whenso he reach the limit of his toils, no novice in the wanderer’s life. But one thing did she leave unsaid. Is he to escape when he hath come? And I refrained from asking that question clearly, so glad was I when she told me he was safe. For she said that he was somewhere nigh this shore, cast up by shipwreck with a handful of friends. Ah! when shall I see thee come? How welcome will thy advent be! *(She catches sight of MENELAUS.)* Ha! who is this? Am I being snared by some trick of Proteus’ impious son? Oh! let me, like a courser at its speed, or a votary of Bacchus, approach the tomb! for there is something wild about this fellow’s looks, who is eager to o’ertake me.

MENELAUS
Ho there! thou that with fearful effort seekest to reach the basement of the tomb and the pillars of burnt sacrifice, stay thee. Wherefore art flying? Ah! with what speechless amaze the sight of thee affects me!

HELEN O friends! I am being ill-treated. This man is keeping me from the tomb, and is eager to take and give me to his master, whose wooing I was seeking to avoid.

MENELAUS
No robber I, or minister of evil.

HELEN
At any rate the garb wherein thou art clad is unseemly.

MENELAUS
Stay thy hasty flight; put fear aside.

HELEN I do so, now that I have reached this spot.

MENELAUS
Who art thou? whom do I behold in thee, lady?

HELEN
Nay, who art thou? The self-same reason prompts us both.

MENELAUS never saw a closer resemblance.

HELEN
Great God! Yea, for to recognize our friends is of God.

MENELAUS
Art thou from Hellas, or a native of this land?

HELEN
From Hellas; but I would learn thy story too.

MENELAUS
Lady, in thee I see a wondrous likeness to Helen.

HELEN
And I in thee to Menelaus; I know not what to say.

MENELAUS
Well, thou hast recognized aright a man of many sorrows.

HELEN
Hail! to thy wife's arms restored at last!

MENELAUS
Wife indeed! Lay not a finger on my robe.

HELEN
The wife that Tyndareus, my father, gave thee.

MENELAUS O Hecate, giver of light, send thy visions favourably!

HELEN
In me thou beholdest no spectre of the night, attendant on the queen of phantoms.

MENELAUS
Nor yet am I in my single person the husband of two wives.

HELEN
What other woman calls thee lord?

MENELAUS
The inmate of yonder cave, whom I from Troy convey.

HELEN
Thou hast none other wife but me.

MENELAUS
Can it be my mind is wandering, my sight failing?

HELEN
Dost not believe thou seest in me thy wife?

MENELAUS
Thy form resembles her, but the real truth robs me of this belief.

HELEN
Observe me well; what need hast thou of clearer proof?

MENELAUS
Thou art like her; that will I never deny.

HELEN
Who then shall teach thee, unless it be thine own eyes?

MENELAUS
Herein is my dilemma; I have another wife.

HELEN
To Troy I never went; that was a phantom.

MENELAUS
Pray, who fashions living bodies?

HELEN
The air, whence thou hast a wife of heaven's workmanship.

MENELAUS
What god's handiwork? Strange is the tale thou tellest.

HELEN
Hera made it as a substitute, to keep me from Paris.

MENELAUS
How then couldst thou have been here, and in Troy, at the same time?

HELEN
The name may be in many a place at once, though not the body.

MENELAUS
Unhand me! the sorrows I brought with me suffice.

HELEN
What! wilt leave me, and take that phantom bride away?

MENELAUS
For thy likeness unto Helen, fare thee well.

HELEN
Ruined! in thee I found my lord only to lose thee.

MENELAUS
The greatness of my troubles at Troy convinces me; thou dost not.

HELEN
Ah, woe is me! who was ever more unfortunate than I? Those whom I love best are leaving me, nor shall I ever reach Hellas, my own dear native land.

(The FIRST MESSENGER enters in haste.)

MESSENGER
At last I find thee, Menelaus, after an anxious search, not till I have evandered through the length and breadth of this foreign strand; I am sent by thy comrades, whom thou didst leave behind.

MENELAUS
What news? surely you are not being spoiled by the barbarians?

MESSENGER A miracle hath happened; my words are too weak for the reality.

MENELAUS
Speak; for judging by this haste, thou hast stirring news.

MESSENGER
My message is: thy countless toils have all been toiled in vain.

MENELAUS
That is an old tale of woe to mourn! come, thy news?

MESSENGER
Thy wife hath disappeared, soaring away into the embracing air; in heaven she now is hidden, and as she left the hollowed cave where we were guarding her, she hailed us thus, “Ye hapless Phrygians, and all Achaea’s

race! for me upon Scamander's strand by Hera's arts ye died from day to day, in the false belief that Helen was in the hands of Paris. But I, since I have stayed my appointed time, and kept the laws of fate, will now depart unto the sky that gave me birth; but the unhappy daughter of Tyndareus, through no fault of hers, hath borne an evil name without reason."
(Catching Sight of HELEN) Daughter of Leda, hail to thee, so thou art here after all! I was just announcing thy departure to the hidden starry realms, little knowing that thou couldst fly at will. I will not a second time let thee flout us thus, for thou didst cause tiki lord and his comrades trouble all for naught in Ilium.

MENELAUS
This is even what she said; her words are proved true; O longed-for day, how hath it restored thee to my arms!

HELEN O Menelaus, dearest husband, the time of sorrow has been long, but joy is now ours at last. Ah, friends, what joy for me to hold my husband in a fond embrace after many a weary cycle of yon blazing lamp of day!

MENELAUS
What joy for me to hold my wife! but with all that I would ask about these years, I now know not where I may first begin.

HELEN O rapture! the very hair upon my head starts up for joy! my tears run down! Around thy neck I fling my arms, dear husband, to hug my joy to me.

MENELAUS O happy, happy sight! I have no fault to find; my wife, he daughter of Zeus and Leda, is mine again, she whom her brothers on their snow-white steeds, whilst torches blazed, made my happy bride, but gods removed her from my home. Now is the deity guiding us to a new destiny, happier than of yore.

HELEN
Evil into good transformed hath brought us twain together at last, dear husband; but late though it be, God grant me joy of my good luck!

MENELAUS
God grant thee joy! I join thee in the self-same prayer; for of us twain one cannot suffer without the other.

HELEN
No more, my friends, I mourn the past; no longer now I grieve. My own dear husband is restored to me, whose coming from Troy I have waited many a long year.

MENELAUS I to thee, and thou to me. And after these long, long years I have at last discovered the fraud of the goddess. But these tears, in gladness shed, are tears of thankfulness rather than of sorrow.

HELEN
What can I say? What mortal heart could e'er have had such hope? To my bosom I press thee, little as I ever thought to.

MENELAUS
And I to mine press thee, who all men thought hadst gone to Ida's town and the hapless towers of Ilium.

HELEN
Ah me! ah me! that is a bitter subject to begin on.

MENELAUS
Tell me, I adjure thee, how wert thou from my home conveyed?

HELEN
Alas! alas! 'tis a bitter tale thou askest to hear.

MENELAUS
Speak, for I must hear it; all that comes is Heaven's gift.

HELEN I loathe the story I am now to tell.

MENELAUS
Tell it for all that. 'Tis sweet to hear of trouble past.

HELEN I ne’er set forth to be the young barbarian’s bride, with oars and wings of lawless love to speed me on my way.

MENELAUS
What deity or fate tore thee from thy country, then?

HELEN
Ah, my lord! ’twas Hermes, the son of Zeus, that brought and placed me by the banks of Nile.

MENELAUS A miracle! Who sent thee thither? O monstrous story!

HELEN I wept, and still my eyes are wet with tears. ’Twas the wife of Zeus that ruined me.

MENELAUS
Hera? wherefore should she afflict us twain?

HELEN
Woe is me for my awful fate! Woe for those founts and baths where the goddesses made brighter still that beauty, which evoked the fatal verdict!

MENELAUS
Why did Hera visit thee with evil regarding this verdict?

HELEN
To wrest the promise of Cypris-

MENELAUS
How now? Say on.

HELEN
From Paris, to whom that goddess pledged me.

MENELAUS
Woe for thee!

HELEN
And so she brought me hither to Egypt to my sorrow.

MENELAUS
Then she gave him a phantom in thy stead, as thou tellest me?

HELEN
And then began those woes of thine, ah, mother! woe is me!

MENELAUS
What meanest thou?

HELEN
My mother is no more; my shameful marriage made her fix the noose about her neck.

MENELAUS
Ah me! is our daughter Hermione yet alive?

HELEN
Still unwed, childless still, she mourns my fatal marriage.

MENELAUS O Paris, who didst utterly o'erthrow my home, here was thy ruin too and theirs, those countless mail-clad Danai.

HELEN
From my country, city, and from thee heaven cast me forth unhappy and accursed, because I left,-and yet not I,-home and husband for union of foul shame.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS
If haply ye find happiness in the future, it will suffice when to the past ye look.

MESSENGER
Menelaus, grant me too a portion of that joy which, though mine own eyes see, I scarcely comprehend.

MENELAUS
Come then, old friend, and share with us our talk.

MESSENGER
Was it not then in her power to decide all the trouble in Troy?

MENELAUS
It was not; I was tricked by the gods into taking to my arms a misty phantom-form, to my sorrow.

MESSENGER
How so? was it then for this we vainly toiled?

MENELAUS 'Twas Hera's handiwork, and the jealousy of three goddesses.

MESSENGER
Is this real woman, then, thy wife?

MENELAUS
This is she; trust my word for that.

MESSENGER
Daughter, how changeful and inscrutable is the nature of God! With some good end doth he vary men's fortune-now up, now down; one suffers; another who ne'er knew suffering, is in his turn to awful ruin brought, having no assurance in his lot from day to day. Thou and thy husband have had your share of trouble-thou in what the world has said, he in battle's heat. For all the striving that he strove, he got him naught; while now, without an effort made, every blessing fortune boasts is his. And thou, in spite of all, hast brought no shame upon thy aged sire, or those twin sons of Zeus, nor art thou guilty of those rumoured crimes. Now again do I recall thy wedding rites, remembering the blazing torch I bore beside thee in a four-horsed chariot at full gallop; while thou with this thy lord, a new-made bride, wert driving forth from thy happy home. A sorry servant he, whoso regardeth not his master's interest, sympathizing with his sorrows and his joys. Slave though I was born, yet may I be numbered amongst honest servants; for in heart, though not in name, I am free. For this is better far than in my single person to suffer these two evils, to feel my heart corrupt, and as the slave of others to be at my neighbour's beck and call.

MENELAUS
Come, old friend, oft hast thou stood side by side with me and taken thy full share of toil; so now be partner in my happiness. Go, tell my comrades, whom I left behind, the state of matters here, as thou hast found them, and the issue of my fortunes; and bid them wait upon the beach and abide the result of the struggle, which I trow awaits me; and if mayhap we find a way to take this lady from the land by stealth, tell them to keep good watch that we may share the luck and escape, if possible, from the barbarian's clutch.

MESSENGER
It shall be done, O king. Now I see how worthless are the seers' tricks, how full of falsehood; nor is there after all aught trustworthy in the blaze of sacrifice or in the cry of feathered fowls; 'tis folly, the very notion that birds can help mankind. Calchas never by word or sign showed the host the truth, when he saw his friends dying on behalf of a phantom, nor yet did Helenus; but the city was stormed in vain. Perhaps thou wilt say, 'twas not heaven's will that they should do so. Then why do we employ these prophets? Better were it to sacrifice to the gods, and crave a blessing, leaving prophecy alone; for this was but devised as a bait to catch livelihood, and no man grows rich by divination if he is idle. No! sound judgment and discernment are the best of seers.

(The MESSENGER departs.)

LEADER
My views about seers agree exactly with this old man's: whoso hath the gods upon his side will have the best seer in his house.

HELEN
Good! so far all is well. But how camest thou, poor husband, safe from Troy? though 'tis no gain to know, yet friends feel a longing to learn all that their friends have suffered.

MENELAUS
That one short sentence of thine contains a host of questions. Why should I tell thee of our losses in the Aegean, or of the beacon Nauplius lighted on Euboea? or of my visits to Crete and the cities of Libya, or of the peaks of Perseus? For I should never satisfy thee with the tale, and by telling thee

should add to my own pain, though I suffered enough at the time; and so would my grief be doubled.

HELEN
Thy answer shows more wisdom than my question. Omit the rest, and tell me only this; how long wert thou a weary wanderer o'er the wide sea's face?

MENELAUS
Seven long years did I see come and go, besides those ten in Troy.

HELEN
Alas, poor sufferer! 'twas a weary while. And thou hast thence escaped only to bleed here.

MENELAUS
How so? what wilt thou tell? Ah wife, thou hast ruined me.

HELEN
Escape and fly with all thy speed from this land. Thou wilt be slain by him whose house this is.

MENELAUS
What have I done to merit such a fate?

HELEN
Thou hast arrived unexpectedly to thwart my marriage.

MENELAUS
What! is some man bent on wedding my wife?

HELEN
Aye, and on heaping those insults on me, which I have hitherto endured.

MENELAUS
Is he some private prince, or a ruler of this land?

HELEN
The son of Proteus, king of the country.

MENELAUS
This was that dark saying I heard the servant tell.

HELEN
At which of the barbarian's gates wert thou standing?

MENELAUS
Here, whence like a beggar I was like to be driven.

HELEN
Surely thou wert not begging food? Ah, woe is me!

MENELAUS
That was what I was doing, though I had not the name of beggar.

HELEN
Of course thou knowest, then, all about my marriage.

MENELAUS I do. But whether thou hast escaped thy lover, I know not.

HELEN
Be well assured I have kept my body chaste.

MENELAUS
How wilt thou convince me of this? If true, thy words are sweet.

HELEN
Dost see the wretched station I have kept at this tomb?

MENELAUS I see, alas! a bed of straw; but what hast thou to do with it?

HELEN
There I crave escape from this marriage as a suppliant.

MENELAUS
For want of an altar, or because it is the barbarians' way?

HELEN
This was as good a protection to me as the gods' temples.

MENELAUS
May I not then even bear thee homeward on my ship?

HELEN
The sword far sooner than thy wife’s embrace is waiting thee.

MENELAUS
So should I be of all men the most miserable.

HELEN
Put shame aside, and fly from this land.

MENELAUS
Leaving thee behind? ’twas for thy sake I sacked Troy.

HELEN
Better so, than that our union should cause thy death.

MENELAUS
Oh! these are coward words, unworthy of those days at Troy!

HELEN
Thou canst not slay the prince, thy possible intent.

MENELAUS
Hath he, then, a body which steel cannot wound?

HELEN
Thou shalt hear. But to attempt impossibilities is no mark of wisdom.

MENELAUS
Am I to let them bind my hands, and say nothing?

HELEN
Thou art in a dilemma; some scheme must be devised.

MENELAUS I had liefer die in action than sitting still.

HELEN
There is one hope, and only one, of our safety.

MENELAUS
Will gold, or daring deeds, or winning words procure it?

HELEN
We are safe if the prince learn not of thy coming.

MENELAUS ary one tell him it is I? He certainly will not know who I am.

HELEN
He hath within his palace an ally equal to the gods.

MENELAUS
Some voice divine within the secret chambers of his house?

HELEN
No; his sister; Theonoe men call her.

MENELAUS
Her name hath a prophetic sound; tell me what she doth.

HELEN
She knoweth everything, and she will tell her brother thou art come.

MENELAUS
Then must we die; for I cannot escape her ken.

HELEN
Perchance we might by suppliant prayers win her over.

MENELAUS
To what end? To what vain hope art thou leading me?

HELEN
That she should not tell her brother thou art here.

MENELAUS
Suppose we persuade her, can we get away?

HELEN
Easily, if she connive thereat; without her knowledge, no,

MENELAUS
Be that thy task; women deal best with women.

HELEN I will not fail, be sure, to clasp her knees.

MENELAUS
Come, then; only, suppose she reject our proposals?

HELEN
Thou wilt be slain, and I, alas! wedded by force.

MENELAUS
Thou wilt betray me; that “force” of thine is but an excuse.

HELEN
Nay, by thy life I swear a sacred oath.

MENELAUS
What meanest thou? dost swear to die and never to another husband yield?

HELEN
Yes, by the self-same sword; I will fall by thy side.

MENELAUS
On these conditions touch my right hand.

HELEN I do so, swearing I will quit the light of day if thou art slain.

MENELAUS I, too, will end my life if I lose thee.

HELEN
How shall we die so as to gain fame?

MENELAUS I will slay thee and then myself upon the summit of the tomb. But first will I in doughty fight contest another's claim to thee; and let who will draw nigh! for I will not sully the lustre of my Trojan fame, nor will I, on my return to Hellas, incur a storm of taunts, as one who robbed Thetis of Achilles; saw Ajax, son of Telamon, fall a weltering corpse; and the sort of Neleus of his child bereft; shall I then flinch myself from death for my own wife? No, no! For if the gods are wise, o'er a brave man by his foes laid low they lightly sprinkle the earth that is his tomb, while cowards 'they cast forth on barren rocky soil.

LEADER
Grant, heaven, that the race of Tantalus may at last be blest, and pass from sorrow unto joy!

HELEN
Ah, woe is me! Yea, all my lot is woe; O Menelaus, we are utterly undone! Behold! from forth the house comes Theonoe, the prophetess, The palace echoes as the bolts are unfastened; fly! yet what use to fly? For whether absent or present she knows of thy arrival here. Ah me! how lost am I! Saved from Troy and from a barbarian land, thou hast come only to fall a prey to barbarian swords.

(THEONOE enters, attended by hand-maidens carrying torches.)

THEONOE
Lead on, bearing before me blazing brands, and, as sacred rites ordain, purge with incense every cranny of the air, that I may breathe heaven's breath free from taint; meanwhile do thou, in case the tread of unclean feet have soiled the path, wave the cleansing flame above it, and brandish the torch in front, that I may pass upon my way. And when to heaven ye have paid the customs I exact, bear back into the house the brand from off the hearth. What of my prophecy, Helen? how stands it now? Thou hast seen thy husband Menelaus arrive without disguise, reft of his ships, and of thy counterfeit. Ah, hapless man! what troubles hast thou escaped, and art come hither, and yet knowest not whether thou art to return or to abide here; for there is strife in heaven, and Zeus this very day will sit in solemn conclave on thee. Hera, who erst was thy bitter foe, is now grown kind, and is willing to bring thee and thy wife safe home, that Hellas may learn that the

marriage of Paris was all a sham, assigned to him by Cypris; but Cypris fain would mar thy homeward course, that she may not be convicted, or proved to have bought the palm of beauty at the price of Helen in a futile marriage. Now the decision rests with me, whether to ruin thee, as Cypris wishes, by telling my brother of thy presence bere, or to save thy life by taking Hera's side, concealing thy coming from my brother, for his orders are that I should tell him, whensoe'er thou shouldst reach these shores. Ho! one of you, go show my brother this man is here, that I may secure my safety.

HELEN

Maiden, at thy knees I fall a suppliant, and seat myself in this sad posture on behalf of myself and him, whom I am in danger of seeing slain, after I have so hardly found him. Oh! tell not thy brother that my husband is returned to these loving arms; save us, I beseech thee; never for thy brother's sake sacrifice thy character for uprightness, by evil and unjust means bidding for his favour. For the deity hates violence, and biddeth all men get lawful gains without plundering others. Wealth unjustly gotten, though it bring some power, is to be eschewed. The breath of heaven and the earth are man's common heritage, wherein to store his home, without taking the goods of others, or wresting them away by force. Me did Hermes at a critical time, to my sorrow, intrust to thy father's safe keeping for this my lord, who now is here and wishes to reclaim me. But how can he recover me if he be slain? How could thy sire restore the living to the dead? Oh! consider ere that the will of heaven and thy father's too; would the deity or would thy dead sire restore their neighbour's goods, or would they forbear? restore them, I feel sure. It is not, therefore, right that thou shouldst more esteem thy wanton brother than thy righteous father. Yet if thou, prophetess as thou art and believer in divine providence, shalt pervert the just intention of thy father and gratify thy unrighteous brother, 'tis shameful thou shouldst have full knowledge of the heavenly will, both what is and what is not, and yet be ignorant of justice. Oh! save my wretched life from the troubles which beset it, granting this as an accession to our good fortune; for every living soul loathes Helen, seeing that there is gone a rumour throughout Hellas that I was false unto my lord, and took up my abode in Phrygia's sumptuous halls. Now, if I come to Hellas, and set foot once more in Sparta, they will hear and see how they were ruined by the wiles of goddesses, while was no traitress to my friends after all; and so will

they restore to me my virtuous name again, and I shall give my daughter in marriage, whom no man now will wed; and, leaving this vagrant life in Egypt, shall enjoy the treasures in my home. Had Menelaus met his doom at some funeral pyre, with tears should I be cherishing his memory in a far-off land, but must lose him now when he is alive and safe? Ah! maiden, I beseech thee, say not so; grant me this boon, I pray, and reflect thy father's justice; for this is the fairest ornament of children, when the child of a virtuous sire resembles its parents in character.

LEADER
Piteous thy pleading, and a piteous object thou! But I fain would hear what Menelaus will say to save his life.

MENELAUS I will not deign to throw myself at thy knees, or wet mine eyes with tears; for were I to play the coward, I should most foully blur my Trojan fame. And yet men say it shows a noble soul to let the tear-drop fall in misfortune. But that will not be the honourable course that I will choose in preference to bravery, if what I shall say is honourable. Art thou disposed to save a stranger seeking in mere justice to regain his wife, why then restore her and save us likewise; if not, this will not be the first by many a time that I have suffered, though thou wilt get an evil name. All that I deem worthy of me and honest, all that will touch thy heart most nearly, will I utter at the tomb of thy sire with regret for his loss. Old king beneath this tomb of stone reposing, pay back thy trust! I ask of thee my wife whom Zeus sent hither unto thee to keep for me. I know thou canst never restore her to me thyself, for thou art dead; but this thy daughter will never allow her father once so glorious, whom I invoke in his grave, to bear a tarnished name; for the decision rests with her now. Thee, too, great god of death, I call to my assistance, who hast received full many a corpse, slain by me for Helen, and art keeping thy wage; either restore those dead now to life again, or compel the daughter to show herself a worthy equal of her virtuous sire, and give me back my wife. But if ye will rob me of her, I will tell you that which she omitted in her speech. Know then, maiden, I by an oath am bound, first, to meet thy brother sword to sword, when he or I must die- there is no alternative. But if he refuse to meet me fairly front to front, and seek by famine to chase away us suppliants twain at this tomb, I am resolved to slay Helen, and then to plunge this two-edged sword through

my own heart, upon the top of the sepulchre, that our streaming blood may trickle down the tomb; and our two corpses will be lying side by side upon this polished slab, a source of deathless grief to thee, and to thy sire reproach. Never shall thy brother wed Helen, nor shall any other; I will bear her hence myself, if not to my house, at any rate to death. And why this stern resolve? Were I to resort to women's ways and weep, I should be a pitiful creature, not a man of action. Slay me, if it seems thee good; I will not die ingloriously; but better yield to what I say, that thou mayst act with justice, and I regain my wife.

LEADER
On thee, maiden, it rests to judge between these arguments. Decide in such a way as to please one and all.

THEONOE
My nature and my inclination lean towards piety; myself, too, I respect, and I will never sully my father's fair name, or gratify my brother at the cost of bringing myself into open dishonour. For justice hath her temple firmly founded in my nature, and since I have this heritage from Nereus I will strive to save Menelaus; wherefore, seeing it is Hera's will to stand thy friend, I will give my vote with her. May Cypris be favourable to me! though in me she hath no part, and I will try to remain a maid alway. As for thy reproaches against my father at this tomb; lo! I have the same words to utter; I should be wronging thee, did I not restore thy wife; for my sire, were he living, would have given her back into thy keeping, and thee to her. Yea, for there is recompense for these things as well amongst the dead as amongst all those who breathe the breath of life. The soul indeed of the dead lives no more, yet hath it a consciousness that lasts for ever, eternal as the ether into which it takes the final plunge. Briefly then to end the matter, I will observe strict silence on all that ye prayed I should, and never with my counsel will I aid my brother's wanton will. For I am doing him good service, though he little thinks it, if turn him from his godless life to holiness. Wherefore devise yourselves some way of escape; my lips are scaled; I will not cross your path. First with the goddesses begin, and of the one,-and that one Cypris,-Crave permission to return unto thy country; and of Hera, that her goodwill may abide in the same quarter, even her scheme

to save thee and thy husband. And thou, my own dead sire, shalt never, in so far as rests with me, lose thy holy name to rank with evil-doers.

(THEONOE and her attendants enter the palace.)

LEADER
No man ever prospered by unjust practices, but in a righteous cause there is hope of safety.

HELEN
Menelaus, on the maiden's side are we quite safe. Thou must from that point start, and by contributing thy advice, devise with me a scheme to save ourselves.

MENELAUS
Hearken then; thou hast been a long while in the palace, and art intimate with the king's attendants.

HELEN
What dost thou mean thereby? for thou art suggesting hopes, as if resolved on some plan for our mutual help.

MENELAUS
Couldst thou persuade one of those who have charge of cars and steeds to furnish us with a chariot?

HELEN I might; but what escape is there for us who know nothing of the country and the barbarian's kingdom?

MENELAUS
True; 'tis impossible. Well, supposing I conceal myself in the palace and slay the king with this two-edged sword?

HELEN
His sister would never refrain from telling her brother that thou wert meditating his death.

MENELAUS
We have not so much as a ship to make our escape in; for the sea. hath swallowed the one we had.

HELEN
Hear me, if haply even a woriian can utter words of wisdom. Dost thou consent to be dead in word, though not really so?

MENELAUS 'Tis a bad omen; still, if by saying so I shall gain aught, I am ready to be dead in word, though not in deed.

HELEN I, too, will mourn thee with hair cut short and dirges, as is women's way, before this impious wretch.

MENELAUS
What saving remedy doth this afford us twain? There is deception in thy scheme.

HELEN I will beg the king of this country leave to bury thee in a cenotaph, as if thou hadst really died at sea.

MENELAUS
Suppose he grant it; how, e'en then, are we to escape without a ship, after having committed me to my empty tomb?

HELEN I will bid him give me a vessel, from which to let drop into the sea's embrace thy funeral offerings.

MENELAUS A clever plan in truth, save in one particular; suppose he bid thee rear the tomb upon the strand, thy pretext comes to naught.

HELEN
But I shall say it is not the custom in Hellas to bury those who die at sea upon the shore.

MENELAUS
Thou removest this obstacle too; I then will sail with thee and help stow the funeral garniture in the same ship.

HELEN
Above all, it is necessary that thou and all thy sailors who escaped from the wreck should be at hand.

MENELAUS
Be sure if once I find a ship at her moorings, they shall be there man for man, each with his sword.

HELEN
Thou must direct everything; only let there be winds to waft our rails and a good ship to speed before them!

MENELAUS
So shall it be; for the deities will cause my troubles to cease. But from whom wilt thou say thou hadst tidings of my death?

HELEN
From thee; declare thyself the one and only survivor, telling how thou wert sailing with the son of Atreus, and didst see him perish.

MENELAUS
Of a truth the garments I have thrown about me, will bear out my tale that they were rags collected from the wreckage.

HELEN
They come in most opportunely, but they were near being lost just at the wrong time. Maybe that misfortune will turn to fortune.

MENELAUS
Am I to enter the palace with thee, or are we to sit here at the tomb quietly?

HELEN
Abide here; for if the king attempts to do thee any mischief, this tomb and thy good sword will protect thee. But I will go within and cut off my hair, and exchange my white robe for sable weeds, and rend my cheek with this hand’s blood-thirsty nail. For ’tis a mighty struggle, and I see two possible issues; either I must die if detected in my plot, or else to my country shall I come and save thy soul alive. O Hera! awful queen, who sharest the couch

of Zeus, grant some respite from their toil to two unhappy wretches; to thee I pray, tossing my arms upward to heaven, where thou hast thy home in the star-spangled firmament. Thou, too, that didst win the prize of beauty at the price of my marriage; O Cypris! daughter of Dione, destroy me not utterly. Thou hast injured me enough aforetime, delivering up my name, though not my person, to live amongst barbarians. Oh! suffer me to die, if death is thy desire, in my native land. Why art thou so insatiate in mischief, employing every art of love, of fraud, and guileful schemes, and spells that bring bloodshed on families? Wert thou but moderate, only that!-in all else thou art by nature man's most well, come deity; and I have reason so to say.

(HELEN enters the palace and MENELAUS withdraws into the background.)

CHORUS *(singing)* Thee let me invoke, tearful Philomel, lurking 'neath the leafy covert in thy place of song, most tuneful of all feathered songsters, oh! come to aid me in my dirge, trilling through thy tawny throat, as I sing the piteous woes of Helen, and the tearful fate of Trojan dames made subject to Achaea's spear, on the day that there came to their plains one who sped with foreign oar across the dashing billows, bringing to Priam's race from Lacedaemon thee his hapless bride, Helen,-even Paris, luckless bridegroom, by the guidance of Aphrodite.

And many an Achaean hath breathed his last amid the spearmen's thrusts and hurtling hail of stones, and gone to his sad end; for these their wives cut off their hair in sorrow, and their houses are left without a bride; and one of the Achaeans, that had but a single ship, did light a blazing beacon on sea-girt Euboea, and destroy full many of them, wrecking them on the rocks of Caphareus and the shores that front the Aegean main, by the treacherous gleam he kindled; when thou, O Menelaus, from the very day of thy start, didst drift to harbourless hills, far from thy country before the breath of the storm, bearing on thy ship a prize that was no prize, but a phantom made by Hera out of cloud for the Danai to struggle over.

What mortal claims, by searching to the utmost limit, to have found out the nature of God, or of his opposite, or of that which comes between, seeing as he doth this world of man tossed to and fro by waves of contradiction and strange vicissitudes? Thou, Helen, art the daughter of Zeus; for thy sire was

the bird that nestled in Leda's bosom; and yet for all that art thou become a by-word for wickedness, through the length and breadth of Hellas, as faithless, treacherous wife and godless woman; nor can I tell what certainty is, whatever may pass for it amongst men. That which gods pronounce have I found true.

O fools! all ye who try to win the meed of valour through war and serried ranks of chivalry, seeking thus to still this mortal coil, in senselessness; for if bloody contests are to decide, there will never be any lack of strife in the towns of men; the maidens of the land of Priam left their bridal bowers, though arbitration might have put thy quarrel right, O Helen. And now Troy's sons are in Hades' keeping in the world below, and fire hath darted on her walls, as darts the flame of Zeus, and thou art bringing woe on woe to hapless sufferers in their misery.

(THEOCLYMENUS and his hunting attendants enter.)

THEOCLYMENUS
All hail, my father's tomb! I buried thee, Proteus, at the place where men go out, that I might often greet thee; and so, ever as I go out and in, I, thy son Theoclymenus call on thee, father. Ho! servants, to the palace take my hounds and hunting nets! How often have I blamed myself for never punishing those miscreants with death! I have just heard that son of Hellas has come openly to my land, escaping the notice of the guard, a spy maybe or a would-be thief of Helen; death shall be his lot if only I can catch him. Ha! I find all my plans apparently frustrated, the daughter of Tyndareus has deserted her seat at the tomb and sailed away from my shores. Ho! there, undo the bars, loose the horses from their stalls, bring forth my chariot, servants, that the wife, on whom my heart is set, may not get away from these shores unseen, for want of any trouble I can take. Yet stay; for I see the object of my pursuit is still in the palace, and has not fled. *(HELEN enters from the palace, clad in the garb of mourning.)* How now, lady, why hast thou arrayed thee in sable weeds instead of white raiment, and from thy fair head hast shorn thy tresses with the steel, bedewing thy cheeks the while with tears but lately shed? Is it in response to visions of the night that thou art mourning, or, because thou hast heard some warning voice within, art thus distraught with grief?

HELEN
My lord,-for already I have learnt to say that name, — I am undone; my luck is gone; I cease to be.

THEOCLYMENUS
In what misfortune art thou plunged? What hath happened?

HELEN
Menelaus, ah me! how can I say it? is dead, my husband.

THEOCLYMENUS
How knowest thou? Did Theonoe tell thee this?

HELEN
Both she, and one who was there when he perished.

THEOCLYMENUS
What! hath one arrived who actually announces this for certaint?

HELEN
One hath; oh may he come e'en as I wish him to!

THEOCLYMENUS
Who and where is he? that I may learn this more surely.

HELEN
There he is, sitting crouched beneath the shelter of this tomb,

THEOCLYMENUS
Great Apollo! how clad in unseemly rags!

HELEN
Ah me! methinks my own husband too is in like plight.

THEOCLYMENUS
From what country is this fellow? whence landed he here?

HELEN
From Hellas, one of the Achaeans who sailed with my husband.

THEOCLYMENUS
What kind of death doth he declare that Menelaus died?

HELEN
The most piteous of all; amid the watery waves at sea.

THEOCLYMENUS
On what part of the savage ocean was he sailing?

HELEN
Cast up on the harbourless rocks of Libya.

THEOCLYMENUS
How was it this man did not perish if he was with him aboard?

HELEN
There are times when churls have more luck than their betters.

THEOCLYMENUS
Where left he the wreck, on coming hither?

HELEN
There, where perdition catch it, but not Menelaus!

THEOCLYMENUS
He is lost; but on what vessel came this man?

HELEN
According to his story sailors fell in with him and picked him up.

THEOCLYMENUS
Where then is that ill thing that was sent to Troy in thy stead?

HELEN
Dost mean the phantom-form of cloud? It hath passed into the air.

THEOCLYMENUS O Priam, and thou land of Troy, how fruitless thy ruin!

HELEN I too have shared with Priam’s race their misfortunes.

THEOCLYMENUS
Did this fellow leave thy husband unburied, or consign him to the grave?

HELEN
Unburied; woe is me for my sad lot!

THEOCLYMENUS
Wherefore hast thou shorn the tresses of thy golden hair?

HELEN
His memory lingers fondly in this heart, whate'er his fate.

THEOCLYMENUS
Are thy tears in genuine sorrow for this calamity?

HELEN
An easy task no doubt to escape thy sister's detection!

THEOCLYMENUS
No, surely; impossible. Wilt thou still make this tomb thy abode?

HELEN
Why jeer at me? canst thou not let the dead man be?

THEOCLYMENUS
No, thy loyalty to thy husband's memory makes thee fly from me.

HELEN I will do so no more; prepare at once for my marriage.

THEOCLYMENUS
Thou hast been long in bringing thyself to it; still I do commend the now.

HELEN
Dost know thy part? Let us forget the past.

THEOCLYMENUS
On what terms? One good turn deserves another.

HELEN
Let us make peace; be reconciled to me.

THEOCLYMENUS I relinquish my quarrel with thee; let it take wings and fly away.

HELEN
Then by thy knees, since thou art my friend indeed,-

THEOCLYMENUS
What art so bent on winning, that to me thou stretchest out a suppliant hand?

HELEN
My dead husband would I fain bury.

THEOCLYMENUS
What tomb can be bestowed on lost bodies? Wilt thou bury a shade?

HELEN
In Hellas we have a custom, whene'er one is drowned at sea-

THEOCLYMENUS
What is your custom? The race of Pelops truly hath some skill in matters such as this.

HELEN
To hold a burial with woven robes that wrap no corpse.

THEOCLYMENUS
Perform the ceremony; rear the tomb where'er thou wilt.

HELEN 'Tis not thus we give drowned sailors burial.

THEOCLYMENUS
How then? I know nothing of your customs in Hellas.

HELEN
We unmoor, and carry out to sea all that is the dead man's due.

THEOCLYMENUS
What am I to give thee then for thy dead husband?

HELEN
Myself I cannot say; I had no such experience in my previous happy life.

THEOCLYMENUS
Stranger, thou art the bearer of tidings I welcome.

MENELAUS
Well, I do not, nor yet doth the dead man.

THEOCLYMENUS
How do ye bury those who have been drowned at sea?

MENELAUS
Each according to his means.

THEOCLYMENUS
As far as wealth goes, name thy wishes for this lady's sake.

MENELAUS
There must be a blood-offering first to the dead.

THEOCLYMENUS
Blood of what? Do thou show me and I will comply.

MENELAUS
Decide that thyself; whate'er thou givest will suffice.

THEOCLYMENUS
Amongst barbarians 'tis customary to sacrifice a horse or bull,

MENELAUS
If thou givest at all, let there be nothing mean in thy gift.

THEOCLYMENUS I have no lack of such in my rich herds

MENELAUS
Next an empty bier is decked and carried in procession.

THEOCLYMENUS
It shall be so; what else is it customary to add?

MENELAUS
Bronze arms; for war was his delight.

THEOCLYMENUS
These will be worthy of the race of Pelops, and these will we give.

MENELAUS
And with them all the fair increase of productive earth.

THEOCLYMENUS
And next, how do ye pour these offerings into the billows?

MENELAUS
There must be a ship ready and rowers.

THEOCLYMENUS
How far from the shore does the ship put out?

MENELAUS
So far that the foam in her wake can scarce be seen from the strand.

THEOCLYMENUS
Why so? wherefore doth Hellas observe this custom?

MENELAUS
That the billow may not cast up again our expiatory offerings.

THEOCLYMENUS
Phoenician rowers will soon cover the distance.

MENELAUS ‘Twill be well done, and gratifying to Menelaus, too.

THEOCLYMENUS
Canst thou not perform these rites well enough without Helen?

MENELAUS
This task belongs to mother, wife, or children.

THEOCLYMENUS ’Tis her task then, according to thee, to bury her husband.

MENELAUS
To be sure; piety demands that the dead be not robbed of their due.

THEOCLYMENUS
Well, let her go; ’tis my interest to foster piety in a wife. And thou, enter the house and choose adornment for the dead. Thyself, too, will not send empty-handed away, since thou hast done her a service. And for the good news thou hast brought me, thou shalt receive raiment instead of going bare, and food, too, that thou mayst reach thy country; for as it is, I see thou art in sorry plight. As for thee, poor lady, waste not thyself in a hopeless case; Menelaus has met his doom, and thy dead husband cannot come to life.

MENELAUS
This then is thy duty, fair young wife; be content with thy present husband, and forget him who has no existence; for this is thy best course in face of what is happening. And if ever I come to Hellas and secure my safety, I will clear thee of thy former ill-repute, if thou prove a dutiful wife to thy true husband.

HELEN I will; never shall my husband have cause to blame me; thou shalt thyself attend us and be witness thereto. Now go within, poor wanderer, and seek the bath, and change thy raiment. I will show my kindness to thee, and that without delay. For thou wilt perform all service due with kindlier feeling for my dear lord Menelaus, if at my hands thou meet with thy deserts.

(THEOCLYMENUS, HELEN, MENELAUS enter the palace.)

CHORUS *(singing)* Through wooded glen, o'er torrent's flood, and ocean's booming waves rushed the mountain-goddess, mother of the gods, in frantic haste, once long ago, yearning for her daughter lost, whose name men dare not utter; loudly rattled the Bacchic castanets in shrill accord, what time those maidens, swift as whirlwinds, sped forth with the goddess on her chariot yoked to wild creatures, in quest of her that was ravished from the circling choir of virgins; here was Artemis with her bow, and there the grim-eyed goddess, sheathed in mail, and spear in hand. But Zeus looked down from his throne in heaven, and turned the issue otherwhither.

Soon as the mother ceased from her wild wandering toil, in seeking her daughter stolen so subtly as to baffle all pursuit, she crossed the snow-capped heights of Ida's nymphs; and in anguish cast her down amongst the rocks and brushwood deep in snow; and, denying to man all increase to his tillage from those barren fields, she wasted the human race; nor would she let the leafy tendrils yield luxuriant fodder for the cattle, wherefore many a beast lay dying; no sacrifice was offered to the gods, and on the altars were no cakes to burn; yea, and she made the dew-fed founts of crystal water to cease their flow, in her insatiate sorrow for her child.

But when for gods and tribes of men alike she made an end to festal cheer, Zeus spoke out, seeking to soothe the mother's moody soul, "Ye stately Graces, go banish from Demeter's angry heart the grief her wanderings bring upon her for her child, and go, ye Muses too, with tuneful choir." Thereon did Cypris, fairest of the blessed gods, first catch up the crashing cymbals, native to that land, and the drum with tight-stretched skin, and then Demeter smiled, and in her hand. did take the deep-toned flute, well pleased with its loud note.

Thou hast wedded as thou never shouldst have done in defiance of all right, and thou hast incurred, my daughter, the wrath of the great mother by disregarding her sacrifices. Oh! mighty is the virtue in dress of dappled fawn-skin, in ivy green that twineth round a sacred thyrsus, in whirling tambourines struck as they revolve in air in tresses wildly streaming for the revelry of Bromius, and likewise in the sleepless vigils of the goddess, when the moon looks down and sheds her radiance o'er the scene. Thou wert confident in thy charms alone.

(HELEN comes out of the palace alone.)

HELEN
My friends, within the palace all goes well for us; for the daughter of Proteus, who is privy to our stealthy scheme, told her brother nothing when questioned as to my husband's coming, but for my sake declared him dead and buried. Most fortunate it is my lord hath had the luck to get these weapons; for he is now himself clad in the harness he was to plunge into the sea, his stalwart arm thrust through the buckler's strap, and in his right hand a spear, on pretence of joining in homage to the dead. He hath girded himself most serviceably for the fray, as if to triumph o'er a host of barbarian foes when once we are aboard yon oared ship; instead of his rags from the wreck hath he donned the robes I gave for his attire, and I have bathed his limbs in water from the stream, a bath he long hath wanted. But I must be silent, for from the house comes forth the man who thinks he has me in his power, prepared to be his bride; and thy goodwill I also claim and thy strict silence, if haply, when we save ourselves, we may save thee too some day.

(THEOCLYMENUS and MENELAUS enter, with a train of attendants bearing the offerings for the funeral rites.)

THEOCLYMENUS
Advance in order, servants, as the stranger hath directed, bearing the funeral gifts the sea demands. But thou, Helen, if thou wilt not misconstrue my words, be persuaded and here abide; for thou wilt do thy husband equal service whether thou art present or not. For I am afraid that some sudden shock of fond regret may prompt thee to plunge into the swollen tide, in an ecstasy of gratitude toward thy former husband; for thy grief for him, though he is lost, is running to excess.

HELEN O my new lord, needs must I honour him with whom I first shared married joys; for I could even die with my husband, so well I loved him; yet how could he thank me, were I to share death's doom with him? Still, let me go and pay his funeral rites unto the dead in person. The gods grant thee the boon I wish and this stranger too, for the assistance he is lending here! And thou shalt find in me a wife fit to share thy house, since thou art rendering kindness to Menelaus and to me; for surely these events are to some good

fortune tending. But now appoint someone to give us a ship wherein to convey these gifts, that I may find thy kindness made complete.

THEOCLYMENUS *(to an attendant)* Go thou, and furnish them with a Sidonian galley of fifty oars and rowers also.

HELEN
Shall not he command the ship who is ordering the funeral?

THEOCLYMENUS
Most certainly; my sailors are to obey him.

HELEN
Repeat the order, that they may clearly understand thee.

THEOCLYMENUS I repeat it, and will do so yet again if that is thy pleasure.

HELEN
Good luck to thee and to me in my designs!

THEOCLYMENUS
Oh! waste not thy fair complexion with excessive weeping.

HELEN
This day shall show my gratitude to thee.

THEOCLYMENUS
The state of the dead is nothingness; to toil for them is vain.

HELEN
In what I say, this world, as well as that, hath share.

THEOCLYMENUS
Thou shalt not find in me a husband at all inferior to Menelaus.

HELEN
With thee have I no fault to find; good luck is all I need.

THEOCLYMENUS
That rests with thyself, if thou show thyself a loving wife to me.

HELEN
This is not a lesson I shall have to learn now, to love my friends.

THEOCLYMENUS
Is it thy wish that I should escort thee in person with active aid?

HELEN
God forbid! become not thy servant's servant, O king!

THEOCLYMENUS
Up and away! I am not concerned with customs which the race of Pelops holds. My house is pure, for Menelaus did not die here; go some one now and bid my vassal chiefs bring marriage-offerings to my palace; for the whole earth must re-echo in glad accord the hymn of my wedding with Helen, to make men envious. Go, stranger, and pour into the sea's embrace these offerings to Helen's former lord, and then speed back again with my bride, that after sharing with me her marriage-feast thou mayst set out for home, or here abide in happiness.

(THEOCLYMENUS and his retinue enter the palace.)

MENELAUS O Zeus, who art called the father of all and god of wisdom, look down on us and change our woe to joy! Lend us thy ready help, as we seek to drag our fortunes up the rugged hill; if with but thy finger-tip thou touch us, we shall reach our longed-for goal. Sufficient are the troubles we ere this have undergone. Full oft have I invoked you gods to near my joys and sorrows; I do not deserve to be for ever unhappy, but to advance and prosper. Grant me but this one boon, and so will ye crown my future with blessing.

(MENELAUS, HELEN and their train of attendants depart.)

CHORUS *(singing)* Hail! thou swift Phoenician ship of Sidon! dear to the rowers, mother to the foam, leader of fair dolphins' gambols, what time the deep is hushed and still, and Ocean's azure child, the queen of calm, takes

up her parable and says: “Away! and spread your canvas to the ocean-breeze. Ho! sailors, ho! come grip your oars of pine, speeding Helen on her way to the sheltered beach where Perseus dwelt of yore.”

It may be thou wilt find the daughters of Leucippus beside the brimming river or before the temple of Pallas, when at last with dance and revelry thou joinest in the merry midnight festival of Hyacinthus, him whom Phoebus slew in the lists by a quoit hurled o’er the mark; wherefore did the son of Zeus ordain that Laconia’s land should set apart that day for sacrifice; there too shalt thou find the tender maid, whom ye left in your house, for as yet no nuptial torch has shed its light for her.

Oh! for wings to cleave the air in the track of Libyan cranes, whose serried ranks leave far behind the wintry storm at the shrill summons of some veteran leader, who raises his exultant cry as he wings his way o’er plains that know no rain and yet bear fruitful increase. Ye feathered birds with necks outstretched, comrades of the racing clouds, on on! till ye reach the Pleiads in their central station and Orion, lord of the night; and as ye settle on Eurotas’ banks proclaim the glad tidings that Menelaus hath sacked the city of Dardanus, and will soon be home.

Ye sons of Tyndareus at length appear, speeding in your chariot through the sky, denizens of heaven’s courts beneath the radiant whirling stars, guide this lady Helen safely o’er the azure main, across the foam-flecked billows of the deep-blue sea, sending the mariners a favouring gale from Zeus; and from your sister snatch the ill-repute of wedding with a barbarian, even the punishment bequeathed to her from that strife on Ida’s mount, albeit she never went to the land of Ilium, to the battlements of Phoebus.

(The SECOND MESSENGER enters in haste, as THEOCLYMENUS comes out of the palace.)

SECOND MESSENGER O king, at last have I found thee in the palace; for new tidings of woe art thou soon to hear from me.

THEOCLYMENUS
How now?

MESSENGER
Make haste to woo a new wife; for Helen hath escaped.

THEOCLYMENUS
Borne aloft on soaring wings, or treading still the earth?

MESSENGER
Menelaus has succeeded in bearing her hence; 'twas he that brought the news of his own death.

THEOCLYMENUS O monstrous story! what ship conveyed her from these shores? Thy tale is past belief.

MESSENGER
The very ship thou didst thyself give the stranger; and that thou mayest briefly know all, he is gone, taking thy sailors with him.

THEOCLYMENUS
How was it? I long to know, for I never thought that a single arm could master all those sailors with whom thou wert despatched.

MESSENGER
Soon as the daughter of Zeus had left this royal mansion and come unto the sea, daintily picking her way, most craftily she set to mourn her husband, though he was not dead but at her side. Now when we reached thy docks well walled, we began to launch the fastest of Sidonian ships, with her full complement of fifty rowers, and each task in due succession followed; some set up the mast, others ranged the oars with their blades ready, and stored the white sails within the hold, and the rudder was let down astern and fastened securely. While we were thus employed, those Hellenes, who had been fellow-voyagers with Menelaus, were watching us, it seems, and they drew nigh the beach, clad in the rags of shipwrecked men,-well built enough, but squalid to look upon. And the son of Atreus, directly he saw them approach, bespoke them, craftily introducing the reason for his mourning: "Ye hapless mariners, how have ye come hither? your Achaean ship where wrecked? Are ye here to help bury dead Atreus' son, whose missing body this lady, daughter of Tyndareas, is honouring with a cenotaph?" Then they with feigned tears proceeded to the ship, bearing

aboard the offerings to be thrown into the deep for Menelaus. Thereat were we suspicious, and communed amongst ourselves regarding the number of extra voyagers; but still we kept silence out of respect for thy orders, for by intrusting the command of the vessel to the stranger thou didst thus spoil all. Now the other victims gave no trouble, and we easily put them aboard; only the bull refused to go forward along the gangway, but rolled his eyes around and kept bellowing, and, arching his back and glaring askance towards his horns, he would not let us touch him. But Helen's lord cried out: "O! ye who laid waste the town of Ilium, come pick up yon bull, the dead man's offering, on your stout shoulders, as is the way in Hellas, and cast him into the hold;" and as he spoke he drew his sword in readiness. Then they at his command came and caught up the bull and carried him bodily on to the deck. And Menelaus stroked the horse on neck and brow, coaxing it to go aboard. At length, when the ship was fully freighted, Helen climbed the ladder with graceful step and took her seat midway betwixt the rowers' benches, and he sat by her side, even Menelaus who was called dead; and the rest, equally divided on the right and left side of the ship, sat them down, each beside his man, with swords concealed beneath their cloaks, and the billows soon were echoing to the rowers' song, as we heard the boatswain's note. Now when we were put out a space, not very far nor very near, the helmsman asked, "Shall we, sir stranger, sail yet further on our course, or will this serve? For thine it is to command the ship." And he answered: "'Tis far enough for me," while in his right hand he gripped his sword and stepped on to the prow; then standing o'er the bull to slay it, never a word said he of any dead man, but cut its throat and thus made prayer: "Poseidon, lord of the sea, whose home is in the deep, and ye holy daughters of Nereus, bring me and my wife safe and sound to Nauplia's strand from hence! Anon a gush of blood, fair omen for the stranger, spouted into the tide. One cried, "There is treachery in this voyage; why should we now sail to Nauplia? Give the order, helmsman, turn thy rudder." But the son of Atreus, standing where he slew the bull, called to his comrades, "Why do ye, the pick of Hellas, delay to smite and slay the barbarians and fling them from the ship into the waves?" While to thy crew the boatswain cried the opposite command: "Ho! some of you catch up chance spars, break up the benches, or snatch the oar-blade from the thole, and beat out the brains of these our foreign foes." Forthwith up sprang each man, the one part armed with poles that sailors use, the other with swords.

And the ship ran down with blood; while Helen from her seat upon the stern thus cheered them on: “Where is the fame ye won in Troy? show it against these barbarians.” Then as they hasted to the fray, some would fall and some rise up again, while others hadst thou seen laid low in death. But Menelaus in full armour, made his way, sword in hand, to any point where his watchful eye perceived his comrades in distress; so we leapt from the ship and swam, and he cleared the benches of thy rowers. Then did the prince set himself to steer, and bade them make a straight course to Hellas. So they set up the mast, and favouring breezes blew; and they are clear away, while I, from death escaped, let myself down by the anchor chain into the sea; and, just as I was spent, one threw me a rope and rescued me, and drew me to land to bring to thee this message. Ah! there is naught more serviceable to mankind than a prudent distrust.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS I would never have believed that Menelaus could have eluded us and thee, O king, in the way he did on his coming.

THEOCLYMENUS
Woe is me! cozened by a woman’s tricks! My bride hath escaped me. If the ship could have been pursued and overtaken, I would have used every means forthwith to catch the strangers; as it is, I will avenge myself upon my treacherous sister, in that she saw Menelaus in my palace and did not tell me. Wherefore shall she nevermore deceive another by her prophetic art.

(A SERVANT comes out of the palace.)

SERVANT
Ho, there! whither away so fast, my lord? on what bloody thought intent?

THEOCLYMENUS
Whither justice calls me. Out of my path!

SERVANT I will not loose thy robe, for on grievous mischief art thou bent.

THEOCLYMENUS
Shalt thou, a slave, control thy master?

SERVANT
Yea, for I am in my senses.

THEOCLYMENUS I should not say so, if thou wilt not let me

SERVANT
Nay, but that I never will.

THEOCLYMENUS
Slay my sister most accursed.

SERVANT
Say rather, most righteous.

THEOCLYMENUS “Righteous?” She who betrayed me?

SERVANT
There is an honourable treachery, which ’tis right to commit.

THEOCLYMENUS
By giving my bride to another?

SERVANT
Only to those who had a better right.

THEOCLYMENUS
Who hath any rights o’er mine?

SERVANT
He that received her from her father.

THEOCLYMENUS
Nay, but fortune gave her to me.

SERVANT
And destiny took her away.

THEOCLYMENUS “Tis not for thee to decide my affairs.

SERVANT
Only supposing mine be the better counsel.

THEOCLYMENUS
So I am thy subject, not thy ruler.

SERVANT
Aye, a subject bound to do the right, and eschew the wrong.

THEOCLYMENUS
It seems thou art eager to be slain.

SERVANT
Slay me; thy sister shalt thou never slay with my consent, but me perchance; for to die for their masters is the fairest death that noble slaves can find.

(THE DIOSCURI appear from above.)

DIOSCURI
Restrain those bursts of rage that hurry thee to undue lengths, Theoclymenus, king of this country. We are the twin sons of Zeus that call to thee by name, whom Leda bore one day, with Helen too who hath fled from thy palace. For thou art wroth for a marriage never destined for thee; nor is thy sister Theonoe, daughter of a Nereid goddess, wronging thee because she honours the word of God and her father's just behests. For it was ordained that Helen should abide within thy halls up till the present time, but since Troy is razed to the ground and she hath lent her name to the goddesses, no longer need she stay, now must she be united in the self-same wedlock as before, and reach her home and share it with her husband. Withhold then thy malignant blade from thy sister, and believe that she herein is acting with discretion. Long, long ago had we our sister saved, seeing that Zeus has made us gods, but we were too weak for destiny as well as the deities, who willed these things to be. This is my bidding to thee; while to my sister I say, "Sail on with thy husband; and ye shall have a prosperous breeze; for we, thy brethren twain, will course along the deep and bring you safely to your fatherland. And when at last thy goal is reached and thy life ended, thou shalt be famous as a goddess, and with thy

twin brethren share the drink-offering, and like us receive gifts from men, for such is the will of Zeus. Yea, and that spot where the son o Maia first appointed thee a home when from Sparta he removed thee, after stealing an image of thee from Heaven's mansions to prevent thy marriage with Paris, even the isle that lies like a sentinel along the Attic coast, shall henceforth be called by thy name amongst men, for that it welcomed thee when stolen from thy home. Moreover, Heaven ordains that the wanderer Menelaus shall find a home within an island of the blest; for to noble souls hath the deity no dislike, albeit these oft suffer more than those of no account."

THEOCLYMENUS
Ye sons of Leda and of Zeus, I will forego my former quarrel about your sister, nor no longer seek to slay mine own. Let Helen to her home repair, if such is Heaven's pleasure. Ye know that ye are sprung of the same stock as your sister, best of women, chastest too; hail then for the true nobility of Helen's soul, a quality too seldom found amongst her sex!

CHORUS *(chanting)* Many are the forms the heavenly will assumes; and many a thing God brings to pass contrary to expectation: that which was looked for is not accomplished, while Heaven finds out a way for what we never hoped; e'en such has been the issue here.

PHOENICIAN WOMEN

Translated by Theodore Alois Buckley

Phoenician Women is based on the same story as Aeschylus' famous drama *Seven Against Thebes*, with the title referring to the Greek chorus, composed of Phoenician women on their way to Delphi and who are then trapped in Thebes by the war. Euripides wrote the play around 408 BC, at a time when Athens suffered a huge defeat at the hands of Sparta and were facing military disaster.

The play opens with a summary of the story of Oedipus and its aftermath told by Jocasta. She explains that after her husband blinded himself upon discovering that he was her son, his sons Eteocles and Polyneices locked him away in hopes that the people might forget what had happened. He cursed them, proclaiming that neither would rule without killing his brother. To avert this, they agreed to split the country and thus Polyneices allowed Eteocles to rule for one year. When that time expired, Eteocles was supposed to abdicate, allowing his brother to rule for a year. However, when the time came, he refused to do this, forcing his brother into exile. Once in exile, Polyneices went to Argos, where he married the daughter of Adrastus, king of the Argives. He then persuaded Adrastus to send a force to help him reclaim the city.

The Greek text of the play is very poor and scholars have detected several interpolations. Over the centuries large and small interpolations have been inserted into the tragedy, causing some scholars even to doubt whether any of the present text was in fact composed by Euripides.

‘Farewell of Oedipus to the Corpses of His Wife and Sons’ by Edouard Toudouze

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The Scene is in the Court before the royal palace at Thebes.

THE ARGUMENT.

Eteocles having gotten possession of the throne of Thebes, deprived his brother Polynices of his share; but he having come as an exile to Argos, married the daughter of the king Adrastus; but ambitious of returning to his country, and having persuaded his father-in-law, he assembled a great army for Thebes against his brother. His mother Jocasta made him come into the city, under sanction of a truce, and first confer with his brother respecting the empire. But Eteocles being violent and fierce from having possessed the empire, Jocasta could not reconcile her children. — Polynices, prepared as against an enemy, rushed out of the city. Now Tiresias prophesied that victory should be on the side of the Thebans, if Menœceus the son of Creon would give himself up to be sacrificed to Mars. Creon refused to give his son to the city, but the youth was willing, and, his father pointing out to him the means of flight and giving him money, he put himself to death. — The Thebans slew the leaders of the Argives. Eteocles and Polynices in a single combat slew each other, and their mother having found the corses of her sons laid violent hands on herself; and Creon her brother received the kingdom. The Argives defeated in battle retired. But Creon, being morose, would not give up those of the enemy who had fallen at Thebes, for sepulture, and exposed the body of Polynices without burial, and banished Œdipus from his country; in the one instance disregarding the laws of humanity, in the other giving way to passion, nor feeling pity for him after his calamity.

THE PHŒNICIAN VIRGINS.

JOCASTA.

O thou that cuttest thy path through the constellations of heaven, and art mounted on thy golden-joined seats, thou sun, whirling thy flame with thy swift steeds, how inauspicious didst thou dart thy ray on that day when Cadmus came to this land having left the sea-washed coast of Phœnicia; who in former time having married Harmonia, daughter of Venus, begat Polydorus; from him they say sprung Labdacus, and from him Laius. But I am the daughter of Menœceus, and Creon my brother was born of the same mother; me they call Jocasta *(for this name my father gave me)*, and Laius takes me for his wife; but after that he was childless, for a long time sharing my bed in the palace, he went and inquired of Apollo, and at the same time demands the mutual offspring of male children in his family; but the God said, "O king of Thebes renowned for its chariots, sow not for such a harvest of children against the will of the Gods, for if thou shalt beget a son, he that is born shall slay thee, and the whole of thy house shall wade through blood." But having yielded to pleasure, and having fallen into inebriety, he begot to us a son, and having begot him, feeling conscious of his error and the command of the God, gives the babe to some herdsmen to expose at the meads of Juno and the rock of Cithæron, having bored sharp-pointed iron through the middle of his ankles, from which circumstance Greece gave him the name of Œdipus. But him the grooms who attend the steeds of Polybus find and carry home, and placed him in the arms of their mistress. But she rested beneath her bosom him that gave me a mother's pangs, and persuades her husband that she had brought forth. But now my son showing signs of manhood in his darkening cheek, either having suspected it by instinct, or having learned it from some one, went to the temple of Apollo, desirous of discovering his parents; at the same time went Laius my husband, seeking to gain intelligence of his son who had been exposed, if he were no longer living; and both met at the same point of the road at Phocis where it divides itself; and the charioteer of Laius commands him, "Stranger, withdraw out of the way of princes;" but he moved slowly, in silence, with haughty spirit; but the steeds with their hoof dyed with blood the tendons of his feet. At this *(but why need I relate each horrid circumstance besides the deed itself?)* the son kills his father, and having

taken the chariot, sends it as a present to his foster-father Polybus. Now at this time the sphinx preyed vulture-like upon the city with rapacity, my husband now no more, Creon my brother proclaims that he will give my bed as a reward to him who would solve the enigma of the crafty virgin. But by some chance or other Œdipus my son happens to discover the riddle of the sphinx, [and he receives as a prize the sceptre of this land,] and marries me, his mother, wretched he not knowing it, nor knew his mother that she was lying down with her son. And I bear children to my child, two sons, Eteocles and the illustrious Polynices, and two daughters, one her father named Ismene, the elder I called Antigone. But Œdipus, after having gone through all sufferings, having discovered in my bed the marriage with his mother, he perpetrated a deed of horror on his own eyes, having drenched in blood their pupils with his golden buckles. But after that the cheek of my children grows dark with manly down, they hid their father confined with bolts that his sad fortune might be forgotten, which indeed required the greatest policy. He is still living in the palace, but sick in mind through his misfortunes he imprecates the most unhallowed curses on his children, that they may share this house with the sharpened sword. But these two, dreading lest the Gods should bring to completion these curses, should they dwell together, in friendly compact determined that Polynices the younger son should first go a willing exile from this land, but that Eteocles remaining here should hold the sceptre for a year, changing in his turn; but after that he sat on the throne of power, he moves not from his seat, but drives Polynices an exile from this land. But he having fled to Argos, and having contracted an alliance with Adrastus, assembles together and leads a vast army of Argives; and having marched to these very walls with seven gates he demands his father's sceptre and his share of the land. But I to quell this strife persuaded my son to come to his brother, confiding in a truce before he grasped the spear. And the messenger who was sent declares that he will come. But, O thou that inhabitest the shining clouds of heaven, Jove, preserve us, give reconciliation to my children; it becomes thee, if thou art wise, not to suffer the same man always to be unfortunate.

TUTOR, ANTIGONE.

TUT. O thou fair bud in thy father's house, Antigone, since thy mother has permitted thee to leave the virgin's apartments for the extreme chamber of

the mansion, in order to view the Argive army in compliance with thy entreaties, yet stay, until I shall first investigate the path, lest any citizen should appear in the pass, and to me taunts should come as a slave, and to thee as a princess: and I who well know each circumstance will tell you all that I saw or heard from the Argives, when I went bearing the offer of a truce to thy brother, from this place thither, and again to this place from him. But no citizen approaches this house; come, ascend with thy steps these ancient stairs of cedar, and survey the plains, and by the streams of Ismenus and Dirce's fount how great is the host of the enemy.

ANT. Stretch forth now, stretch forth thine aged hand from the stairs to my youth, raising up the steps of my feet.

TUT. Behold, join thy hand, virgin, thou hast come in lucky hour, for the Pelasgian host is now in motion, and they are separating the bands from one another.

ANT. O awful daughter of Latona, Hecate, the field all brass gleaming like lightning.

TUT. For Polynices hath not come tamely to this land, raging with host of horsemen, and ten thousand shields.

ANT. Are the gates fastened with bars, and is the brazen bolt fitted to the stone-work of Amphion's wall?

TUT. Take courage; as to the interior the city is safe, But view the first chief, if thou desirest to know.

ANT. Who is he with the white-plumed helmet, who commands in the van of the army, moving lightly round on his arm his brazen shield?

TUT. He is a leader, lady.

ANT. Who is he? From whom sprung? Speak, aged man, what is he called by name?

TUT. He indeed is called by birth a Mycenæan, and he dwells at the streams of Lerna, the king Hippomedon.

ANT. Ah! how haughty, how terrible to behold! like to an earth-born giant, starlike in countenance amidst his painted devices, he corresponds not with the race of mortals.

TUT. Dost thou not see him now passing the stream of Dirce, a general?

ANT. Here is another, another fashion of arms. But who is he?

TUT. He is the son of Œneus, Tydeus, and bears on his breast the Ætolian Mars.

ANT. Is this the prince, O aged man, who is husband to the sister of my brother's wife? In his arms how different of color, of barbaric mixture!

TUT. For all the Ætolians, my child, bear the target, and hurl with the lance, most certain in their aim.

ANT. But how, O aged man, dost thou know these things so perfectly?

TUT. Having seen the devices of the shields, then I remarked them, when I went to bear the offer of a truce to thy brother, beholding which, I recognize the warriors.

ANT. But who is this, who is passing round the tomb of Zethus, with clustering locks, in his eyes a Gorgon to behold, in appearance a youth?

TUT. A general he is. [See Note [A].]

ANT. How a crowd in complete armor attends him behind!

TUT. This is Parthenopæus, son of Atalanta.

ANT. But, may Diana who rushes over the mountains with his mother destroy him, having subdued him with her arrows, who has come against my city to destroy it.

TUT. May it be so, my child, nevertheless they are come with justice to this land; wherefore also I fear lest the Gods should judge rightly.

ANT. Where, but where is he who was born of one mother with me in hard fate, O dearest old man; tell me, where is Polynices?

TUT. He is standing near the tomb of the seven virgin daughters of Niobe, close by Adrastus. Seest thou him?

ANT. I see indeed, but not distinctly; but somehow I see the resemblance of his form, and his shape shadowed out. Would that with my feet I could perform the journey of the winged cloud through the air to my brother, then would I fling my arms round his dearest neck, after so long a time a wretched exile. How splendid is he, O old man, in his golden armor, glittering like the morning rays of the sun.

TUT. He will come to this house confiding in the truce, so as to fill thee with joy.

ANT. But who, O aged man, is this, who guides his milk-white steeds seated in his chariot?

TUT. The prophet Amphiaraus this, O my mistress, and with him the victims, the libations of the earth delighting in blood.

AST. O thou daughter of the brightly girded sun, thou moon, golden-circled light, applying what quiet and temperate blows to his steeds does he direct his chariot! But where is he who utters such dreadful insults against this city, Capaneus?

TUT. He is scanning the approach to the towers, measuring the walls both from their foundation to the top.

ANT. O vengeance, and ye loud-roaring thunders of Jove, and thou blasting fire of the lightning, do thou quell this more-than-mortal arrogance. This is he who will with his spear give to Mycenæ, and to the streams of Lernæan Triæna, and to the Amymonian waters of Neptune, the Theban women, having invested them with slavery. Sever, O awful Goddess, never, O

daughter of Jove, with golden clusters of ringlets, Diana, may I endure servitude.

TUT. My child, enter the palace, and at home remain in thy virgin chambers, since thou hast arrived at the indulgement of thy desire, as to what you were anxious to behold. For, since confusion has entered the city, a crowd of women is advancing to the royal palace. The race of women is prone to complaint, and if they find but small occasion for words, they add more, and it is a sort of pleasure to women, to speak nothing well-advised one of another.

CHORUS.

I have come, having left the Tyrian wave, the first-fruits of Loxias, from the sea-washed Phœnicia, a slave for the shrine of Apollo, that I might dwell under the snowy brows of Parnassus, having sped my way over the Ionian flood by the oar, the west wind with its blasts riding over the barren plains of waters which flow round Sicily, the sweetest murmur in the heavens. Chosen out from my city the fairest present to Apollo, I came to the land of the Cadmeans, the illustrious descendants of Agenor, sent hither to these kindred towers of Laius. And I am made the slave of Apollo in like manner with the golden-framed images. Moreover the water of Castalia awaits me, to lave the virgin pride of my tresses, in the ministry of Apollo. O blazing rock, the flame of fire that seems double above the Dionysian heights of Bacchus, and thou vine, who distillest the daily nectar, producing the fruitful cluster from the tender shoot; and ye divine caves of the dragon, and ye mountain watch-towers of the Gods, and thou hallowed snowy mountain, would that I were the chorus of the immortal God free from alarms encompassing thee around, by the caves of Apollo in the centre of the earth, having left Dirce. But now impetuous Mars having advanced before the walls lights up against this city, which may the Gods avert, hostile war; for common are the misfortunes of friends, and common is it, if this land defended by its seven turrets should suffer any calamity, to the Phœnician country, alas! alas! common is the affinity, common are the descendants of Io bearing horns; of which woes I have a share. But a thick cloud of shields glares around the city, the likeness of gory battle, bearing which destruction from the Furies to the children of Œdipus Mars shall quickly advance. O

Pelasgian Argos, I dread thy power, and vengeance from the Gods, for he rushes not his arms to this war unjustly, who seeks to recover his home.

POLYNICES, CHORUS.

POL. The bolts indeed of the gate-keepers have with ease admitted me, that I might come within the walls; wherefore also I fear, lest, having caught me within their nets, they let not my body go without bloodshed. On which account my eye must be turned about on every side, both that way and this, lest there be treachery. But armed in my hand with this sword, I will give myself confidence of daring. Ha! Who is this; or do we fear a noise? Every thing appears terrible even to the bold, when his foot shall pass across a hostile country. I trust however in my mother, at the same time I scarce trust, who persuaded me to come hither confiding in a truce. But protection is nigh; for the hearths of the altars are at hand, and houses not deserted. Come. I will let go my sword into its dark scabbard, and will question these who they are, that are standing at the palace. Ye female strangers, tell me, from what country do ye approach Grecian habitations?

CHOR. The Phœnician is my paternal country, she that nurtured me: and the descendants of Agenor sent me hither from the spoils, the first-fruits to Apollo. And while the renowned son of Œdipus was preparing to send me to the revered shrine, and to the altars of Phœbus, in the mean time the Argives marched against the city. But do thou in turn answer me, who thou art, who hast come to this bulwark of the Theban land with its seven gates?

POL. My father is Œdipus the son of Laius; Jocasta daughter of Menœceus brought me forth; the Theban people call me Polynices.

CHOR. O thou allied to the sons of Agenor, my lords, by whom I was sent, I fall at thy knees in lowly posture, O king, preserving my country’s custom. Thou hast come, thou hast come, after a length of time, to thy paternal land. O venerable matron, come forth quickly, open the doors; dost thou hear, O mother, that producedst this hero? why dost thou delay to leave thy lofty mansion, and to embrace thy child with thine arms?

JOCASTA, POLYNICES, CHORUS.

JOC. Hearing the Phœnician tongue, ye virgins, within this mansion, I drag my steps trembling with age. Ah! my son, after length of time, after numberless days, I behold thy countenance; clasp thy mother's bosom in thine arms, throw around her thy kisses, and the dark ringlets of thy clustering hair, shading my neck. Ah! scarce possible is it that thou appearest in thy mother's arms so unhoped for, and so unexpected. How shall I address thee? how shall I perform all? how shall I, walking in rapture around thee on that side and this, both with my hands and words, reap the varied pleasure, the delight of my former joys? O my son, thou hast left thy father's house deserted, sent away an exile by wrongful treatment from thy brother. How longed for by thy friends! how longed for by Thebes! From which time I am both shorn of my hoary locks, letting them fall with tears, with wailing; deprived, my child, of the white robes, I receive in exchange around me these dark and dismal weeds. But the old man in the palace deprived of sight, always preserving with tears regret for the unanimity of the brothers which is separated from the family, has madly rushed on self-destruction with the sword and with the noose above the beams of the house, bewailing the curse imprecated on his children; and with cries of woe he is always hidden in darkness. But thou, my child, I hear, art both joined in marriage, and hast the joys of love in a foreign family, and cherishest a foreign alliance; intolerable to this thy mother and to the aged Laius, the woe of a foreign marriage brought upon us. But neither did I light the torch of fire for you, as is customary in the marriage rites, as befits the happy mother; nor was Ismenus careful of the bridal rites in the luxury of the bath: and the entrance of thy bride was made in silence through the Theban city. May these ills perish, whether the sword, or discord, or thy father is the cause, or whether fate has rushed with violence upon the house of Œdipus; for the weight of these sorrows has fallen upon me.

CHOR. Parturition with the attendant throes has a wonderful effect on women; and somehow the whole race of women have strong affection toward their children.

POL. My mother, determining wisely, and yet not determining wisely, have I come to men my foes; but it is necessary that all must be enamored of their country; but whoever says otherwise, pleases himself with vain words, but has his heart there. But so far have I come to trouble and terror, lest any

treachery from my brother should slay me, so that having my hand on my sword I proceeded through the city rolling round my eye; but one thing is on my side, the truce and thy faith, which has brought me within my paternal walls: but I have come with many tears, after a length of time beholding the courts and the altars of the Gods, and the schools wherein I was brought up, and the fount of Dirce, from which banished by injustice, I inhabit a foreign city, having a stream of tears flowing through my eyes. But, for from one woe springs a second, I behold thee having thy head shorn of its locks, and these sable garments; alas me! on account of my misfortunes. How dreadful a thing, mother, is the enmity of relations, having means of reconciliation seldom to be brought about! For how fares the old man my father in the palace, vainly looking upon darkness; and how fare my two sisters? Are they indeed bewailing my wretched banishment?

JOC. Some God miserably destroys the race of Œdipus; for thus began it, when I brought forth children in that unhallowed manner, and thy father married me in evil hour, and thou didst spring forth. But why relate these things? What is sent by the Gods we must bear. But how I may ask the questions I wish, I know not, for I fear lest I wound at all thy feelings; but I have a great desire.

POL. But inquire freely, leave nothing out. For what you wish, my mother, this is dear to me.

JOC. I ask thee therefore, first, for the information that I wish to obtain. What is the being deprived of one’s country, is it a great ill?

POL. The greatest: and greater is it in deed than in word.

JOC. What is the reason of that? What is that so harsh to exiles?

POL. One thing, and that the greatest, not to have the liberty of speaking.

JOC. This that you have mentioned belongs to a slave, not to give utterance to what one thinks.

POL. It is necessary to bear with the follies of those in power.

JOC. And this is painful, to be unwise with the unwise.

POL. But for interest we must bend to slavery contrary to our nature.

JOC. But hopes support exiles, as report goes.

POL. They look upon them with favorable eyes, at least, but are slow of foot.

JOC. Hath not time shown them to be vain?

POL. They have a certain sweet delight to set against misfortunes.

JOC. But whence wert thou supported, before thou foundest means of sustenance by thy marriage?

POL. At one time I had food for the day, at another I had not.

JOC. And did the friends and hosts of your father not assist you?

POL. Be prosperous, *and thou shalt have friends*: but friends are none, should one be in adversity.

JOC. Did not thy noble birth raise thee to great distinction?

POL. To want is wretched; high birth fed me not.

JOC. Their own country, it appears, is the dearest thing to men.

POL. You can not express by words how dear it is.

JOC. But how camest thou to Argos? What intention hadst thou?

POL. Apollo gave a certain oracle to Adrastus.

JOC. What is this thou hast mentioned? I am unable to discover.

POL. To unite his daughters in marriage with a boar and lion.

JOC. And what part of the name of beasts belongs to you, my son.

POL. I know not. The God called me to this fortune.

JOC. For the God is wise. But in what manner didst thou obtain her bed?

POL. It was night; but I came to the portals of Adrastus.

JOC. In search of a couch to rest on, as a wandering exile?

POL. This was the case, and then indeed there came a second exile.

JOC. Who was this? how unfortunate then was he also!

POL. Tydeus, who they say sprung from Œneus his sire.

JOC. In what then did Adrastus liken you to beasts?

POL. Because we came to blows for lodging.

JOC. In this the son of Talaus understood the oracle.

POL. And gave in marriage to us two his two virgin daughters.

JOC. Art thou fortunate then in thy marriage alliance, or unfortunate?

POL. My marriage can not be found fault with up to this day.

JOC. But how didst thou persuade an army to follow you hither?

POL. Adrastus swore this oath to his two sons-in-law, that he would replace both in their own country, but me first. And many princes of the Argives and Mycenæans are at hand, rendering to me a sad, but necessary favor; for I am leading an army against this my own city; but I have called the Gods to witness how unwillingly I have raised the spear against my dearest parents. But the dissolution of these ills extends to thee, my mother, that having reconciled the friendly brothers, you may free from toil me and thyself, and the whole city. It is a proverb long ago chanted, but nevertheless I will repeat it; wealth is honored most of all things by men, and has the greatest

influence of any thing among men. In pursuit of which I am come, leading hither ten thousand spears: for a nobly-born man in poverty is nothing.

CHOR. And see Eteocles here comes to this mediation; thy business it is, O Jocasta, being their mother, to speak words, with which thou shalt reconcile thy children.

ETEOCLES, POLYNICES, JOCASTA, CHORUS.

ETEO. Mother, I am present; giving this grace to thee, I have come; what must I do? Let some one begin the conference. Since arranging also around the walls the chariots of the bands, I restrained the city, that I may hear from thee the common terms of reconciliation, for which thou hast permitted this man to come within the walls under sanction of a truce, having persuaded me.

JOC. Stay; precipitate haste has not justice; but slow counsels perform most deeds in wisdom. But repress that fierce eye and those blasts of rage; for thou art not looking on the Gorgon's head cut off at the neck, but thou art looking on thy brother who is come to thee. And do thou again, Polynices, turn thy face toward thy brother; for looking at the same point with thine eyes, thou wilt both speak better, and receive his words better. But I wish to give you a wise piece of advice. When a friend is enraged with a man his friend, having met him face to face, let him fix his eyes on his friend's eyes, this only ought he to consider, the end for which he is come, but to have no recollection of former grievances. Thy words then first, my son, Polynices; for thou art come leading an army of Argives, having suffered injustice, as thou sayest; and may some God be umpire and the reconciler of your strife.

POL. The speech of truth is simple, and those things which are just need not wily interpretations; for they have energy themselves; but the unjust speech, unsound in itself, requires cunning preparations to gloze it. But I have previously considered for my father's house, and my own advantage and that of this man; desiring to escape the curses, which Œdipus denounced formerly against us, I myself of my own accord departed from this land, having given him to rule over his own country for the space of a year, so that I myself should have the government again, having received it in turn, and not having come into enmity and bloodshed with this man to perform

some evil deed, and to suffer what is now taking place. But he having assented to this, and having brought the Gods to witness his oaths, has performed nothing of what he promised, but himself holds the regal power and my share of the palace. And now I am ready, having received my own right, to send the army away from out of this land, and to regulate my house, having received it in my turn, and to give it up again to this man for the same space of time, and neither to lay my country waste, nor to apply to its towers the means of ascent by the firmly-fixed ladders. Which, should I not meet with justice, will I endeavor to put in execution: and I call the Gods as witnesses of this, that acting in every thing with justice, I am without justice deprived of my country in the most unrighteous manner. These individual circumstances, mother, not having collected together intricacies of argument, have I declared, but both to the wise and to the illiterate just, as appears to me.

CHOR. To me indeed, although we have not been brought up according to the Grecian land, nevertheless to me thou appearest to speak with judgment.

ETEO. If the same thing were judged honorable alike by all, and at the same time wise, there would not be doubtful strife among men. But now nothing is similar, nothing the same among mortals, except in names; but the sense is not the same, for I, my mother, will speak having kept nothing back; I would mount to the rising of the stars, and sink beneath the earth, were I able to perform this, so that I might possess the greatest of the Goddesses, kingly power. This prize then, my mother, I am not willing rather to give up to another, than to preserve for myself. For it implies cowardice in him, whoever having lost the greater share, hath received the less; but in addition to this I feel ashamed, that this man having come with arms, and laying the country waste, should obtain what he wishes; for to Thebes this would be a reproach, if through fear of the Mycenæan spear I should give up my sceptre for this man to hold. But he ought, my mother, to effect a reconciliation, not by arms: for speech does every thing which even the sword of the enemy could do. But if he is desirous of inhabiting this land in any other way, it is in his power; but the other point I will never give up willingly. When it is in my power to rule, ever to be a slave to him? Wherefore come fire, come sword, yoke thy steeds, fill the plains with chariots, since I will not give up my kingly power to this man. For if one

must be unjust, it is most glorious to be unjust concerning empire, but in every thing else one should be just.

CHOR. It is not right to speak well, where the deeds are not glorious; for this is not honorable, but galling to justice.

JOC. My son, Eteocles, not every ill is added to age, but experience has it in its power to evince more wisdom than youth. Why, my child, dost thou so desirously court ambition, the most baneful of the deities? do not thou; the Goddess is unjust. But she hath entered into many families and happy states and hath come forth again, to the destruction of those who have to do with her. Of whom thou art madly enamored. This is more noble, my son, to honor equality, which ever links friends with friends, and states with states, and allies with allies: for equality is sanctioned by law among men. But the lesser share is ever at enmity with the greater, and straight begins the day of hatred. For equality arranged also among mortals measures, and the divisions of weights, and defined numbers. And the dark eye of night, and the light of the sun, equally walk their annual round, and neither of them being overcome hath envy of the other. Thus the sun and the night are subservient to men, but wilt not thou brook having an equal share of government, and give his share to him? Then where is justice? Why dost thou honor so unboundedly that prosperous injustice, royalty, and think so highly of her? Is the being conspicuous honorable? At least, it is empty honor. Or dost thou desire to labor much, possessing much in thy house? but what is superfluity? It possesses but a name; since a sufficiency indeed to the temperate is abundance. Neither do men enjoy riches as their own, but having the property of the Gods do we cherish them. And when they list, again do they take them away. Come, if I ask thee, having proposed together two measures, whether it is thy wish to reign, or save the city? Wilt thou say, to reign? But should he conquer thee, and the Argive spears overcome the Cadmæanforces, thou wilt behold this city of the Thebans vanquished, thou wilt behold many captive maidens with violence ravished by men your foes. Bitter then to Thebes will be the power which thou seekest to hold; but yet thou art ambitious of it. To thee I say this: but to thee, Polynices, say I, that Adrastus hath conferred an unwise favor on thee; and foolishly hast thou also come to destroy this city. Come, if thou wilt subdue this land *(may which never happen)*, by the Gods, how wilt thou

erect trophies of thy spear? And how again wilt thou sacrifice the first-fruits, having conquered thy country? and how wilt thou engrave upon the spoils by the waters of Inachus, “Having laid Thebes in ashes, Polynices consecrated these shields to the Gods?” Never, my son, may it come to thee to receive such glory from the Greeks. But again, shouldest thou be conquered, and should the arms of the other prevail, how wilt thou return to Argos having left behind ten thousand dead? Surely some one will say, O! unfortunate marriage alliance! O Adrastus, who placed them on us, through the nuptials of one bride we are lost! Thou art hastening two ills, my son, to be deprived of those, and to fail in this. Give up your too great ardor, give it up; the follies of two when they clash together in the same point, are the most hateful ill.

CHOR. O ye Gods, may ye be averters of these ills, and grant to the children of Œdipus some means of agreement.

ETEO. My mother, this is not a contest of words, but intervening time is fruitlessly wasted; and thy earnestness avails nothing; for we shall not agree in any other way, than on the terms proposed, that I holding the sceptre be monarch of this land. Forbearing then tedious admonitions, let me have my way; and do thou begone from out these walls, or thou shalt die.

POL. By whose hand? Who is there so invulnerable, who having pointed the murderous sword against me, shall not bear the same fate?

ETEO. He is near, not far removed from thee: dost thou look on these my hands?

POL. I see them. But wealth is cowardly, and feeble, loving life.

ETEO. And therefore hast thou come, with such a host against one who is nothing in arms?

POL. For a cautious general is better than one daring.

ETEO. Thou art insolent, having trusted in the truce, which preserves you from death.

POL. A second time again I demand of you the sceptre and my share of the land.

ETEO. I will admit no demand, for I will regulate my own family.

POL. Holding more than your share?

ETEO. I own it; but quit this land.

POL. O ye altars of my paternal Gods.

ETEO. Which thou art come to destroy?

POL. Do ye hear me?

ETEO. Who will hear thee, who art marching against thy country?

POL. And ye shrines of the Gods delighting in the milk-white steeds;

ETEO. Who hate thee.

POL. I am driven out of my own country.

ETEO. For thou hast come to destroy it.

POL. With injustice indeed, O ye Gods!

ETEO. At Mycenæ call upon the Gods, not here.

POL. Thou art impious.

ETEO. But not my country's enemy, as thou art.

POL. Who drives me out without my share.

ETEO. And I will put thee to death in addition.

POL. My father, hearest thou what I suffer?

ETEO. For he hears what wrongs thou doest.

POL. And thou, my mother?

ETEO. It is not lawful for thee to mention thy mother.

POL. O my city!

ETEO. To Argos go, and call on Lerna's stream.

POL. I will go, do not distress thyself; but thee, my mother, I mention with honor.

ETEO. Depart from out of the country.

POL. I will go out; but grant me to see my father.

ETEO. You will not obtain your request.

POL. But my virgin sisters then.

ETEO. Never shalt thou behold these.

POL. O my sisters!

ETEO. Why callest thou on these — being their greatest enemy?

POL. My mother, but thou farewell.

JOC. Do I experience any thing that is well, my son?

POL. I am no longer thy child.

JOC. To many troubles was I born.

POL. For he throws insults on us.

ETEO. For I am insulted in turn.

POL. Where wilt thou stand before the towers?

ETEO. Why dost thou ask me this question?

POL. I will oppose myself to thee, to slay thee.

ETEO. Desire of this seizes me also.

JOC. Wretched me! what will ye do, my children?

POL. The deed itself will show.

JOC. Will ye not escape your father's curses?

ETEO. Let the whole house perish!

POL. Since soon my blood-stained sword will not remain any longer in inactivity. But I call to witness the land that nurtured me, and the Gods, how dishonored I am driven from this land, suffering such foul treatment, as a slave and not born of the same father Œdipus. And if any thing befalls thee, my city, blame not me, but him; for against my will have I come, and against my will am I driven from this land. And thou, king Apollo, God of our streets, and ye shrines, farewell, and ye my equals, and ye altars of the Gods receiving the victims; for I know not if it is allowed me ever again to address you. But hope does not yet slumber, in which I have trusted with the favor of the Gods, that having slain this man, I shall be master of this Theban land.

ETEO. Depart from out of the country; with truth indeed did your father give you the name of Polynices by some divine foreknowledge, a name corresponding with strife.

CHORUS.

Cadmus came from Tyre to this land, before whom the quadrupede heifer bent with willing fall, showing the accomplishment of the oracle, where the divine word ordered him to colonize the plains of the Aonians productive of wheat, where indeed the fair-flowing stream of the water of Dirce passes over the verdant and deep-furrowed fields, where the * * * * mother produced Bacchus, by her marriage with Jove, whom the wreathed ivy twining around him instantly, while yet a babe, blest and covered with its verdant shady branches, an event to be celebrated with Bacchic revel by the

Theban virgins and inspired women. There was the bloodstained dragon of Mars, the savage guard, watching with far-rolling eyeballs over the flowing fountains and grassy streams; whom Cadmus, having come for water for purification, slew with a fragment of rock, the destroyer of the monster having thrown his arms with blows on his blood-stained head, by the counsel of the divine Pallas born without mother, having thrown the teeth fallen to the earth upon the deep-furrowed plains. Whence the earth sent forth a spectacle, an armed [host] above the extreme limits of the ground; but iron-hearted slaughter again united them with their beloved earth; and sprinkled with blood the ground which showed them to the serene gales of the air. And thee, sprung of old from our ancestor Io, Epaphus, O progeny of Jove, on thee have I called, have I called in a foreign tongue, with prayers in foreign accent, come, come to this land *(thy descendants have founded it)*, where the two Goddesses Proserpine and the dear Goddess Ceres, queen of all *(since earth nurtures all things)*, have held their possessions, send the fire-bearing Goddesses to defend this land: since every thing is easy to the Gods.

ETEOCLES, CHORUS, MESSENGER.

ETEO. Go thou, and bring hither Creon son of Menœceus, the brother of my mother Jocasta, saying this, that I wish to communicate with him counsels of a private nature and those which concern the common welfare of the country, before we go into battle and the ranks of war. And see, he spares the trouble of your steps, by his presence; for I see him coming toward my palace.

CREON, ETEOCLES, CHORUS.

CRE. Surely have I visited many places, desiring to see you, O king Eteocles! and I have gone round to the gates and the guards of the Thebans, seeking you.

ETEO. And indeed I have wished to see you, Creon, for I found attempts at reconciliation altogether fail when I came and entered into conference with Polynices.

CRE. I have heard that he aspires to higher thoughts than Thebes, having trusted in his alliance with Adrastus and his army. But it becomes us to hold these things in dependence on the Gods. But what is most immediately before us, this am I come to acquaint you with.

ETEO. What is this? for I understand not your speech.

CRE. A prisoner is arrived from the Argives.

ETEO. Does he bring us any news of those stationed there?

CRE. The Argive army is preparing quickly to surround the city of the Thebans with thickly-ranged arms.*(Note [B].)*

ETEO. Therefore must we draw our forces out of the Theban city.

CRE. Whither? Dost thou not in the impetuosity of youth see what it behooves thee to see?

ETEO. Without these trenches, as we are quickly about to fight.

CRE. Small are the forces of this land; but theirs innumerable.

ETEO. I know that they are bold in words.

CRE. Argos of the Greeks has some renown.

ETEO. Be confident; quickly will I fill the plain with their slaughter.

CRE. I would it were so: but this I see is a work of much labor.

ETEO. Know that I will not restrain my forces within the walls.

CRE. And yet the whole of victory is prudence.

ETEO. Dost thou wish then that I have recourse to other measures?

CRE. To every measure indeed, rather than hazard all on one battle.

ETEO. What if we were to attack them by night from ambush?

CRE. If, having failed, at least you can have a safe retreat hither.

ETEO. Night brings the same advantage to all, but more to the daring.

CRE. Dreadful is it to fail in the darkness of night.

ETEO. But shall I lead my force against them while at their meal?

CRE. That would cause terror; but we must conquer.

ETEO. The ford of Dirce is indeed deep to pass.

CRE. Every thing is inferior to a good guard.

ETEO. What then, shall I charge the Argive army with my cavalry?

CRE. And there the army is fenced round with chariots.

ETEO. What then shall I do? give up the city to the enemy?

CRE. By no means; but deliberate if thou art wise.

ETEO. What more prudent forethought is there?

CRE. They say that they have seven men, as I have heard.

ETEO. What have they been commanded to do? for their strength is small.

CRE. To head their bands, to besiege the seven gates.

ETEO. What then shall we do? I will not wait this indecision.

CRE. Do thou thyself also choose seven men for the gates.

ETEO. To head divisions, or for single combat?

CRE. To head divisions, having selected the bravest.

ETEO. I understand you; to guard the approach to the walls.

CRE. And with them other generals; one man sees not every thing?

ETEO. Having chosen them for boldness, or prudence in judgment?

CRE. For both; for one without the other availeth nothing.

ETEO. It shall be so: and having gone to the city of the seven towers, I will appoint chiefs at the gates, as you advise, having opposed equal champions against equal foes. But to mention the name of each would be a great delay, the enemy encamped under our very walls. But I will go, that I may not be idle with my hand. And may it befall me to find my brother opposed to me, and being joined with me in battle, to take him with my spear, [and to slay him, who came to desolate my country.] But it is thy duty to attend to the marriage of my sister Antigone and thy son Hæmon, if I fail aught of success; but the firm vow made before I now confirm at my going out. Thou art my mother's brother, why need I use more words? Treat her worthily, both for thine own and my sake. But my father incurs the punishment of the rashness he brought upon himself, having quenched his sight; I praise him not; even us will he put to death with his execrations, should he gain his point. But one thing is left undone by us, if the soothsayer Tiresias have any oracle to deliver, to enquire this of him; but I will send thy son, Creon, Menœceus, of the same name with thy father, to bring Tiresias hither. With pleasure will he enter into conversation with you; but I lately reviled him with his divining art, so that he is offended with me. But this charge I give the city with thee, Creon; if my arms should conquer, that the body of Polynices be never buried in this Theban land; but that the man who buries him shall die, although he be a friend. This I have told you: but my attendants I tell, bring out my arms, and my panoply which covers me, that we may go this appointed contest of the spear with victorious justice. But to Caution, the most valued of the Goddesses, will we address our prayers to preserve this city.

CHORUS.

O Mars, cause of infinite woe, why, I pray, art thou so possessed with blood and death, so discordant with the revels of Bacchus? Thou dost not in the

circle of beautiful dancers in the bloom of youth, having let flow thy hair, on the breath of the flute modulate strains, in which there is a lovely power to renew the dance. But with thy armed men, having excited the army of Argives against Thebes with blood, thou dancest before the city in a most inharmonious revel, thou movest not thy foot maddened by the thyrsus clad in fawn-skins, but thy solid-hoofed steed with thy chariot and horses' bits; and bounding at the streams of Ismenus, thou art borne rapidly in the chariot-course, having excited against the race of those sown [by Cadmus,] a raging host that grasp the shield, well armed, adverse to us at the walls of stone: surely Discord is some dreadful Goddess, who devised all these calamities against the princes of this land, the Labdacidæ involved in woe. O thou forest of heavenly foliage, most productive of beasts, thou snowy eye of Diana, Cithæron, never oughtest thou to have nourished him doomed to death, the son of Jocasta, Œdipus, the babe who was cast out from his home, marked by the golden clasps. Neither ought that winged virgin the Sphinx, thou mountain monster, that grief to this land, to have come, with her most inharmonious lays; who formerly approaching our walls, bore in her four talons the descendants of Cadmus to the inaccessible light of heaven, whom the infernal Pluto sends against the Thebans; but other ill-fated discord among the children of Œdipus springs up in the palace and in the city. For that which is not honorable, never can be honorable, as neither can children the unhallowed offspring of the mother, the pollution of the father. But she came to a kindred bed. Thou didst produce, O [Theban] land! thou didst produce formerly *(as I heard the foreign report, I heard it formerly at home)*, the race sprung from teeth from the fiery-crested dragon fed on beasts, the proudest honor of Thebes. But to the nuptials of Harmonia the Gods came of old, and by the harp and by the lyre of Amphion uprose the walls of Thebes the tower of the double streams, at the midst of the pass of Dirce, which waters the verdant plain before Ismenus. And Io, our ancient mother, doomed to bear horns, brought forth a line of Theban kings. But this city receiving ten thousand goods one in change for another, hath stood in the highest chaplets of war.

TIRESIAS *(led by his daughter)*, MENŒCEUS, CREON, CHORUS.

TIR. Lead onward, my daughter, since thou art an eye to my blind steps, as the star to the mariners. Placing my steps hither on this level plain, proceed

lest we stumble; thy father is feeble; and preserve carefully in thy virgin hand my calculations which I took, having learned the auguries of the birds, sitting in the sacred seats where I fortell the future. My child, Menœceus, son of Creon, tell me, how far is the remainder of the journey through the city to thy father? Since my knees are weary, and with difficulty I accomplish such a long journey.

CRE. Be of good cheer; for thou hast steered thy foot, Tiresias, near to thy friends; but take hold of him, my son. Since every chariot, and the foot of the aged man is used to expect the assistance of another's hand.

TIR. Well: I am present; but why didst thou call me with such haste, Creon?

CRE. We have not as yet forgotten: but recover thy strength, and collect thy breath, having thrown aside the fatigue occasioned by the journey.

TIR. I am relaxed indeed with toil, brought hither from the Athenians the day before this. For there also was a contest of the spear with Eumolpus, where I made the descendants of Cecrops splendid conquerors. And I wear this golden chaplet, as thou seest, having received the first-fruits of the spoil of the enemy.

CRE. Thy victorious garlands I make a happy omen. For we, as thou well knowest, are tossing in a storm of war with the Greeks, and great is the hazard of Thebes. The king Eteocles has therefore gone forth adorned with his armor already to battle with the Argives. But to me has he sent that I might learn from you, by doing what we should be most likely to preserve the city.

TRE. For Eteocles' sake indeed I would have stopped my mouth, and repressed the oracles, but to thee, since thou desirest to know them, will I declare them: for this land labors under the malady of old, O Creon, from the time when Laïus became the father of children in spite of the Gods, and begat the wretched Œdipus, a husband for his mother. But the cruel lacerations of his eyes were in the wisdom of the Gods, and a warning to Greece. Which things the sons of Œdipus seeking to conceal among themselves by the lapse of time, as about forsooth to escape from the Gods, erred through their ignorance, for they neither giving the honor due to their

father, nor allowing him a free liberty, infuriated the unfortunate man: and he breathed out against them dreadful threats, being both in affliction, and moreover dishonored. And I, what things omitting to do, and what words omitting to speak on the subject, have nevertheless fallen into the hatred of the sons of Œdipus? But death from their mutual hands is near them, O Creon. And many corses fallen around corses, having mingled the weapons of Argos and Thebes, shall cause bitter lamentations to the Theban land. And thou, O wretched city, art sapped from thy foundations, unless men will obey my words. For this were the first thing, that not any of the family of Œdipus should be citizens, nor king of the territory, inasmuch as they are possessed by demons, and are they that will overthrow the city. And since the evil triumphs over the good, there is one other thing requisite to insure preservation. But, as this is neither safe for me to say, and distressing to those on whom the lot has fallen, to give to the city the balm of preservation, I will depart: farewell; for being an individual with many shall I suffer what is about to happen if it must be so; for what can I do!

CRE. Stay here, old man.

TIR. Lay not hold upon me.

CRE. Remain; why dost thou fly me?

TIR. Thy fortune flies thee, but not I.

CRE. Tell me the means of preserving the citizens and their city.

TRE. Thou wishest now indeed, and soon thou wilt not wish.

CRE. And how am I not willing to preserve my country?

TIR. Art thou willing then to hear, and art thou eager?

CRE. For toward what ought I to have a greater eagerness?

TIR. Hear now then my prophecies. — But this first I wish to ascertain clearly, where is Menœceus who brought me hither.

CRE. He is not far off, but close to thee.

TIR. Let him depart then afar from my oracles.

CRE. He that is my son will keep secret what ought to be kept secret.

TIR. Art thou willing then that I speak in his presence?

CRE. *Yes*: for he would be delighted to hear of the means of preservation.

TIR. Hear now then the tenor of my oracles; what things doing ye may preserve the city of the Cadmeans. It is necessary for thee to sacrifice this thy son Menœceus for the country, since thou thyself callest for this fortune.

CRE. What sayest thou, what word is this thou hast spoken, old man?

TIR. As circumstances are, thus also oughtest thou to act.

CRE. O thou, that hast said many evils in a short time!

TIR. To thee at least; but to thy country great and salutary.

CRE. I heard not, I attended not; let the city go where it will.

TIR. This is no longer the same man; he retracts again what he said.

CRE. Farewell! depart; for I have no need of thy prophecies.

TIR. Has truth perished, because thou art unfortunate?

CRE. By thy knees I implore thee, and by thy reverend locks.

TIR. Why kneel to me? the evils thou askest are hard to be controlled. *(Note [E].)*

CRE. Keep it secret; and speak not these words to the city.

TIR. Dost thou command me to be unjust? I can not be silent.

CRE. What then wilt thou do to me? Wilt thou slay my son?

TIR. These things will be a care to others; but by me will it be spoken.

CRE. But from whence has this evil come to me, and to my child?

TIR. Well dost thou ask me, and comest to the drift of my discourse. It is necessary that he, stabbed in that cave where the earth-born dragon lay, the guardian of Dirce's fountain, give his gory blood a libation to the earth on account of the ancient wrath of Mars against Cadmus, who avenges the slaughter of the earth-born dragon; and these things done, ye shall obtain Mars as your ally. But if the earth receive fruit in return for fruit, and mortal blood in return for blood, ye shall have that land propitious, which formerly sent forth a crop of men from seed armed with golden helmets; but there must of this race die one, who is the son of the dragon's jaw. But thou art left among us of the race of those sown men, pure in thy descent, both by thy mother's side and in the male line; and thy children too: Hæmon's marriage however precludes his being slain, for he is not a youth, [for, although he has not approached her bed, he has yet contracted the marriage.] But this youth, devoted to this city, by dying may preserve his native country. And he will cause a bitter return to Adrastus and the Argives, casting back death over their eyes, and Thebes will he make illustrious: of these two fates choose the one; either preserve thy child or the state. Every information from me thou hast: — lead me, my child, toward home; — but whoever exercises the art of divination, is a fool; if indeed he chance to show disagreeable things, he is rendered hateful to those to whom he may prophesy; but speaking falsely to his employers from motives of pity, he is unjust as touching the Gods. — Phœbus alone should speak in oracles to men, who fears nobody.

CREON, MENŒCEUS, CHORUS.

CHOR. Creon, why art thou mute compressing thy voice in silence, for to me also there is no less consternation.

CRE. But what can one say? — It is clear however what my answer will be. For never will I go to this degree of calamity, to expose my son a victim for the state. For all men live with an affection toward their children, nor would any give up his own child to die. Let no one praise me for the deed, and slay my children. But I myself, for I am arrived at a mature period of life, am

ready to die to liberate my country. But haste, my son, before the whole city hears it, disregarding the intemperate oracles of prophets, fly as quickly as possible, having quitted this land. For he will tell these things to the authorities and chiefs, going to the seven gates, and to the officers: and if indeed we get before him, there is safety for thee, but if thou art too late, we are undone, thou diest.

MEN. Whither then fly? To what city? what friends?

CRE. Wheresoever thou wilt be farthest removed from this country.

MEN. Therefore it is fitting for thee to speak, and for me to do.

CRE. Having passed through Delphi —

MEN. Whither is it right for me to go, my father?

CRE. To the land of Ætolia.

MEN. And from this whither shall I proceed?

CRE. To Thesprotia's soil.

MEN. To the sacred seat of Dodona?

CRE. Thou understandest.

MEN. What then will there be to protect me?

CRE. The conducting deity.

MEN. But what means of procuring money?

CRE. I will supply gold.

MEN. Thou sayest well, my father. Go then, for having proceeded to salute thy sister, whose breast I first sucked, Jocasta I mean, deprived of my mother, and reft from her, an orphan, I will depart and save my life. But haste, go, let not thy purpose be hindered.

MENŒCEUS, CHORUS.

MEN. Ye females, how well removed I my father's fears, having deceived him with words, in order to gain my wishes; who sends me out of the way, depriving the city of its good fortune, and gives me up to cowardice. And these things are pardonable indeed in an old man, but in my case it deserves no pardon to become the deserter of that country which gave me birth. That ye may know then, I will go, and preserve the city, and will give up my life for this land. For it is a disgraceful thing, that those indeed who are free from the oracle, and are not concerned with any compulsion of the Gods, standing at their shields in battle, shall not be slow to die fighting before the towers for their country; and I, having betrayed my father, and my brother, and my own city, shall depart coward-like from out of the land; but wherever I live, I shall appear vile. No: by that Jove that dwelleth amidst the constellations, and sanguinary Mars, who set up those sown men, who erst sprung from the earth, to be kings of this country. But I will depart, and standing on the summit of the battlements, stabbing myself over the dark deep lair of the dragon, where the prophet appointed, will give liberty to the country — the word has been spoken. But I go, by my death about to give no mean gift to the state, and will rid this land of its affliction. For if every one, seizing what opportunity he had in his power of doing good, would persist in it, and bring it forward for his country's weal, states, experiencing fewer calamities, henceforward might be prosperous.

CHOR. Thou camest forth, thou camest forth, O winged monster, production of the earth, and the viper of hell, the ravager of the Cadmeans, big with destruction, big with woes, in form half-virgin, a hostile prodigy, with thy ravening wings, and thy talons that preyed on raw flesh, who erst from Dirce's spot bearing aloft the youths, accompanied by an inharmonious lay, thou broughtest, thou broughtest cruel woes to our country; cruel was he of the Gods, whoever was the author of these things. And the moans of the matrons, and the moans of the virgins, resounded in the house, in a voice, in a strain of misery, they lamented some one thing, some another, in succession through the city. And the groaning and the noise was like to thunder, when the winged virgin bore out of sight any man from the city. But at length came by the mission of the Pythian oracle Œdipus the unhappy to this land of Thebes, to us then indeed delighted, but

again came woes. For he, wretched man, having gained the glorious victory over the enigmas, contracts a marriage, an unfortunate marriage with his mother, and pollutes the city. And fresh woes does the unfortunate man cause to succeed with slaughter, devoting by curses his sons to the unhallowed contest. — With admiration, with admiration we look on him, who is gone to kill himself for the sake of his country's land; to Creon indeed having left lamentations, but about to make the seven-towered gates of the land greatly victorious. Thus may we be mothers, thus may we be blest in our children, O dear Pallas, who destroyedst the blood of the dragon by the hurled stone, driving the attention of Cadmus to the action, whence with rapine some fiend of the Gods rushed on this land.

MESSENGER, JOCASTA, CHORUS.

MESS. Ho there! who is at the gate of the palace? Open, conduct Jocasta from out of the house. — What ho! again — after a long time indeed, but yet come forth, hear, O renowned wife of Œdipus, ceasing from thy lamentations, and thy tears of grief.

JOC. O most dear man, surely thou comest bearing the news of some calamity, of the death of Eteocles, by whose shield thou always didst go, warding off the weapons of the enemy. What new message, I pray, dost thou come to deliver? Is my son dead or alive? Tell me.

MESS. He lives, be not alarmed for this, for I will rid thee of this fear.

JOC. But what? In what state are our seven-towered ramparts?

MESS. They stand unshaken, nor is the city destroyed.

JOC. Come they in danger from the spear of Argos?

MESS. To the very extreme of danger; but the arms of Thebes came off superior to the Mycenæan spear.

JOC. Tell me one thing, by the Gods, whether thou knowest any thing of Polynices *(since this is a concern to me also)* whether he sees the light.

MESS. Thus far in the day thy pair of children lives.

JOC. Be thou blest. But how did ye stationed on the towers drive off the spear of Argos from the gates? Tell me, that I may go and delight the old blind man in the house with the news of his country's being preserved.

MESS. After that the son of Creon, he that died for the land, standing on the summit of the towers, plunged the black-handled sword into his throat, the salvation of this land, thy son placed seven cohorts, and their leaders with them, at the seven gates, guards against the Argive spear; and he drew up the horse ready to support the horse, and the heavy-armed men to reinforce the shield-bearers, so that to the part of the wall which was in danger there might be succor at hand. But from the lofty citadel we view the army of the Argives with their white shields, having quitted Tumessus and now come near the trench, at full speed they reached the city of the land of Cadmus. And the pæan and the trumpets at the same time from them resounded, and off the walls from us. And first indeed Parthenopæus the son of the huntress *(Atalanta)* led his division horrent with their thick shields against the Neïtan gate, having a family device in the middle of his shield, Atalanta destroying the Ætolian boar with her distant-wounding bow. And against the Prætan gate marched the prophet Amphiaraüs, having victims in his car, not bearing an insolent emblem, but modestly having his arms without a device. But against the Ogygian gate stood Prince Hippomedon, bearing an emblem in the middle of his shield, the Argus gazing with his spangled eyes, [some eyes indeed with the rising of the stars awake, and some with the setting closed, as we had the opportunity of seeing afterward when he was dead.] But Tydeus was drawn up at the Homoloïan gate, having on his shield a lion's skin rough with his mane, but in his right hand he bore a torch, as the Titan Prometheus, intent on firing the city. But thy son Polynices drew up his array at the Crenean gate; but the swift Potnian mares, the emblem on his shield, were starting through fright, well circularly grouped within *the orb* at the handle of the shield, so that they seemed infuriated. But Capaneus, not holding less notions than Mars on the approaching battle, drew up his division against the Electran gate. Upon the iron embossments of his shield was an earth-born giant bearing upon his shoulders a whole city, which he had torn up from the foundations with bars, an intimation to us what our city should suffer. But at the seventh gate was Adrastus, having

his shield filled with a hundred vipers, bearing on his left arm a representation of the hydra, the boast of Argos, and from the midst of the walls the dragons were bearing the children of the Thebans in their jaws. But I had the opportunity of seeing each of these, as I took the word of battle to the leaders of the divisions. And first indeed we fought with bows, and javelins, and distant-wounding slings, and fragments of rocks; but when we were conquering in the fight, Tydeus shouted out, and thy son on a sudden, "O sons of the Danaï, why delay we, ere we are galled with their missile weapons, to make a rush at the gates all in a body, light-armed men, horsemen, and those who drive the chariots?" And when they heard the cry, no one was backward; but many fell, their heads besmeared with blood; of us also you might have seen before the walls frequent divers toppling to the ground; and they moistened the parched earth with streams of blood. But the Arcadian, no Argive, the son of Atalanta, as some whirlwind falling on the gates, calls out for fire and a spade, as though he would dig up the city. But Periclymenus the son of the God of the Ocean stopped him in his raging, hurling at his head a stone, a wagon-load, a pinnacle *rent* from the battlement; and dashed in pieces his head with its auburn hair, and crushed the suture of the bones, and besmeared with blood his lately blooming cheeks; nor shall he carry back his living form to his mother, glorious in her bow, the daughter of Mænalus. But when thy son saw this gate was in a state of safety, he went to another, and I followed. But I see Tydeus, and many armed with shields around him, darting with their Ætolian lances at the highest battlements of the towers, so that our men put to flight quitted the heights of the ramparts; but thy son, as a hunter, collects them together again; and posted them a second time on the towers; and we hasten on to another gate, having relieved the distress in this quarter. But Capaneus, how can I express the measure of his rage! For he came bearing the ranges of a long-reaching ladder, and made this high boast, "That not even the hallowed fire of Jove should hinder him from taking the city from its highest turrets." And these things soon as he had proclaimed, though assailed with stones, he clambered up, having contracted his body under his shield, climbing the slippery footing of the bars of the ladder: but when he was now mounting the battlements of the walls Jupiter strikes him with his thunder; and the earth resounded, insomuch that all trembled; and his limbs were hurled, as it were by a sling, from the ladder separately from one another, his hair to heaven, and his blood to the ground, and his limbs, like the whirling of

Ixion on his wheel, were carried round; and his scorched body falls to the earth. But when Adrastus saw that Jove was hostile to his army, he stationed the host of the Argives without the trench. But ours on the contrary, when they saw the auspicious sign from Jove, drove out their chariots, horsemen and heavy-armed, and rushing into the midst of the Argive arms engaged in fight: and there were all the sorts of misery together: they died, they fell from their chariots, and the wheels leaped up and axles upon axles: and corses were heaped together with corses. — We have preserved then our towers from being overthrown to this present day; but whether for the future this land will be prosperous, rests with the Gods.

CHOR. To conquer is glorious; but if the Gods have the better intent, may I be fortunate!

JOC. Well are the ways of the Gods, and of fortune; for my children live, and my country has escaped; but the unhappy Creon seems to feel the effects of my marriage, and of Œdipus's misfortunes, being deprived of his child; for the state indeed, happily, but individually, to his misery: but recount to me again, what after this did my two sons purpose to do?

MESS. Forbear the rest; for in every circumstance hitherto thou art fortunate.

JOC. This hast thou said so as to raise suspicion; I must not forbear.

MESS. Dost thou want any thing more than that thy sons are safe?

JOC. In what follows also I would hear if I am fortunate.

MESS. Let me go: thy son is deprived of his armor-bearer.

JOC. Thou concealest some ill and coverest it in obscurity.

MESS. I can not speak thy ills after thy happiness.

JOC. *But thou shalt*, unless fleeing from me thou fleest through the air.

MESS. Alas! alas! Why dost thou not suffer me to depart after a message of glad tidings, but forcest me to tell calamities? — Thy sons are intent on

most shameful deeds of boldness — to engage in single combat apart from the whole army, having addressed to the Argives and Thebans in common a speech, such as they never ought to have spoken. But Eteocles began, standing on the lofty turret, having commanded to proclaim silence to the army. And he said, "O generals of the Grecian land, and chieftains of the Danaï, who have come hither, and O people of Cadmus, neither for the sake of Polynices barter your lives, nor for my cause. For I myself, taking this danger on myself, alone will enter the lists with my brother; and if indeed I slay him, I will dwell in the palace alone; but should I be subdued, I will give it up to him alone. But you, ceasing from the combat, O Argives, shall return to your land, not leaving your lives here; [of the Theban people also there is enough that lieth dead,"] Thus much he spake; but thy son Polynices rushed from the ranks, and approved his words. But all the Argives murmured their applause, and the people of Cadmus, as thinking this plan just. And after this the generals made a truce, and in the space between the two armies pledged an oath to abide by it. And now the two sons of the aged Œdipus clad their bodies in an entire suit of brazen armor. And their friends adorned them, the champion of this land indeed the chieftains of the Thebans; and him the principal men of the Danaï. And they stood resplendent, and they changed not their color, raging to let forth their spears at each other. But their friends on either side as they passed by encouraging them with words, thus spoke. "Polynices, it rests with thee to erect the statue of Jove, emblem of victory, and to confer a glorious fame on Argos." But to Eteocles on the other hand; "Now thou fightest for the state, now if thou come off victorious, thou art in possession of the sceptre." These things they said exhorting them to the combat. But the seers sacrificed the sheep, and scrutinized the shooting of the flames, and the bursting *of the gall*, the moisture adverse *to the fire*, and the extremity of the flame, which bears a two-fold import, both the sign of victory, and the sign of being defeated. But if thou hast any power, or words of wisdom, or the soothing charms of incantation, go, stay thy children from the fearful combat, since great the danger, [and dreadful will be the sequel of the contest, *namely*, tears for thee, deprived this day of thy two children.]

JOC. O my child, Antigone, come forth from before the palace; the state of thy fortune suits not now the dance, nor the virgin's chamber, but it is thy

duty, in conjunction with thy mother, to hinder two excellent men, and thy brothers verging toward death from falling by each other's hands.

ANTIGONE, JOCASTA, CHORUS.

ANT. With what new horrors, O mother of my being, dost thou call out to thy friends before the house?

JOC. O my daughter, the life of thy brothers is gone from them.

ANT. How sayest thou?

JOC. They are drawn out in single combat.

ANT. Alas me! what wilt thou say, my mother?

JOC. Nothing of pleasant import; but follow.

ANT. Whither? leaving my virgin chamber.

JOC. To the army.

ANT. I am ashamed to go among the crowd.

JOC. Thy present state admits not bashfulness.

ANT. But what shall I do then?

JOC. Thou shalt quell the strife of the brothers.

ANT. Doing what, my mother.

JOC. Falling before them with me.

ANT. Lead to the space between the armies; we must not delay.

JOC. Haste, daughter, haste, since, if indeed I reach my sons before they engage, I still exist in heaven's fair light, but if they die, I shall lie dead with them.

CHORUS.

Alas! alas! shuddering with horror, shuddering is my breast; and through my flesh came pity, pity for the unhappy mother, on account of her two children, whether of them then will distain with blood the other *(alas me for my sufferings, O Jove, O earth)*, the own brother's neck, the own brother's life, in arms, in slaughter? Wretched, wretched I, over which corse then shall I raise the lamentation for the dead? O earth, earth, the two beasts of prey, blood-thirsty souls, brandishing the spear, will quickly distain with blood the fallen, fallen enemy. Wretches, that they ever came to the thought of a single combat! In a foreign strain will I mourn with tears my elegy of groans due to the dead. Destiny is at hand — death is near; this day will decide the event. Ill-fated, ill-fated murder because of the Furies! But I see Creon here with clouded brow advancing toward the house, I will cease therefore from the groans I am uttering.

CREON, CHORUS.

CRE. Ah me! what shall I do? whether am I to groan in weeping myself, or the city, which a cloud of such magnitude encircles as to cast us amidst the gloom of Acheron? For my son has perished having died for the city, having achieved a glorious name, but to me a name of sorrow. Him having taken just now from the dragon's den, stabbed by his own hand, I wretched bore in my arms; and the whole house resounds with shrieks; but I, myself aged, am come after my aged sister Jocasta, that she may wash and lay out my son now no more. For it behooves the living well to revere the God below by paying honors to the dead.

CHOR. Thy sister is gone out of the house, O Creon, and the girl Antigone attending the steps of her mother.

CRE. Whither? and for what hap? tell me.

CHOR. She heard that her sons were about to come to a contest in single battle for the royal palace.

CRE. How sayest thou? whilst I was fondly attending to my son's corse, I arrived not so far *in knowledge*, as to be acquainted with this also.

CHOR. But thy sister has indeed been gone some time; but I think, O Creon, that the contest, in which their lives are at stake, has already been concluded by the sons of Œdipus.

CRE. Ah me! I see indeed this signal, the downcast eye and countenance of the approaching messenger, who will relate every thing that has taken place.

MESSENGER, CREON, CHORUS.

MESS. O wretched me! what language or what words can I utter? we are undone —

CRE. Thou beginnest thy speech with no promising prelude.

MESS. Oh wretched me! doubly do I lament, for I hear great calamities.

CRE. In addition to the calamities that have happened dost thou still speak of others?

MESS. Thy sister's sons, O Creon, no longer behold the light.

CRE. Ah! alas! thou utterest great ills to me and to the state.

MESS. O mansions of Œdipus, do ye hear these things of thy children who have perished by similar fates?

CHOR. Ay, so that, had they but sense, they would weep.

CRE. O most heavy misery! Oh me wretched with woes! alas! unhappy me!

MESS. If that thou knewest the evils yet in addition to these.

CRE. And how can there be more fatal ills than these?

MESS. Thy sister is dead with her two children.

CHOR. Raise, raise the cry of woe, and smite your heads with the blows of your white hands.

CRE. Oh unhappy Jocasta, what an end of thy life and of thy marriage hast thou endured in the riddles of the Sphinx! But how took place the slaughter of her two sons, and the combat arising from the curse of Œdipus? tell me.

MESS. The success of the country before the towers indeed thou knowest; for the circuit of the wall is not of such vast extent, but that thou must know all that has taken place. But after that the sons of the aged Œdipus had clad their limbs in brazen armor, they came and stood in the midst of the plain between the two armies, ready for the contest, and the fierceness of the single battle. And having cast a look toward Argos, Polynices uttered his prayer; "O venerable Juno *(for I am thine, since in marriage I joined myself with the daughter of Adrastus, and dwell in that land)*, grant me to slay my brother, and to cover with blood my hostile hand bearing the victory." And Eteocles looking at the temple of Pallas, glorious in her golden shield, prayed; "O Daughter of Jove, grant me with my hand to hurl my victorious spear from this arm home to the breast of my brother, [and slay him who came to lay waste my country."] And when the sound of the Tuscan trumpet was raised, as the torch, the signal for the fierce battle, they sped with dreadful rush toward each other; and like wild boars whetting their savage tusks, they met, their cheeks all moist with foam; and they rushed forward with their lances; but they couched beneath the orbs of their shields, in order that the steel might fall harmless. But if either perceived the other's eye raised above the verge, he drove the lance at his face, intent to be beforehand with him: but dexterously they shifted their eyes to the open ornaments of their shields, so that the spear was made of none effect. And more sweat trickled down the spectators than the combatants, through the fear of their friends. But Eteocles, stumbling with his foot against a stone, which rolled under his tread, places his limb without the shield. But Polynices ran up with his spear, when he saw a stroke open to his steel, and the Argive spear passed through the shank. And all the host of the Danaï shouted for joy. And the hero who first was wounded, when he perceived his shoulder exposed in this effort, pierced the breast of Polynices with his lance, and gave joy to the citizens of Cadmus, but he broke the point of his spear. But being come to a strait for a spear, he retreated backward on his leg, and taking a stone of marble, he hurled it and crashed *his antagonist's* spear in the middle: and the battle was on equal terms, both being deprived of the spear in their hands. Then seizing the handles of their swords they

met at close quarters, and, as they clashed their shields together, raised a great tumult of battle around them. And Eteocles having a sort of idea of its success, made use of a Thessalian stratagem, *which he had learned* from his connection with that country. For giving up his present mode of attack, he brings his left foot behind, protecting well the pit of his own stomach; and stepping forward his right leg, he plunged the sword through the navel, and drove it to the vertebræ. But the unhappy Polynices bending together his side and his bowels falls weltering in blood. But the other, as he were now the victor, and had subdued him in the fight, casting his sword on the ground, went to spoil him, not fixing his attention on himself, but on that his purpose. Which thing also deceived him; for Polynices, he that fell first, still breathing a little, preserving his sword e'en in his deathly fall, with difficulty indeed, but he did stretch his sword to the heart of Eteocles. And holding the dust in their gripe they both fall near one another, and determined not the victory.

CHOR. Alas! alas! to what degree, O Œdipus, do I groan for thy misfortunes! but the God seems to have fulfilled thy imprecations.

MESS. Hear now then woes even in addition to these — For when her sons having fallen were breathing their last, at this moment the wretched mother rushes before them, and when she perceived them stricken with mortal wounds she shrieked out, "Oh my sons, I am come too late a succor:" and throwing herself by the side of her children in turn, she wept, she lamented with moans her long anxiety in suckling them *now lost*: and their sister, who accompanied to stand by her in her misery, at the same time *broke forth*; "O supporters of my mother's age! Oh ye that have betrayed my hopes of marriage, my dearest brothers!" — But king Eteocles heaving from his breast his gasping breath, heard his mother, and putting out his cold clammy hand, sent not forth indeed a voice; but from his eyes spoke her in tears to signify affection. But Polynices, who yet breathed, looking at his sister and his aged mother, thus spoke: "We perish, O my mother; but I grieve for thee, and for this my sister, and my brother who lies dead, for being my friend, he became my enemy, but still my friend. — But bury me, O mother of my being, and thou my sister, in my native land, and pacify the exasperated city, that I may obtain thus much at least of my country's land, although I have lost the palace. And close my eyelids with thy hand, my

mother" *(and he places it himself upon his eyes)*, "and fare ye well! for now darkness surroundeth me." And both breathed out their lives together. And the mother, when she saw what had taken place, beyond endurance grieving, snatched the sword from the dead body, and perpetrated a deed of horror; for she drove the steel through the middle of her throat, and lies dead on those most dear to her, having each in her arms embraced. But the people rose up hastily to a strife of opinions; we indeed, as holding, that my master was victorious; but they, that the other was; and there was also a contention between the generals, those on the other side *contended*, that Polynices first struck with the spear, but those on ours that there was no victory where the combatants died. [And in the mean time Antigone withdrew from the army;] but they rushed to arms; but fortunately by a sort of foresight the people of Cadmus had sat upon their shields: and we gained the advantage of falling on the Argives not yet accoutred in their arms. And no one made a stand, but flying they covered the plain; and immense quantities of blood were spilt of the corses that fell, but when we were victorious in the fight, some indeed raised the image of Jove emblem of victory, but some of us stripping the shields from the Argive corses sent the spoils within the city. But others with Antigone are bearing hither the dead for their friends to lament over. But these contests have in some respect turned out most happy for this state, but in other respect most unhappy.

CHOR. No longer the misfortunes of the house come to our ears, we may also see before the palace these three fallen corses, who have shared the dark realms by a united death.

[*The dead bodies borne*.]

ANTIGONE, CREON, CHORUS.

ANT. Not veiling the softness of my cheek on which my ringlets fall, nor caring for the purple glow of virginity under my lids, the blush of my countenance, I am borne along the bacchanal of the dead, rending the fillet from my hair, rejecting the saffron robe of delicateness, having the mournful office of conducting the dead. Alas! alas! woe is me! Oh Polynices, thou well answeredst to thy name! Alas me! Oh Thebes! but thy strife, no strife, but murder consummated with murder, hath destroyed the house of Œdipus with dreadful, with mournful blood. But what groan

responsive to my sufferings, or what lament of music shall I invoke to my tears, to my tears, O house, O house, bearing these three kindred bodies, my mother, and her children, the joy of the fury? who destroyed the entire house of Œdipus, what time intelligently he unfolded the difficult song of the fierce monster, having thereby slain the body of the fierce musical Sphinx. Alas me! my father; what Grecian, or what Barbarian, or what other of the noble in birth, of mortal blood, in time of old ever bore such manifest sufferings of so many ills? Wretched I, how do I lament! What bird, sitting on the highest boughs of the oak or pine, will sing responsive to my lamentations, who have lost my mother? who weep the strain of grief in addition to these moans *for my brothers*, about to pass my long life in floods of tears. — Which shall I bewail? On which first shall I scatter the first offerings rent from my hair? On my mother's two breasts of milk, or upon the death-wounds of my two brothers? Alas! alas! Leave thine house, bringing thy sightless eye, O aged father, Œdipus, show thy wretched age, who within thy palace having poured the gloomy darkness over thine eyes, draggest on a long life. Dost thou hear wandering in the hall, — resting thy aged foot upon the couch in a state of misery?

ŒDIPUS, CREON, ANTIGONE, CHORUS.

ŒD. Why, O virgin, hast thou with the most doleful tears called me forth leaning on the support of a blind foot to the light, a bed-ridden man from his darksome chamber, gray-headed, an obscure phantom of air — a dead body beneath the earth — a flitting dream?

ANT. O father, thou shalt receive words of unhappy tidings; no longer do thy children behold the light, nor thy wife, who ever was employed in attending as a staff on thy blind foot, my father: alas me!

ŒD. Alas me, for my sufferings! for well may I groan and vociferate these things. The three souls, tell me, my child, by what fate, how quitted they this light?

ANT. Not for the sake of reproaching thee, nor exulting over thee, but for grief I speak: thy evil genius, heavy with swords, and fire, and wretched combats, has rushed down upon thy children, O my father.

ŒD. Alas me! ah! ah!

ANT. Why dost thou thus groan?

ŒD. Alas me! my children!

ANT. Thou wouldest grieve indeed, if looking on the chariot of the sun drawn by its four steeds, thou couldest direct the sight of thine eyes to these bodies of the dead.

ŒD. The evil of my sons indeed is manifest; but my wretched wife, by what fate, O my child, did she perish?

ANT. Causing to all tears of grief they could not contain, to her children she bared her breast, a suppliant she bared it, holding it up in supplication. But the mother found her children at the Electran gate, in the mead where the lotus abounds, contending with their lances in the common war, as lions bred in the same cave, with the blood-wounds now a cold, a gory libation, which Plato received, and Mars gave. And having seized the brazen-wrought sword from the dead she plunged it into her flesh, but with grief for her children she fell amidst her children. But all these sufferings, O my father, has the God heaped this day upon our house, whoever he be, that adds this consummation.

CHOR. This day hath been the beginning of many woes to the house of Œdipus; but may life be more fortunate!

CRE. Now indeed cease from your grief, for it is time to think of the sepulture. But hear these words, O Œdipus; Eteocles, thy son, hath given to me the dominion of this land, giving them as a marriage portion to Hæmon, and *with them* the bed of thy daughter Antigone. I therefore will not suffer thee any longer to dwell in this land. For clearly did Tiresias say, that never, whilst thou dost inhabit this land, will the state be prosperous. But depart; and this I say not from insolence, nor being thine enemy, but on account of thy evil genius, fearing lest the country suffer any harm.

ŒD. O Fate, from the beginning how wretched [and unhappy] didst thou form me, [if ever other man was formed!] whom, even before I came into

the light from my mother's womb, when yet unborn Apollo foretold that I should be the murderer of my father Laïus, alas! wretch that I am! And when I was born, again my father who gave me life, seeks to take my life, considering that I was born his enemy: for it was fated that he should die by my hands, and he sends me, poor wretch, as I craved the breast, a prey for the wild beasts: where I was preserved — for would that Cithæron, it ought, had sunk to the bottomless chasms of Tartarus, for that it did not destroy me; but the God fixed it my lot to serve under Polybus my master: but I unhappy man, having slain my own father, ascended the bed of my wretched mother, and begat children, my brothers, whom I destroyed, having received down the curse from Laïus, and given it to my sons. For I was not by nature so utterly devoid of understanding, as to have devised such things against my eyes, and against the life of my children, without the interference of some of the Gods. Well! — what then shall I ill-fated do? who will accompany me the guide of my dark steps? She that lies here dead! living, well know I, she would. But my noble pair of sons? I have no sons. — But still in my vigor can I myself procure my sustenance? Whence? — Why, O Creon, dost thou thus utterly kill me? for kill me thou wilt, if thou shalt cast me out of the land. Yet will I not appear base, stretching my hands around thy knees, for I can not belie my former nobleness, not even though my plight is miserable.

CRE. Well has it been spoken by thee, that thou wilt not touch my knees, but I can not permit thee to dwell in the land. But of these corses, the one we must even now bear to the house; but the body of Polynices cast out unburied beyond the borders of this land. And these things shall be proclaimed to all the Thebans: "whoever shall be found either crowning the corse, or covering it with earth, shall receive death for his offense." But thou, ceasing from the groans for the three dead, retire, Antigone, within the house, and behave as beseems a virgin, expecting the approaching day in which the bed of Hæmon awaits thee.

ANT. Oh father, in what a state of woes do we miserable beings lie! How do I lament for thee! more than for the dead! For it is not that one of thy ills is heavy, and the other not heavy, but thou art in all things unhappy, my father. — But thee I ask, our new lord, [wherefore dost thou insult my

father here, banishing him from his country?] Why make thy laws against an unhappy corse?

CRE. The determination of Eteocles this, not mine.

ANT. It is absurd, and thou a fool to enforce it.

CRE. How so? Is it not just to execute injunctions?

ANT. No, if they are base, at least, and spoken with ill intent.

CRE. What! will he not with justice be given to the dogs?

ANT. *No*, for thus do ye not demand of him lawful justice.

CRE. *We do*; since he was the enemy of the state, who least ought to be an enemy.

ANT. Hath he not paid then his life to fortune?

CRE. And in his burial too let him now satisfy vengeance.

ANT. What outrage having committed, if he came after his share of the kingdom?

CRE. This man, that you may know once for all, shall be unburied.

ANT. I will bury him; even though the city forbid it.

CRE. Thyself then wilt thou at the same time bury near the corse.

ANT. But that is a glorious thing, for two friends to lie near.

CRE. Lay hold of her, and bear her to the house.

ANT. By no means — for I will not let go this body.

CRE. The God has decreed it, O virgin, not as thou wilt.

ANT. And this too is decreed — that the dead be not insulted.

CRE. Around him none shall place the moist dust.

ANT. Nay, by his mother here Jocasta, I entreat thee, Creon.

CRE. Thou laborest in vain, for thou canst not obtain this.

ANT. But suffer thou me at any rate to bathe the body.

CRE. This would be one of the things forbidden by the state.

ANT. But let me put bandages round his cruel wounds.

CRE. In no way shalt thou show respect to this corse.

ANT. Oh most dear, but I will at least kiss thy lips.

CRE. Thou shalt not prepare calamity against thy wedding by thy lamentations.

ANT. What! while I live shall I ever marry thy son?

CRE. There is strong necessity for thee, for by what means wilt thou escape the marriage?

ANT. That night then shall find me one of the Danaïdæ.

CRE. Dost mark with what audacity she hath insulted us?

ANT. The steel be witness, and the sword, by which I swear.

CRE. But why art thou so eager to get rid of this marriage?

ANT. I will take my flight with my most wretched father here.

CRE. There is nobleness in thee; but there is some degree of folly.

ANT. And I will die with him too, that thou mayest farther know.

CRE. Go — thou shalt not slay my son — quit the land.

ŒDIPUS, ANTIGONE, CHORUS.

ŒD. O daughter, I praise thee indeed for thy zealous intentions.

ANT. But if I were to marry, and thou suffer banishment alone, my father?

ŒD. Stay and be happy; I will bear with content mine own ills.

ANT. And who will minister to thee, blind as thou art, my father?

ŒD. Falling wherever it shall be my fate, I will lie on the ground.

ANT. But Œdipus, where is he? and the renowned Enigmas?

ŒD. Perished! one day blest me, and one day destroyed.

ANT. Ought not I then to have a share in thy woes?

ŒD. To a daughter exile with a blind father is shameful.

ANT. Not to a right-minded one however, but honorable, my father.

ŒD. Lead me now onward, that I may touch thy mother.

ANT. There: touch the aged woman with thy most dear hand.

ŒD. O mother! Oh most hapless wife!

ANT. She doth lie miserable, having all ills at once on her.

ŒD. But where is the fallen body of Eteocles, and of Polynices?

ANT. They lie extended before thee near one another.

ŒD. Place my blind hand upon their unhappy faces.

ANT. There: touch thy dead children with thy hand.

ŒD. O ye dear wrecks, unhappy, of an unhappy father.

ANT. O name of Polynices, most dear indeed to me.

ŒD. Now, my child, is the oracle of Apollo come to pass.

ANT. What? but dost thou mention evils in addition to these evils?

ŒD. That I must die an exile at Athens.

ANT. Where? what citadel of Attica will receive thee?

ŒD. The sacred Colonus, and the temple of the Equestrian God. But stay — minister to thy blind father here, since thou art desirous of sharing his exile.

ANT. Go to thy wretched banishment: stretch forth thy dear hand, O aged father, having me as thy guide, as the gale that wafts the ship.

ŒD. Behold, I go, my child, be thou my unhappy conductor.

ANT. We are, we are indeed unhappy above all Theban virgins.

ŒD. Where shall I place my aged footstep? Bring my staff, my child.

ANT. This way, this way come; here, here place thy foot, thou that hast the strength of a dream.

ŒD. Alas! alas! for my most wretched flight! — To drive me, old as I am, from my country — Alas! alas! the dreadful, dreadful things that I have suffered!

ANT. What suffered! what suffered! Vengeance sees not the wicked, nor repays the foolishness of mortals.

ŒD. That man am I, who mounted aloft to the victorious heavenly song, having solved the dark enigma of the virgin Sphinx.

ANT. Dost thou bring up again the glory of the Sphinx? Forbear from speaking of thy former successes. These wretched sufferings awaited thee, O father, being an exile from thy country to die any where. Leaving with my dear virgins tears for my loss, I depart far from my country, wandering in state not like a virgin's.

ŒD. Oh! the excellency of thy mind!

ANT. In the calamities of a father at least it will make me glorious. Wretched am I, on account of the insults offered to thee and to my brother, who has perished from the family, a corse denied sepulture, unhappy, whom, even if I must die, my father, I will cover with secret earth.

ŒD. Go, show thyself to thy companions.

ANT. They have enough of my lamentations.

ŒD. But make thy supplications at the altars.

ANT. They have a satiety of my woes.

ŒD. Go then, where stands the fane of Bacchus unapproached, on the mountains of the Mænades.

ANT. To whom I formerly, clad in the skin of the Theban fawn, danced the sacred step of Semele on the mountains, conferring a thankless favor on the Gods?

ŒD. O ye inhabitants of my illustrious country, behold, I, this Œdipus, who alone stayed the violence of the bloodthirsty Sphinx, now, dishonored, forsaken, miserable, am banished from the land. Yet why do I bewail these things, and lament in vain? For the necessity of fate proceeding from the Gods a mortal must endure.

CRE. [O greatly glorious Victory, mayest thou uphold my life, and cease not from crowning me!] *(See note [H].)*

ORESTES

Translated by Theodore Alois Buckley

Composed in 408 BC, this tragedy concerns the aftermath of Orestes' murder of his mother Clytemnestra to avenge the death of his father Agamemnon. In the chronology of events following *Orestes*, the play takes place after the events contained in plays such as *Electra* by Euripides or *The Libation Bearers* by Aeschylus, and before events contained in plays like *The Eumenides* by Aeschylus and *Andromache* by Euripides.

Despite Apollo's earlier prophecy, Orestes finds himself tormented by Erinyes (Furies) to the blood guilt stemming from his matricide. The only person capable of aiding Orestes in his madness is his sister Electra. To complicate matters further, a leading political faction of Argos wants to put Orestes to death for the murder. Orestes' only hope to save his life lies in his uncle Menelaus, who has returned with Helen after spending ten years in Troy and several more years amassing wealth in Egypt.

Like in many of his other dramas, Euripides uses mythology to represent his own commentary on the politics of contemporary Athens during the Peloponnesian War. *Orestes* first played at the Dionysia during the waning years of the war, when both Athens and Sparta and all of their allies had suffered huge losses. Euripides challenges the role of the gods and perhaps more appropriately man's interpretation of divine will. In the play, Orestes and other characters note that although man is subordinate to the gods, the superiority of the gods does not make them fair or rational. Even Apollo, the god synonymous with law and order, gives an unsatisfactory argument at the end, citing the reason for the Trojan War as the method the gods chose to cleanse the earth of surplus population. Many Athenians sitting in the original audience would have then question whether their own leaders had entangled the city in a costly and ultimately purposeless war.

'Orestes Pursued by the Furies' by William-Adolphe Bouguereau, 1862

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THE ARGUMENT.

Orestes, in revenge for the murder of his father, took off Ægisthus and Clyætmnestra; but having dared to slay his mother, he was instantly punished for it by being afflicted with madness. But on Tyndarus, the father of her who was slain, laying an accusation against him, the Argives were about to give a public decision on this question, "What ought he, who has dared this impious deed, to suffer?" By chance Menelaus, having returned from his wanderings, sent in Helen indeed by night, but himself came by day, and being entreated by Orestes to aid him, he rather feared Tyndarus the accuser: but when the speeches came to be spoken among the populace, the multitude were stirred up to kill Orestes. * * * * But Pylades, his friend, accompanying him, counseled him first to take revenge on Menelaus by killing Helen. As they were going on this project, they were disappointed of their hope by the Gods snatching away Helen from them. But Electra delivered up Hermione, when she made her appearance, into their hands, and they were about to kill her. When Menelaus came, and saw himself bereft by them at once of his wife and child, he endeavored to storm the palace; but they, anticipating his purpose, threatened to set it on fire. Apollo, however, having appeared, said that he had conducted Helen to the Gods, and commanded Orestes to take Hermione to wife, and Electra to dwell with Pylades, and, after that he was purified of the murder, to reign over Argos.

The scene of the piece is laid at Argos; But the chorus consists of Argive women, intimate associates of Electra, who also come on inquiring about the calamity of Orestes. The play has a catastrophe rather suited to comedy. The opening scene of the play is thus arranged. Orestes is discovered before the palace of Agamemnon, fatigued, and, on account of his madness, lying on a couch on which Electra is sitting by him at his feet. A difficulty has been started, why does not she sit at his head? for thus would she seem to watch more tenderly over her brother, if she sat nearer him. The poet, it is answered, seems to have made this arrangement on account of the Chorus; for Orestes, who had but just then and with difficulty gotten to sleep, would have been awakened, if the women that constituted the Chorus had stood nearer to him. But this we may infer from what Electra says to the Chorus,

“Σιγα, σιγα, λεπτον ιχνος αρβυλης.” It is probable then that the above is the reason of this arrangement.

The play is among the most celebrated on the stage, but infamous in its morals; for, with the exception of Pylades, all the characters are bad persons.

ORESTES.

ELECTRA.

There is no word so dreadful to relate, nor suffering, nor heaven-inflicted calamity, the burden of which human nature may not be compelled to bear. For Tantalus, the blest, *(and I am not reproaching his fortune, when I say this,)* the son of Jupiter, as they report, trembling at the rock which impends over his head, hangs in the air, and suffers this punishment, as they say indeed, because, although being a man, yet having the honor of a table in common with the Gods upon equal terms, he possessed an ungovernable tongue, a most disgraceful malady. He begat Pelops, and from him sprung Atreus, for whom the Goddess having carded the wool spun the thread of contention, *and doomed him* to make war on Thyestes his relation; *(why must I commemorate things unspeakable?)* But Atreus then killed his children — and feasted him. But from Atreus, for I pass over in silence the misfortunes which intervened, sprung Agamemnon, the illustrious, *(if he was indeed illustrious,)* and Menelaus; their mother Aërope of Crete. But Menelaus indeed marries Helen, the hated of the Gods, but King Agamemnon *obtained* Clytæmnestra's bed, memorable throughout the Grecians: from whom we virgins were born, three from one mother; Chrysothemis, and Iphigenia, and myself Electra; and Orestes the male part of the family, from a most unholy mother, who slew her husband, having covered him around with an inextricable robe; the reason however it is not decorous in a virgin to tell; I leave this undeclared for men to consider as they will. But why indeed must I accuse the injustice of Phœbus? Yet persuaded he Orestes to kill that mother that brought him forth, a deed which gained not a good report from all men. But nevertheless he did slay her, as he would not be disobedient to the God. I also took a share in the murder, but such as a woman ought to take. As did Pylades also who perpetrated this deed with us. From that time wasting away, the wretched Orestes is afflicted with a grievous malady, but falling on his couch there lies, but his mother's blood whirls him to frenzy *(for I dread to mention those Goddesses, the Eumenides, who persecute him with terror)*. Moreover this is the sixth day since his slaughtered mother was purified by fire as to her body. During which he has neither taken any food down his throat, he has not bathed his limbs, but covered beneath his cloak, when indeed his

body is lightened of its disease, on coming to his right mind he weeps, but at another time starts suddenly from his couch, as a colt from his yoke. But it has been decreed by this city of Argos, that no one shall receive us who have slain a mother under their roof, nor at their fire, and that none shall speak to us; but this is the appointed day, in the which the city of the Argives will pronounce their vote, whether it is fitting that we should die being stoned with stones, or having whet the sword, should plunge it into our necks. But I yet have some hope that we may not die, for Menelaus has arrived at this country from Troy, and filling the Nauplian harbor with his oars is mooring his fleet off the shore, having been lost in wanderings from Troy a long time: but the much-afflicted Helen has he sent before to our palace, having taken advantage of the night, lest any of those, whose children died under Ilium, when they saw her coming, by day, might go so far as to stone her; but she is within bewailing her sister, and the calamity of her family. She has however some consolation in her woes, for the virgin Hermione, whom Menelaus bringing from Sparta, left at our palace, when he sailed to Troy, and gave as a charge to my mother to bring up, in her she rejoices, and forgets her miseries. But I am looking at each avenue when I shall see Menelaus present, since, for the rest, we ride on slender power, if we receive not some succor from him; the house of the unfortunate is an embarrassed state of affairs.

ELECTRA. HELEN.

HEL. O daughter of Clytæmnestra and Agamemnon, O Electra, thou that hast remained a virgin a long time. How are ye, O wretched woman, both you, and your brother, the wretched Orestes *(he was the murderer of his mother)*? For by thy converse I am not polluted, transferring, as I do, the blame to Phœbus. And yet I groan the death of Clytæmnestra, whom, after that I sailed to Troy, *(how did I sail, urged by the maddening fate of the Gods!)* I saw not, but of her bereft I lament my fortune.

ELEC. Helen, why should I inform thee of things thou seest thyself here present, the race of Agamemnon in calamities. I indeed sleepless sit companion to the wretched corse, *(for he is a corse, in that he breathes so little,)* but at his fortune I murmur not. But thou a happy woman, and thy husband a happy man, have come to us, who fare most wretchedly.

HEL. But what length of time has he been lying on his couch?

ELEC. Ever since he shed his parent's blood.

HEL. Oh wretched, and his mother too, that thus she perished!

ELEC. These things are thus, so that he is unable to speak for misery.

HEL. By the Gods wilt thou oblige me in a thing, O virgin?

ELEC. As far as I am permitted by the little leisure I have from watching by my brother.

HEL. Wilt thou go to the tomb of my sister?

ELEC. My mother's tomb dost thou desire? wherefore?

HEL. Bearing the first offerings of my hair, and my libations.

ELEC. But is it not lawful for thee to go to the tomb of thy friends?

HEL. No, for I am ashamed to show myself among the Argives.

ELEC. Late art thou discreet, then formerly leaving thine home disgracefully.

HEL. True hast thou spoken, but thou speakest not pleasantly to me.

ELEC. But what shame possesses thee among the Myceneans?

HEL. I fear the fathers of those who are dead under Ilium.

ELEC. For this is a dreadful thing; and at Argos thou art declaimed against by every one's mouth.

HEL. Do thou then grant me this favor, and free me from this fear.

ELEC. I can not look upon the tomb of my mother.

HEL. And yet it is disgraceful for servants to bear these.

ELEC. But why not send thy daughter Hermione?

HEL. It is not well for virgins to go among the crowd.

ELEC. And yet she might repay the dead the care of her education.

HEL. Right hast thou spoken, and I obey thee, O virgin, and I will send my daughter, for thou sayest well. Come forth, my child Hermione, before the house, and take these libations in thine hand, and my hair, and, going to the tomb of Clytæmnestra, leave there this mixture of milk and honey, and the froth of wine, and standing on the summit of the mound, say thus: "Helen, thy sister, presents thee with these libations, in fear herself to approach thy tomb, and afraid of the populace of Argos:" and bid her hold kind intentions toward me, and thyself, and my husband, and toward these two miserable persons whom the God has destroyed. But promise all the offerings to the manes, whatever it is fitting that I should perform for a sister. Go, my child, hasten, and when thou hast offered the libations at the tomb, remember to return back as speedily as possible.

ELEC. [*alone*] O Nature, what a great evil art thou among men, and the safeguard of those who possess thee, with virtue! For see, how she has shorn off the extremities of her hair, in order to preserve her beauty; but she is the same woman she always was. May the Gods detest thee, for that thou hast destroyed me, and this man, and the whole state of Greece: oh wretch that I am! But my dear friends that accompany me in my lamentations are again present; perhaps they will disturb the sleeper from his slumber, and will melt my eyes in tears when I behold my brother raving.

ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELEC. O most dear woman, proceed with a gentle foot, make no noise, let there be heard no sound. For your friendliness is very kind, but to awake him will be a calamity to me. Hush, hush — gently advance the tread of thy sandal, make no noise, let there be heard no sound. Move onward from that place — onward from before the couch.

CHOR. Behold, I obey.

ELEC. St! st! Speak to me, my friend, as the breathing of the soft reed pipe.

CHOR. See, I utter a voice low as an under note.

ELEC. Ay, thus come hither, come hither, approach quietly — go quietly: tell me, for what purpose, I pray, are ye come? For he has fallen on his couch, and been sleeping some time.

CHOR. How is he? Give us an account of him, my friend.

ELEC. What fortune can I say of him? and what his calamities? still indeed he breathes, but sighs at short intervals.

CHOR. What sayest thou? Oh, the unhappy man!

ELEC. You will kill him if you move his eyelids, now that he is taking the sweetest enjoyment of sleep.

CHOR. Unfortunate on account of these most angry deeds from heaven! oh! wretched on account of thy sufferings!

ELEC. Alas! alas! Apollo himself unjust, then spoke unjust things, when at the tripod of Themis he commanded the unhallowed, inauspicious murder of my mother.

CHOR. Dost thou see? he moves his body in the robes that cover him.

ELEC. You by your cries, O wretch, have disturbed him from his sleep.

CHOR. I indeed think he is sleeping yet.

ELEC. Will you not depart from us? will you not bend your footsteps back from the house, ceasing this noise?

CHOR. He sleeps.

ELEC. Thou sayest well.

CHOR. Venerable, venerable Night, thou that dispensest sleep to languid mortals, come from Erebus; come, come, borne on thy wings to the house of Agamemnon; for by our griefs and by our sufferings we are quite undone, undone.

ELEC. Ye were making a noise.

CHOR. No. *(Note [A].)*

ELEC. Silently, silently repressing the high notes of your voice, apart from his couch, you will enable him to have the tranquil enjoyment of sleep.

CHOR. Tell us; what end to his miseries awaits him?

ELEC. Death, death; what else can? for he has no appetite for food.

CHOR. Death then is manifestly before him.

ELEC. Phœbus offered us as victims, when he commanded the dreadful, abhorred murder of our mother, that slew our father.

CHOR. With justice indeed, but not well.

ELEC. Thou hast died, thou hast died, O mother, O thou that didst bring me forth, but hast killed the father, and the children of thy blood. We perish, we perish, even as two corses. For thou art among the dead, and the greatest part of my life is passed in groans, and wailings, and nightly tears; marriageless, childless, behold, how like a miserable wretch do I drag out my existence forever!

CHOR. O virgin Electra, approach near, and look that thy brother has not died unobserved by thee; for by this excessive quiet he doth not please me.

ORESTES, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ORES. O precious balm of sleep, thou that relievest my malady, how pleasant didst thou come to me in the time of need! O divine oblivion of my sufferings, how wise thou art, and the goddess to be supplicated by all in

distress! — whence, in heaven's name, came I hither? and how brought? for I remember not things past, bereaved, as I am, of my senses.

ELEC. My dearest brother, how didst thou delight me when thou didst fall asleep! wilt thou I touch thee, and raise thy body up?

ORES. Raise me then, raise me, and wipe the clotted foam from off my wretched mouth, and from my eyes.

ELEC. Behold, the task is sweet, and I refuse not to administer to a brother's limbs with a sister's hand.

ORES. Lay thy side by my side, and remove the squalid hair from my face, for I see but imperfectly with my eyes.

ELEC. O wretched head, sordid with ringlets, how art thou disordered from long want of the bath!

ORES. Lay me on the couch again; when my fit of madness gives me a respite, I am feeble and weak in my limbs.

ELEC. Behold, the couch is pleasant to the sick man, an irksome thing to keep, but still a necessary one.

ORES. Again raise me upright — turn my body.

CHOR. Sick persons are hard to be pleased from their feebleness.

ELEC. Wilt thou set thy feet on the ground, putting forward thy long-discontinued step? In all things change is sweet.

ORES. Yes, by all means; for this has a semblance of health, but the semblance is good, though it be distant from the truth.

ELEC. Hear now therefore, O my brother, while yet the Furies suffer thee to have thy right faculties.

ORES. Wilt thou tell any news? and if good indeed, thou art conferring pleasure; but if it pertain at all to mischief — I have enough distress.

ELEC. Menelaus has arrived, the brother of thy father, but his ships are moored in the Nauplian bay.

ORES. How sayest? Is he come, a light in mine and thy sufferings, a man of kindred blood, and that hath received benefits from our father?

ELEC. He is come; take this a sure proof of my words, bringing with him Helen from the walls of Troy.

ORES. Had he been saved alone, he had been more blest. But if he brings his wife, he has arrived with a mighty evil.

ELEC. Tyndarus begat an offspring of daughters, a conspicuous mark for blame, and infamous throughout Greece.

ORES. Do thou then be unlike the bad, for it is in thy power. And not only say, but also hold these sentiments.

ELEC. Alas! my brother, thine eye rolls wildly; quick art thou changed to madness, so late in thy senses.

ORES. O mother, I implore thee, urge not on me those Furies gazing blood, horrid with snakes, for these, these are leaping around me.

ELEC. Remain, O wretched man, calmly on thy couch, for thou seest none of those things, which thou fanciest thou seest plainly.

ORES. O Phœbus, these dire Goddesses in the shape of dogs will kill me, these gorgon-visaged ministers of hell.

ELEC. I will not let thee go, but, putting my arm around thee, will stop thy starting into those unfortunate convulsions.

ORES. Loose me. Thou art one of my Furies, and seizest me by the middle, that thou mayest hurl me into Tartarus.

ELEC. Oh! wretched me! what assistance can I obtain, since we have on us the vengeful wrath of heaven!

ORES. Give me my bow of horn, the gift of Phœbus, with which Apollo said I should repel the Fiends, if they appalled me by their maddened raging.

ELEC. Shall any God be wounded by mortal hand? *(Note [B].)*

ORES. *Yes. She shall,* if she will not depart from my sight... Hear ye not — see ye not the winged shafts impelled from the distant-wounding bow? Ha! ha! Why tarry ye yet? Skim the high air with your wings, and impeach the oracles of Phœbus. — Ah! why am I thus disquieted, heaving my panting breath from my lungs? Whither, whither have I wandered from my couch? For from the waves again I see a calm. — Sister, why weepest, hiding thine eyes beneath thy vests, I am ashamed to have thee a partner in my sufferings, and to give a virgin trouble through my malady. Pine not away on account of my miseries: for thou indeed didst assent to this, but the shedding of my mother's blood was accomplished by me: but I blame Apollo, who, after having instigated me to a most unholy act, with words indeed consoled me, but not with deeds. But I think that my father, had I, beholding him, asked him if it were right for me to slay my mother, would have put forth many supplications, beseeching me by this beard not to impel my sword to the slaughter of her who bore me, if neither he thereby could be restored to life, and I thus wretched must go through such miseries. And now then unveil thyself, my sister, and cease from tears, even though we be very miserable: but when thou seest me desponding, do thou restrain my distraction, and that which preys upon my mind, and console me; but when thou groanest, it becomes my duty to come to thee, and suggest words of comfort. For these are the good offices friends ought to render each other. But go thou into the house, O unfortunate sister, and, stretched at full length, compose thy sleepless eyelids to sleep, and take refreshment, and pour the bath upon thy fair skin. For if thou forsakest me, or gettest any illness by continually sitting by me, we perish; for thee I have my only succor, by the rest, as thou seest, abandoned.

ELEC. This can not be: with thee will I choose to die, with thee to live; for it is the same: for if then shouldst die, what can I do, a woman? how shall I be preserved, alone and destitute? without a brother, without a father, without a friend: but if it seemeth good to thee, these things it is my duty to

do: but recline thy body on the bed, and do not to such a degree conceive to be real whatever frightens and startles thee from the couch, but keep quiet on the bed strewn for thee. For though thou be not ill, but only seem to be ill, still this even is an evil and a distress to mortals. *(Note [C].)*

CHORUS. Alas! alas! O swift-winged, raving Goddesses, who keep up the dance, not that of Bacchus, with tears and groans. You, dark Eumenides, you, that fly through the wide extended air, executing vengeance, executing slaughter, you do I supplicate, I supplicate: suffer the offspring of Agamemnon to forget his furious madness; alas! for his sufferings. What were they that eagerly grasping at, thou unhappy perishest, having received from the tripod the oracle which Phœbus spake, on that pavement, where are said to be the recesses in the midst of the globe! O Jupiter, what pity is there? what is this contention of slaughter that comes persecuting thee wretched, to whom some evil genius casts tear upon tear, transporting to thy house the blood of thy mother which drives thee frenzied! Thus I bewail, I bewail. Great prosperity is not lasting among mortals; but, as the sail of the swift bark, some deity having shaken him, hath sunk him in the voracious and destructive waves of tremendous evils, as in the waves of the ocean. For what other family ought I to reverence yet before that sprung from divine nuptials, sprung from Tantalus? — But lo! the king! the prince Menelaus, is coming! but he is very easily discernible from the elegance of his person, as king of the house of the Tantalidæ.

O thou that didst direct the army of a thousand vessels to Asia's land, hail! but thou comest hither with good fortune, having obtained the object of thy wishes from the Gods.

MENELAUS, ORESTES, CHORUS.

MEN. O palace, in some respect indeed I behold thee with pleasure, coming from Troy, but in other respect I groan when I see thee. For never yet saw I any other house more completely encircled round with lamentable woes. For I was made acquainted with the misfortune that befell Agamemnon, [and his death, by what death he perished at the hands of his wife,] when I was landing my ships at Malea; but from the waves the prophet of the mariners declared unto me, the foreboding Glaucus the son of Nereus, an unerring God, who told me thus in evident form standing by me.

“Menelaus, thy brother lieth dead, having fallen in his last bath, which his wife prepared.” But he filled both me and my sailors with many tears; but when I come to the Nauplian shore, my wife having already landed there, expecting to clasp in my friendly embraces Orestes the son of Agamemnon, and his mother, as being in prosperity, I heard from some fisherman the unhallowed murder of the daughter of Tyndarus. And now tell me, maidens, where is the son of Agamemnon, who dared these terrible deeds of evil? for he was an infant in Clytæmnestra’s arms at that time when I left the palace on my way to Troy, so that I should not know him, were I to see him.

ORES. I, Menelaus, am Orestes, whom thou seekest, I of my own accord will declare my evils. But first I touch thy knees in supplication, putting up prayers from my mouth, not using the sacred branch: save me. But thou art come in the very season of my sufferings.

MEN. O ye Gods, what do I behold! whom of the dead do I see!

ORES. Ay! well thou sayest the dead; for in my state of suffering I live not; but see the light.

MEN. Thou wretched man, how disordered thou art in thy squalid hair!

ORES. Not the appearance, but the deeds torment me.

MEN. But thou glarest dreadfully with thy shriveled eyeballs.

ORES. My body is vanished, but my name has not left me.

MEN. Alas, thy uncomeliness of form which has appeared to me beyond conception!

ORES. I am he, the murderer of my wretched mother.

MEN. I have heard; but spare a little the recital of thy woes.

ORES. I spare it; but in woes the deity is rich to me.

MEN. What dost thou suffer? What malady destroys thee?

ORES. The conviction that I am conscious of having perpetrated dreadful deeds.

MEN. How sayest thou? Plainness, and not obscurity, is wisdom.

ORES. Sorrow is chiefly what destroys me, —

MEN. She is a dreadful goddess, but sorrow admits of cure.

ORES. And fits of madness in revenge for my mother's blood.

MEN. But when didst first have the raging? what day was it then?

ORES. That day in which I heaped the tomb on my mother.

MEN. What? in the house, or sitting at the pyre?

ORES. As I was guarding by night lest any one should bear off her bones.

MEN. Was any one else present, who supported thy body?

ORES. Pylades, who perpetrated with me the vengeance and death of my mother.

MEN. But by what visions art thou thus afflicted?

ORES. I appear to behold three virgins like the night.

MEN. I know whom thou meanest, but am unwilling to name them.

ORES. Yes: for they are awful; but forbear from speaking such high polished words.

MEN. Do these drive thee to distraction on account of this kindred murder?

ORES. Alas me for the persecutions, with which wretched I am driven!

MEN. It is not strange that those who do strange deeds should suffer them.

ORES. But we have whereto we may transfer the criminality of the mischance.

MEN. Say not the death *of thy father;* for this is not wise.

ORES. Phœbus who commanded us to perpetrate the slaying of our mother.

MEN. Being more ignorant than to know equity, and justice.

ORES. We are servants of the Gods, whatever those Gods be.

MEN. And then does not Apollo assist thee in thy miseries?

ORES. He is always about to do it, but such are the Gods by nature.

MEN. But how long a time has thy mother's breath gone from her?

ORES. This is the sixth day since; the funeral pyre is yet warm.

MEN. How quickly have the Goddesses come to demand of thee thy mother's blood!

ORES. I am not wise, but a true friend to my friends.

MEN. But what then doth the revenge of thy father profit thee?

ORES. Nothing yet; but I consider what is in prospect in the same light as a thing not done.

MEN. But regarding the city how standest thou, having done these things?

ORES. We are hated to that degree, that no one speaks to us.

MEN. Nor hast thou washed thy blood from thy hands according to the laws?

ORES. *How can I?* for I am shut out from the houses, whithersoever I go.

MEN. Who of the citizens thus contend to drive thee from the land?

ORES. Œax, imputing to my father the hatred which arose on account of Troy.

MEN. I understand. The death of Palamede takes its vengeance on thee.

ORES. In which at least I had no share — but I perish by the three.

MEN. But who else? Is it perchance one of the friends of Ægisthus?

ORES. They persecute me, whom now the city obeys.

MEN. But does the city suffer thee to wield Agamemnon's sceptre?

ORES. How should they? who no longer suffer us to live.

MEN. Doing what, which thou canst tell me as a clear fact?

ORES. This very day sentence will be passed upon us.

MEN. To be exiled from this city? or to die? or not to die?

ORES. To die, by being stoned with stones by the citizens.

MEN. And dost thou not fly then, escaping beyond the boundaries of the country?

ORES. *How can we?* for we are surrounded on every side by brazen arms.

MEN. By private enemies, or by the hand of Argos?

ORES. By all the citizens, that I may die — the word is brief.

MEN. O unhappy man! thou art come to the extreme of misfortune.

ORES. On thee my hope builds her escape from evils, but, thyself happy, coming among the distressed, impart thy good fortune to thy friends, and be not the only man to retain a benefit thou hast received, but undertake also services in thy turn, paying their father's kindness to those to whom thou

oughtest. For those friends have the name, not the reality, who are not friends in adversity.

CHOR. And see the Spartan Tyndarus is toiling hither with his aged foot, in a black vest, and shorn, his locks cut off in mourning for his daughter.

ORES. I am undone, O Menelaus! Lo! Tyndarus is coming toward us, to come before whose presence, most of all men's, shame covereth me, on account of what has been done. For he used to nurture me when I was little, and satiated me with many kisses, dandling in his arms Agamemnon's boy, and Leda with him, honoring me no less than the twin-born of Jove. For which, O my wretched heart and soul, I have given no good return: what dark veil can I take for my countenance? what cloud can I place before me, that I may avoid the glances of the old man's eyes?

TYNDARUS, MENELAUS, ORESTES, CHORUS.

TYND. Where, where can I see my daughter's husband Menelaus? For as I was pouring my libations on the tomb of Clytæmnestra, I heard that he was come to Nauplia with his wife, safe through a length of years. Conduct me, for I long to stand by his hand and salute him, seeing my friend after a long lapse of time.

MEN. O hail! old man, who sharest thy bed with Jove.

TYND. O hail! thou also, Menelaus my dear relation, — ah! what an evil is it not to know the future! This dragon here, the murderer of his mother, glares before the house his pestilential gleams — the object of my detestation — Menelaus, dost thou speak to this unholy wretch?

MEN. Why not? he is the son of a father who was dear to me.

TYND. What! was he sprung from him, being such as he is?

MEN. He was; but, though he be unfortunate, he should be respected.

TYND. Having been a long time with barbarians, thou art thyself turned barbarian.

MEN. Nay! it is the Grecian fashion always to honor one of kindred blood.

TYND. *Yes*, and also not to wish to be above the laws.

MEN. Every thing proceeding from necessity is considered as subservient to her among the wise.

TYND. Do thou then keep to this, but I'll have none of it.

MEN. *No*, for anger joined with thine age, is not wisdom.

TYND. With this man what controversy can there be regarding wisdom? If what things are virtuous, and what are not virtuous, are plain to all, what man was ever more unwise that this man? who did not indeed consider justice, nor applied to the common existing law of the Grecians. For after that Agamemnon breathed forth his last, struck by my daughter on the head, a most foul deed *(for never will I approve of this)*, it behooved him indeed to lay against her a sacred charge of bloodshed, following up the accusation, and to cast his mother from out of the house; and he would have taken the wise side in the calamity, and would have kept to law, and would have been pious. But now has he come to the same fate with his mother. For with justice thinking her wicked, himself has become more wicked in slaying his mother.

But thus much, Menelaus, will I ask thee; If the wife that shared his bed were to kill him, and his son again kills his mother in return, and he that is born of him shall expiate the murder with murder, whither then will the extremes of these evils proceed? Well did our fathers of old lay down these things; they suffered not him to come into the sight of their eyes, not to their converse, who was under an attainder of blood; but they made him atone by banishment; they suffered however none to kill him in return. For always were one about to be attainted of murder, taking the pollution last into his hands. But I hate indeed impious women, but first among them my daughter, who slew her husband. But never will I approve of Helen thy wife, nor would I speak to her, neither do I commend thee for going to the plain of Troy on account of a perfidious woman. But I will defend the law, as far at least as I am able, putting a stop to this brutish and murderous practice, which is ever destructive both of the country and the state. — For

what feelings of humanity hadst thou, thou wretched man, when she bared her breast in supplication, thy mother? I indeed, though I witnessed not that scene of misery, melt in my aged eyes with tears through wretchedness. One thing however goes to the scale of my arguments; thou art both hated by the Gods, and sufferest vengeance of thy mother, wandering about with madness and terrors; why must I hear by the testimony of others, what it is in my power to see? That thou mayest know then *once for all*, Menelaus, do not things contrary to the Gods, through thy wishes to assist this man. But suffer him to be slain by the citizens with stones, or set not thy foot on Spartan ground. But my daughter in dying met with justice, but it was not fitting that she should die by him. In other respects indeed have I been a happy man, except in my daughters, but in this I am not happy.

CHOR. He is enviable, who is fortunate in his children, and has not on him some notorious calamities.

ORES. O old man, I tremble to speak to thee, wherein I am about to grieve thee and thy mind. But I am unholy in that I slew my mother; but holy at least in another point of view, having avenged my father. Let then thine age, which hinders me through fear from speaking, be removed out of the way of my words, and I will go on in a direct path; but now do I fear thy gray hairs. What could I do? for oppose the facts, two against two. My father indeed begat me, but thy daughter brought me forth, a field receiving the seed from another; but without a father there never could be a child. I reasoned therefore with myself, that I should assist the prime author of my birth rather than the aliment which under him produced me. But thy daughter *(I am ashamed to call her mother)*, in secret and unchaste nuptials, had approached the bed of another man; of myself, if I speak ill of her, shall I be speaking, but yet will I tell it. Ægisthus was her secret husband in her palace. Him I slew, and after him I sacrificed my mother, doing indeed unholy things, but avenging my father. But as touching those things for which thou threatenest that I must be stoned, hear, how I shall assist all Greece. For if the women shall arrive at such a pitch of boldness as to murder the men, making good their escape with regard to their children, seeking to captivate their pity by their breasts, it would be as nothing with them to slay their husbands, having any pretext that might chance; but I having done dreadful things *(as thou sayest)*, have put a stop to this law, but

hating my mother deservedly I slew her, who betrayed her husband absent from home in arms, the generalissimo of the whole land of Greece, and kept not her bed undefiled. But when she perceived that she had done amiss, she inflicted not vengeance on herself, but, that she might not suffer vengeance from her husband, punished and slew my father. By the Gods, *(in no good cause have I named the Gods, pleading against a charge of murder,)* had I by my silence praised my mother's actions, what then would the deceased have done to me? To my mother indeed the Furies are present as allies, but would they not be present to him, who has received the greater injury? Would he not, detesting me, have haunted me with the Furies? Thou then, O old man, by begetting a bad daughter, hast destroyed me; for through her boldness deprived of my father, I became a matricide. Dost see? Telemachus slew not the wife of Ulysses, for she married not a husband on a husband, but her marriage-bed remains unpolluted in the palace. Dost see? Apollo, who, dwelling in his habitation in the midst of the earth, gives the most clear oracles to mortals, by whom we are entirely guided, whatever he may say, on him relying slew I my mother. 'Twas he who erred, not I: what could I do? Is not the God sufficient for me, who transfer *the deed* to him, to do away with the pollution? Whither then can any fly for succor, unless he that commanded me shall deliver me from death? But say not these things have been done "not well;" but *say* "not fortunately" for us who did them. But to whatsoever men their marriages are well established, there is a happy life, but to those to whom they fall not out well, with regard to their affairs both at home and abroad they are unfortunate.

CHOR. Women were born always to be in the way of what may happen to men, to the making of things unfortunate.

TYND. Since thou art bold, and yieldest not to my speech, but thus answerest me so as to grieve my mind, thou wilt rather inflame me to urge thy death. But this I shall consider a handsome addition to those labors for which I came, *namely*, to deck my daughter's tomb. For going to the multitude of the Argives assembled, I will rouse the state willing and not unwilling, to pass the sentence of being stoned on thee and on thy sister; but she is worthy of death rather than thee, who irritated thee against her mother, always pealing in thine ear words to increase thy hatred, relating dreams she had of Agamemnon, and this also, that the infernal Gods

detested the bed of Ægisthus; for even here *on earth* it were hard *to be endured*; until she set the house in flames with fire more strong than Vulcan's. — Menelaus, but to thee I speak this, and will moreover perform it. If thou regard my hate, and my alliance, ward not off death from this man in opposition to the Gods; but suffer him to be slain by the citizens with stones, or set not thy foot on Spartan ground. Thus much having heard, depart, nor choose the impious for thy friends, passing over the pious. — But O attendants, conduct us from this house.

ORES. Depart, that the remainder of my speech may reach this man uninterrupted by the clamors of thy age: Menelaus, whither dost thou roam in thought, entering on a double path of double care?

MEN. Suffer me; having some thoughts with myself, I am perplexed to which side of fortune to turn me.

ORES. Do not make up thy opinion, but having first heard my words, then deliberate.

MEN. Say on; for thou hast spoken rightly; but there are seasons where silence may be better than talking, and there are seasons where talking may be better than silence.

ORES. I will speak then forthwith: Long speeches have the preference before short ones, and are more plain to hear. Give thou to me nothing of what thou hast, O Menelaus, but what thou hast received from my father, return; I mean not riches — yet riches, which are the most dear of what I possess, if thou wilt preserve my life. Say I am unjust, I ought to receive from thee, instead of this evil, something contrary to what justice demands; for Agamemnon my father having collected Greece in arms, in a way justice did not demand, went to Troy, not having erred himself, but in order to set right the error, and injustice of thy wife. This one thing indeed thou oughtest to give me for one thing, but he, as friends should for friends, of a truth exposed his person for thee toiling at the shield, that thou mightest receive back thy wife. Repay me then this kindness for that which thou receivedst there, toiling for one day in standing as my succor, not completing ten years. But the sacrifice of my sister, which Aulis received, this I suffer thee to have; do not kill Hermione, *I ask it not*. For, I being in

the state in which I now am, thou must of necessity have the advantage, and I must suffer it to be so. But grant my life to my wretched father, and my sister's, who has been a virgin a long time. For dying I shall leave my father's house destitute. Thou wilt say "impossible:" this is the very thing *I have been urging*, it behooves friends to help their friends in misfortunes. But when the God gives prosperity, what need is there of friends? For the God himself sufficeth, being willing to assist. Thou appearest to all the Greeks to be fond of thy wife; *(and this I say, not stealing under thee imperceptibly with flattery;)* by her I implore thee; O wretched me for my woes, to what have I come? but why must I suffer thus? For in behalf of the whole house I make this supplication. O divine brother of my father, conceive that the dead man beneath the earth hears these things, and that his spirit is hovering over thee, and speaks what I speak. These things have I said, with tears, and groans, and miseries, and have prayed earnestly, looking for preservation, which all, and not I only, seek.

CHOR. I too implore thee, although a woman, yet still I implore thee to succor those in need, but thou art able.

MEN. Orestes, I indeed reverence thy person, and I am willing to labor with thee in thy misfortunes. For thus it is right to endure together the misfortunes of one's relations, if the God gives the ability, even so far as to die, and to kill the adversary; but this ability again I want from the Gods. For I am come having my single spear unaided by allies, having wandered with infinite labors with small assistance of friends left me. In battle therefore we can not come off superior to Pelasgian Argos; but if we can by soft speeches, to that hope are we equal. For how can any one achieve great actions with small means? For when the rabble is in full force falling into a rage, it is equally difficult to extinguish as a fierce fire. But if one quietly yields to it as it is spreading, and gives in to it, watching well his opportunity, perhaps it may spend its rage, but when it has remitted from its blast, you may without difficulty have it your own way, as much as you please. For there is inherent in them pity, but there is inherent also vehement passion, to one who carefully watches his opportunity a most excellent advantage. But I will go and endeavor to persuade Tyndarus, and the city, to use their great power in a becoming manner. For a ship, the main sheet stretched out to a violent degree, is wont to pitch, but stands upright

again, if you slacken the main sheet. For the God hates too great vehemence, and the citizens hate it; but I must *(I speak as I mean)* save thee by wisdom, not by opposing my superiors. But I can not by force, as perchance thou thinkest, preserve thee; for it is no easy matter to erect from one single spear trophies from the evils, which are about thee. For never have we approached the land of Argos by way of supplication; but now there is necessity for the wise to become the slaves of fortune.

ORESTES, CHORUS.

ORES. O thou, a mere cipher in other things except in warring for the sake of a woman; O thou most base in avenging thy friends, dost thou fly, turning away from me? But all Agamemnon's services are gone: thou wert then without friends, O my father, in thy affliction. Alas me! I am betrayed, and there no longer are any hopes, whither turning I may escape death from the Argives. For he was the refuge of my safety. But I see this most dear of men, Pylades, coming with hasty step from the Phocians, a pleasing sight, a man faithful in adversity, more grateful to behold than the calm to the mariners.

PYLADES, ORESTES, CHORUS.

PYL. I came through the city with a quicker step than I ought, having heard of the council of state assembled, and seeing it plainly myself, against thee and thy sister, as about to kill you instantly. — What is this? how art thou? in what state, O most dear to me of my companions and kindred? for all these things art thou to me.

ORES. We are gone — briefly to show thee my calamities.

PYL. Thou wilt have ruined me too; for the things of friends are common.

ORES. Menelaus has behaved most basely toward me and my sister.

PYL. It is to be expected that the husband of a bad wife be bad.

ORES. He is come, and has done just as much for me as if he had not come.

PYL. What! is he in truth come to this land?

ORES. After a long season; but nevertheless he was very soon discovered to be too base to his friends.

PYL. And has he brought in his ship with him his most infamous wife?

ORES. Not he her, but she brought him hither.

PYL. Where is she, who, beyond any woman, destroyed most of the Grecians?

ORES. In my palace, if I may indeed be allowed to call this mine.

PYL. But what words didst thou say to thy father's brother?

ORES. *I requested him* not to suffer me and my sister to be slain by the citizens.

PYL. By the Gods, what said he to this request; this I wish to know.

ORES. He declined, from motives of prudence, as bad friends act toward their friends.

PYL. Going on what ground of excuse? This having learned, I am in possession of every thing.

ORES. The father himself came, he that begat such excellent daughters.

PYL. Tyndarus you mean; perhaps enraged with thee on account of his daughter.

ORES. You are right: be paid more attention to his ties with him, than to his ties with my father.

PYL. And dared he not, being present, to take arms against thy troubles?

ORES. *No*: for he was not born a warrior, but brave among women.

PYL. Thou art then in the greatest miseries, and it is necessary for thee to die.

ORES. The citizens must pass their vote on us for the murder *we have committed*.

PYL. Which vote what will it decide? tell me, for I am in fear.

ORES. Either to die or live; not many words on matters of great import.

PYL. Come fly, and quit the palace with thy sister.

ORES. Seest thou not? we are watched by guards on every side,

PYL. I saw the streets of the city lined with arms.

ORES. We are invested as to our persons, as a city by the enemy.

PYL. Now ask me also, what I suffer; for I too am undone.

ORES. By whom? This would be an evil added to my evils.

PYL. Strophius, my father, being enraged, hath driven me an exile from his house.

ORES. Bringing against thee some private charge, or one in common with the citizens?

PYL. Because I perpetrated with thee the murder of thy mother, he banished me, calling me unholy.

ORES. O thou unfortunate! it seems that thou also sufferest for my evils.

PYL. We have not Menelaus's manners — this must be borne.

ORES. Dost thou not fear lest Argos should wish to kill thee, as it does also me?

PYL. We do not belong to these to punish, but to the land of the Phocians.

ORES. The populace is a terrible thing, when they have evil leaders.

PYL. But when they have good ones, they always deliberate good things.

ORES. Be it so: we must speak on our common business.

PYL. On what affair of necessity?

ORES. Supposing I should go to the citizens, and say —

PYL. — that thou hast acted justly?

ORES. Ay, avenging my father:

PYL. I fear they might not receive thee gladly.

ORES. But shall I die then shuddering in silence!

PYL. This were cowardly.

ORES. How then can I do?

PYL. Hast thou any chance of safety, if thou remainest?

ORES. I have none.

PYL. But going, is there any hope of thy being preserved from thy miseries?

ORES. Should it chance well, there might be.

PYL. Is not this then better than remaining?

ORES. Shall I go then?

PYL. Dying thus, at least thou wilt die more honorably.

ORES. And I have a just cause.

PYL. Only pray for its appearing so.

ORES. Thou sayest well: this way I avoid the imputation of cowardice.

PYL. More than by tarrying here.

ORES. And some one perchance may pity me —

PYL. Yes; for thy nobleness of birth is a great thing.

ORES. — indignant at my father's death.

PYL. All this in prospect.

ORES. Go I must, for it is not manly to die ingloriously.

PYL. These sentiments I praise.

ORES. Shall we then tell these things to my sister?

PYL. No, by the Gods.

ORES. Why, there might be tears.

PYL. This then is a great omen.

ORES. Clearly it is better to be silent.

PYL. Thou art a gainer by delay.

ORES. This one thing only opposes me.

PYL. What new thing again is this thou sayest?

ORES. I fear lest the goddesses should stop me with their torments.

PYL. But I will take care of thee.

ORES. It is a difficult and dangerous task to touch a man thus disordered.

PYL. Not for me to touch thee.

ORES. Take care how thou art partner of my madness.

PYL. Let not this be thought of.

ORES. Wilt thou not then be timid to assist me?

PYL. No, for timidity is a great evil to friends.

ORES. Go on now, the helm of my foot.

PYL. Having a charge worthy of a friend.

ORES. And guide me to my father's tomb.

PYL. To what end is this?

ORES. That I may supplicate him to save me.

PYL. This at least is just.

ORES. But let me not see my mother's monument.

PYL. For she was an enemy. But hasten, that the decree of the Argives condemn thee not before thou goest; leaning thy side, weary with disease, on mine: since I will conduct thee through the city, little caring for the multitude, nothing ashamed; for where shall I show myself thy friend, if I assist thee not when them art in perilous condition?

ORES. This it is to have companions, not relationship alone; so that a man who is congenial in manners, though a stranger in blood, is a better friend for a man to have, than ten thousand relatives.

CHORUS.

The great happiness, and the valor high sounding throughout Greece, and by the channels of the Simois, has again withdrawn from the fortune of the Atridæ, as of old, from the ancient calamity of the house, when the strife of the golden lamb arose among the descendants of Tantalus; most shocking feasts, and the slaughter of noble children; from whence murder responsive

to murder fails not to attend on the two sons of Atreus. What seems good is not good, to gash the parents' skin with a fierce hand, and brandish the sword black-stained with blood in the sunbeams. But, on the other hand, to act wickedly is mad impiety, and the folly of evil-minded men.

But the wretched daughter of Tyndarus in the fear of death shrieked out, "My son, thou darest impious deeds, killing thy mother; do not, attending to the gratification of thy father, kindle an everlasting disgrace."

What malady, or what tears, or what pity on earth is greater, than to imbrue one's hand in a mother's blood? What a deed, what a deed having performed, does the son of Agamemnon rave with madness, a prey to the Eumenides, marked for death, giddy with his rolling eyes! O wretched on account of his mother, when though seeing the breast bared from the robe of golden texture, he stabbed the mother in retaliation for the father's sufferings.

ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELEC. Ye virgins, has the wretched Orestes, overcome with heaven-inflicted madness, rushed any where from this house?

CHOR. By no means; but he is gone to the Argive people, to undergo the trial proposed regarding life, by which you must either live or die.

ELEC. Alas me! what thing has he done? but who persuaded him?

CHOR. Pylades. — But this messenger seems soon about to inform us of what has passed there concerning thy brother.

MESSENGER, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

MESS. O wretched hapless daughter of the chief Agamemnon, revered Electra, hear the unfortunate words which I am come to bring.

ELEC. Alas! alas! we are undone; this thou signifiest by thy speech. For thou comest, as it seems, a messenger of woes.

MESS. It has been carried by the vote of the Pelasgians, that thy brother and thou must die this day.

ELEC. Ah me! the expected event has come, which long since fearing, I pined away with lamentations on account of what was in prospect. — But what was the debate? What arguments among the Argives condemned us, and confirmed our sentence of death? Tell me, old man, whether by the hand raised to stone me, or by the sword must I breathe out my soul, having this calamity in common with my brother?

MESS. I chanced indeed to be entering the gates from the country, anxious to hear both what regarded thee, and what regarded Orestes; for at all times I had a favorable inclination toward thy father: and thy house fed me, poor indeed, but noble in my conduct toward friends. But I see the crowd going and sitting down on an eminence; where they say Danaus first collected the people to a common council, when he suffered punishment at the hands of Ægyptus. But seeing this concourse, I asked one of the citizens, "What new thing is stirring in Argos? Has any message from hostile powers roused the city of the Danaids?" But he said, "Seest thou not this Orestes walking near us, who is about to run in the contest of life and death?" But I see an unexpected sight, which oh that I had never seen! Pylades and thy brother walking together, the one indeed broken with sickness, but the other, like a brother, sympathizing with his friend, tending his weakened state with fostering care. But when the assembly of the Argives was full, a herald stood forth and said, "Who wishes to speak *on the question*, whether it is right that Orestes, who has killed his mother, should die, or not?" And on this Talthybius rises, who, in conjunction with thy father, laid waste the Phrygians. But he spoke words of divided import, being the constant slave of those in power; struck with admiration indeed at thy father, but not commending thy brother *(speciously mixing up words of bad import)*, because he laid down no good laws toward his parents: but he was continually casting a smiling glance on Ægisthus's friends. For such is this kind; heralds always dance attendance on the prosperous; but that man is their friend, whoever may chance to have power in the state, and to be in office. But next to him prince Diomed harangued; he indeed was for suffering them to kill neither thee nor thy brother, but *bid them* observe piety by punishing you with banishment. But some indeed murmured their

assent, that he spoke well, but others praised him not. And after him rises up some man, intemperate in speech, powerful in boldness, an Argive, yet not an Argive, forced upon us, relying both on the tumult, and on ignorant boldness, prompt by persuasion to involve them in some mischief. (For when a man, sweet in words, holding bad sentiments, persuades the multitude, it is a great evil to the city. But as many as always advise good things with understanding, although not at the present moment, eventually are of service to the state: but the intelligent leader ought to look to this, for the case is the same with the man who speaks words, and the man who approves them.) Who said, that they ought to kill Orestes and thee by stoning. But Tyndarus was privily making up such sort of speeches for him who wished your death to speak. But another man stood up, and spoke in opposition to him, in form indeed not made to catch the eye; but a man endued with the qualities of a man, rarely polluting the city, and the circle of the forum; one who farmed his own land, which class of persons alone preserve the country, but prudent, and wishing the tenor of his conduct to be in unison with his words, uncorrupted, one that had conformed to a blameless mode of living; he proposed to crown Orestes the son of Agamemnon, who was willing to avenge his father by slaying a wicked and unholy woman, who took this out of the power of men, and would no one have been the cause of arming the hand for war, nor undertaking an expedition, leaving his home, if those who are left destroy what is intrusted to their charge in the house, disgracing their husbands' beds. And to right-minded men at least he appeared to speak well: and none spoke besides, but thy brother advanced and said, "O inhabitants of the land of Inachus, avenging you no less than my father, I slew my mother, for if the murder of men shall become licensed to women, ye no longer can escape dying, or ye must be slaves to your wives. But ye do the contrary to what ye ought to do. For now she that was false to the bed of my father is dead; but if ye do indeed slay me, the law has lost its force, and no man can escape dying, forasmuch as there will be no lack of this audacity."

But he persuaded not the people, though appearing to speak well. But that villain, who spoke among the multitude, overcomes him, he that harangued for the killing of thy brother and thee. But scarcely did the wretched Orestes persuade them that he might not die by stoning; but he promised that this day he would quit his life by self-slaughter together with thee: — but

Pylades is conducting him from the council, weeping: but his friends accompany him bewailing him, pitying him; but he is coming a sad spectacle to thee, and a wretched sight. But prepare the sword, or the noose for thy neck, for thou must die, but thy nobleness of birth hath profited thee nothing, nor the Pythian Phœbus who sits on the tripod, but hath destroyed thee.

CHOR. O unhappy virgin! how art thou dumb, casting thy muffled countenance toward the ground, as though about to run into a strain of groans and lamentations!

ELEC. I begin the lament, O land of Greece, digging my white nail into my cheek, sad bleeding woe, and dashing my head, which the lovely goddess of the manes beneath the earth has to her share. And let the Cyclopian land howl, applying the steel to their head cropped of hair over the calamity of our house. This pity, this pity, proceeds for those who are about to die, who once were the princes of Greece. For it is gone, it is gone, the entire race of the children of Pelops has perished, and the happiness which once resided in these blest abodes. Envy from heaven has now seized it, and the harsh decree of blood in the state. Alas! alas! O race of mortals that endure for a day, full of tears, full of troubles, behold how contrary to expectation fate comes. But in the long lapse of time each different man receives by turns his different sufferings. But the whole race of mortals is unstable and uncertain.

Oh! could I go to that rock stretched from Olympus in its loftiness midst heaven and earth by golden chains, that mass of clay borne round with rapid revolutions, that in my plaints I might cry out to my ancient father Tantalus; who begat the progenitors of my family, who saw calamities, what time in the pursuing of steeds, Pelops in his car drawn by four horses perpetrated, as he drove, the murder of Myrtilus, *by casting him* into the sea, hurling him down to the surge of the ocean, as he guided his car on the shore of the briny sea by Geræstus foaming with its white billows. Whence the baleful curse came on my house since, by the agency of Maia's son, there appeared the pernicious, pernicious prodigy of the golden-fleeced lamb, a birth which took place among the flocks of the warlike Atreus. On which both Discord drove back the winged chariot of the sun, directing it from the path of

heaven leading to the west toward Aurora borne on her single horse. And Jupiter drove back the course of the seven moving Pleiads another way: and from that period he sends deaths in succession to deaths, and "the feast of Thyestes," so named from Thyestes. And the bed of the Cretan Ærope deceitful in a deceitful marriage has come as a finishing stroke on me and my father, to the miserable destruction of our family.

CHOR. But see, thy brother is advancing, condemned by the vote of death, and Pylades the most faithful of all, a man like a brother, supporting the enfeebled limbs of Orestes, walking by his side with the foot of tender solicitude.

ELECTRA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

ELEC. Alas me! for I bewail thee, my brother, seeing thee before the tomb, and before the pyre of thy departed shade: alas me! again and again, how am I bereft of my senses, seeing with my eyes the very last sight of thee.

ORES. Wilt thou not in silence, ceasing from womanish groans, make up thy mind to what is decreed? These things indeed are lamentable, but yet we must bear our present fate.

ELEC. And how can I be silent? We wretched no longer are permitted to view this light of the God.

ORES. Do not thou kill me; I, the unhappy, have died enough already under the hands of the Argives; but pass over our present ills.

ELEC. O Orestes! oh wretched in thy youth, and thy fate, and thy untimely death, then oughtest thou to live, when thou art no more.

ORES. Do not by the Gods throw cowardice around me, bringing the remembrance of my woes so as to cause tears.

ELEC. We shall die; it is not possible not to groan our misfortunes; for the dear life is a cause of pity to all mortals.

ORES. This is the day appointed for us! but we must either fit the suspended noose, or whet the sword with our hand.

ELEC. Do thou then kill me, my brother; let none of the Argives kill me, putting a contumely on the offspring of Agamemnon.

ORES. I have enough of thy mother's blood, but thee I will not slay; but die by thine own hand in whatever manner thou wilt.

ELEC. These things shall be; I will not be deserted by thy sword; but I wish to clasp my hands around thy neck.

ORES. Thou enjoyest a vain gratification, if this be an enjoyment, to throw thy hands around those who are hard at death's door.

ELEC. Oh thou most dear! oh thou that hast the desirable and most sweet name, and one soul with thy sister!

ORES. Thou wilt melt me; and still I wish to answer thee in the endearment of encircling arms, for why am I any longer ashamed? O bosom of my sister, O dear object of my caresses, these embraces are allowed to us miserable beings instead of children and the bridal bed.

ELEC. Alas! How can the same sword *(if this request be lawful)* kill us, and one tomb wrought of cedar receive us?

ORES. This would be most sweet; but thou seest how destitute we are, in respect to being able to share our sepulture.

ELEC. Did not Menelaus speak in behalf of thee, taking a decided part against thy death, the base man, the deserter of my father? [Note [G].]

ORES. He showed it not even in his countenance, but keeping his hopes on the sceptre, he was cautious how he saved his friends. But let be, he will die acting in a manner nobly, and most worthily of Agamemnon. And I indeed will show my high descent to the city, striking home to my heart with the sword; but thee, on the other hand, it behooveth to act in concert with my bold attempts. But do thou, Pylades, be the umpire of our death, and well

compose the bodies of us when dead, and bury us together, bearing us to our father's tomb. And farewell — but I am going to the deed, as thou seest.

PYL. Hold. This one thing indeed first I bring in charge against thee — Dost thou think that I can wish to live when thou diest?

ORES. For how does it concern thee to die with me?

PYL. Dost ask? But how does it to live without thy company?

ORES. Thou didst not slay my mother, as I did, a wretch.

PYL. With thee I did at least; I ought also to suffer these things in common with thee.

ORES. Take thyself back to thy father, do not die with me. For thou indeed hast a city *(but I no longer have)*, and the mansion of thy father, and a great harbor of wealth. But thou art frustrated in thy marriage with this unhappy virgin, whom I betrothed to thee, revering thy friendship. Nevertheless do thou, contracting other nuptials, be a blest father, but the connection between me and thee no longer subsists, But thou, O darling name of my converse, farewell, be happy, for this is not allowed me, but it is to thee; for we, the dead, are deprived of happiness.

PYL. Surely thou art wide astray from my purposes. Nor may the fruitful plain receive my blood, nor the bright air, if ever I betraying thee, having freed myself, forsake thee; for I committed the slaughter with thee *(I will not deny it)*, and I planned all things, for which now thou sufferest vengeance. Die then I must with thee and her together, for her, whose marriage I have courted, I consider as my wife; for what good excuse ever shall I give, going to the Delphian land to the citadel of the Phocians, I, who was present with you, your friend, before indeed you were unfortunate, but now, when you are unfortunate, am no longer thy friend? It is not possible — but these things are my care also. But since we are about to die, let us come to a common conference, how Menelaus may be involved in our calamity.

ORES. O thou dearest man: for would I see this and die.

PYL. Be persuaded then, but defer the slaughtering sword.

ORES. I will defer, if any how I can avenge myself on my enemy.

PYL. Be silent then, for I have but small confidence in women.

ORES. Do not at all fear these, for they are friends that are present.

PYL. Let us kill Helen, which will cause great grief to Menelaus.

ORES. How? for the will is here, if it can be done with glory.

PYL. Stabbing her; but she is lurking in thy house.

ORES. Yes indeed, and is putting her seal on all my effects.

PYL. But she shall seal no more, having Pluto for her bridegroom.

ORES. And how can this be? for she has a train of barbarian attendants.

PYL. Whom? for I would be afraid of no Phrygian.

ORES. Such men as should preside over mirrors and scents.

PYL. For has she brought hither her Trojan fineries?

ORES. *Oh yes!* so that Greece is but a cottage for her.

PYL. A race of slaves is a mere nothing against a race that will not be slaves.

ORES. In good truth, this if I could achieve, I shrink not from two deaths.

PYL. But neither do I indeed, if I could revenge thee at least.

ORES. Disclose thy purpose, and go through it as thou sayest.

PYL. We will enter then the house, as men about to die.

ORES. Thus far I comprehend, but the rest I do not comprehend.

PYL. We will make our lamentation to her of the things we suffer.

ORES. So that she shall weep, though joyed within her heart.

PYL. And the same things will be for us to do afterward, which she does then.

ORES. Then how shall we finish the contest?

PYL. We will wear our swords concealed beneath our robes.

ORES. But what slaughter can there be before her attendants?

PYL. We will bolt them out, scattered in different parts of the house.

ORES. And him that is not silent we must kill.

PYL. Then the circumstances of the moment will point out what steps to take.

ORES. To kill Helen, I understand the sign.

PYL. Thou seest: but hear on what honorable principles I meditate it. For, if we draw our sword on a more modest woman, the murder will blot our names with infamy. But in the present instance, she shall suffer vengeance for the whole of Greece, whose fathers she slew, and made the brides bereaved of their spouses; there shall be a shout, and they will kindle up fire to the Gods, praying for many blessings to fall to thee and me, inasmuch as we shed the blood of a wicked woman. But thou shalt not be called the matricide, when thou hast slain her, but dropping this name thou shalt arrive at better things, being styled the slayer of the havoc-dealing Helen. It never, never were right that Menelaus should be prosperous, and that thy father, and thou, and thy sister should die, and thy mother; *(this I forbear, for it is not decorous to mention;)* and that he should seize thy house, having recovered his bride by the means of Agamemnon's valor. For may I live no longer, if I draw not my black sword upon her. But if then we do not compass the murder of Helen, having fired the palace we will die, for we

shall have glory, succeeding in one of these two things, nobly dying, or nobly rescued.

CHOR. The daughter of Tyndarus is an object of detestation to all women, being one that has given rise to scandal against the sex.

ORES. Alas! There is no better thing than a real friend, not riches, not kingdoms; but the popular applause becomes a thing of no account to receive in exchange for a generous friend. For thou contrivedst the destruction that befell Ægisthus, and wast close to me in my dangers. But now again thou givest me to revenge me on mine enemies, and art not out of the way — but I will leave off praising thee, since there is some burden even in this "to be praised to excess." But I altogether in a state of death, wish to do something to my foes and die, that I may in turn destroy those who betrayed me, and those may groan who also made me unhappy. I am the son of Agamemnon, who ruled over Greece by general consent; no tyrant, but yet he had the power as it were of a God, whom I will not disgrace, suffering a slavish death, but breathe out my soul in freedom, but on Menelaus will I revenge me. For if we could gain this one thing, we should be prosperous, if from any chance safety should come unhoped for on the slayers *then*, not the slain: this I pray for. For what I wish is sweet to delight the mind without fear of cost, though with but fleeting words uttered through the mouth.

ELEC. I, O brother, think that this very thing brings safety to thee, and thy friend, and in the third place to me.

ORES. Thou meanest the providence of the Gods: but where is this? for I know that there is understanding in thy mind.

ELEC. Hear me then, and thou too give thy attention.

ORES. Speak, since the existing prospect of good affords some pleasure.

ELEC. Art thou acquainted with the daughter of Helen? Thou knowest her of whom I ask.

ORES. I know her, Hermione, whom my mother brought up.

ELEC. She is gone to Clytæmnestra's tomb.

ORES. For what purpose? what hope dost thou suggest?

ELEC. To pour libations on the tomb in behalf of her mother.

ORES. And what is this, thou hast told me of, that regards our safety?

ELEC. Seize her as a pledge as she is coming back.

ORES. What remedy for the three friends is this thou sayest?

ELEC. When Helen is dead, if Menelaus does any harm to thee or Pylades, or me *(for this firm of friendship is all one)*, say that thou wilt kill Hermione; but thou oughtest to draw thy sword, and hold it to the neck of the virgin. And if indeed Menelaus save thee, anxious that the virgin may not die; when he sees Helen's corse weltering in blood, give back the virgin for her father to enjoy; but should he, not governing his angry temper, slay thee, do thou also plunge the sword into the virgin's neck, and I think that he, though at first he come to us very big, will after a season soften his heart; for neither is he brave nor valiant: this is the fortress of our safety that I have; my arguments on the subject have been spoken.

ORES. O thou that hast indeed the mind of a man, but a form among women beautiful, to what a degree art thou more worthy of life than death! Pylades, wilt thou miserably be disappointed of such a woman, or dwelling with her obtain this happy marriage?

PYL. For would it could be so! and she could come to the city of the Phocians meeting with her deserts in splendid nuptials!

ORES. But when will Hermione come to the house? Since for the rest thou saidst most admirably, if we could succeed in taking the whelp of the impious father.

ELEC. Even now I guess that she must be near the house, for *with this supposition* the space itself of the time coincides.

ORES. It is well; do thou therefore, my sister Electra, waiting before the house, meet the arrival of the virgin. And watch, lest any one, either some ally, or the brother of my father, should be beforehand with us coming to the palace: and make some noise toward the house, either knocking at the doors, or sending thy voice within. But let us, O Pylades *(for thou undertakest this labor with me)*, entering in, arm our hands with the sword to one last attempt. O my father, that inhabitest the realms of gloomy night, Orestes thy son invokes thee to come a succor to thy suppliants; for on thy account I wretched suffer unjustly, and am betrayed by thy brother, myself having acted justly: whose wife I wish to take and destroy; but be thou our accomplice in this affair.

ELEC. O father, come then, if beneath the earth thou hearest thy children calling, who die for thee.

PYL. O thou relation of my father, give ear, O Agamemnon, to my prayers also, preserve thy children.

ORES. I slew my mother.

PYL. But I directed the sword.

ELEC. But I at least incited you, and freed you from delay.

ORES. Succoring thee, my father.

ELEC. Neither did I forsake thee.

PYL. Wilt thou not therefore, hearing these things that are brought against thee, defend thy children?

ORES. I pour libations on thee with my tears.

ELEC. And I with lamentations.

PYL. Cease, and let us haste forth to the work, for if prayers penetrate under the earth, he hears; but, O Jove our ancestor, and thou revered deity of justice, grant us to succeed, him, and myself, and this virgin, for over us

three friends one hazard, one cause impends, either for all to live, or all to die!

ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELEC. O dear Mycenian virgins, who have the first place at the Pelasgian seat of the Argives; —

CHOR. What voice art thou uttering, my respected mistress? for this appellation awaits thee in the city of the Danaids.

ELEC. Arrange yourselves, some of you in this beaten way, and some there, in that other path, to guard the house.

CHOR. But on what account dost thou command this, tell me, my friend.

ELEC. Fear possesses me, lest any one being in the palace, on account of this murderous deed, should contrive evils on evils.

SEMICHOR. Go, let us hasten, I indeed will guard this path, that tends toward where the sun flings his first rays.

SEMICHOR. And I indeed this, which leads toward the west.

ELEC. Now turn the glances of your eyes around in every position, now here, now there, then take some other view.

CHOR. We are, as thou commandest.

ELEC. Now roll your eyelids over your pupils, glance them every way through your ringlets.

SEMICHOR. Is this any one here appearing in the path? — Who is this rustic that is standing about thy palace?

ELEC. We are undone then, my friends; he will immediately show to the enemy the lurking beasts of prey armed with their swords.

SEMICHOR. Be not afraid, the path is clear, which thou thinkest not.

ELEC. But what? — does all with you remain secure? Give me some good report, whether the space before the hall be empty?

SEMICHOR. All here at least is well, but look to thy province, for no one of the Danaids is approaching toward us.

SEMICHOR. Thy report agrees with mine, for neither is there a disturbance here.

ELEC. Come now, — I will listen at the door: why do ye delay, ye that are within, to sacrifice the victim, now that ye are in quiet? — They hear not: Alas me! wretched in misery! Are the swords then struck dumb at her beauty? Perhaps some Argive in arms rushing in with the foot of succor will approach the palace. — Now watch more carefully; it is no contest that admits delay; but turn *your eyes* some this way, and some that.

CHOR. I turn each different way, looking about on all sides.

HELEN. *(within)* Oh! Pelasgian Argos! I am miserably slain!

ELEC. Heard ye? The men are employing their head in the murder. — It is the shriek of Helen, as I may conjecture.

SEMICHOR. O eternal might of Jove, come to assist my friends in every way.

HEL. Menelaus, I die! But thou art at hand, and dost not help me!

ELEC. Kill, strike, slay, plunging with your hands the two double-edged swords into the deserter of her father, the deserter of her husband, who destroyed numbers of the Grecians perishing by the spear at the river, whence tears fell into conjunction with tears, fell on account of the iron weapons around the whirlpools of Scamander.

CHOR. Be still, be still: I heard the sound of some one coming along the path around the palace.

ELEC. O most dear women, in the midst of the slaughter behold Hermione is present; let us cease from our clamor, for she comes about to fall into the

meshes of our toils. A goodly prey will she be, if she be taken. Again to your stations with a calm countenance, and with a color that shall not give evidence of what has been done. I too will preserve a pensive cast of countenance, as though perfectly unacquainted with what has happened.

HERMIONE, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELEC. O virgin, art thou come from crowning Clytæmnestra's tomb, and pouring libations to her manes?

HERM. I am come, having obtained her good services; but some terror has come upon me, on account of the noise in the palace, which I hear being a far distance off the house.

ELEC. But why? There have happened to us things worthy of groans.

HERM. Speak good words; but what news dost thou tell me?

ELEC. It has been decreed by this land, that Orestes and I die.

HERM. No, I hope not so; you, who are my relations.

ELEC. It is fixed; but we stand under the yoke of necessity.

HERM. Was the noise then in the house on this account?

ELEC. For falling down a suppliant at the knees of Helen, he cries out —

HERM. Who? for I know no more, except thou tellest me.

ELEC. The wretched Orestes, that he may not die, and in behalf of me.

HERM. For a just reason then the house lamented.

ELEC. For on what other account should one rather cry out? But come, and join in supplication with thy friends, falling down before thy mother, the supremely blest, that Menelaus will not see us perish. But, O thou, that receivedst thy education at the hands of my mother, pity us, and alleviate

our sufferings. Come hither to the trial; but I will lead the way, for thou alone hast the ends of our preservation.

HERM. Behold I direct my footstep toward the house. Be preserved, as far as lies in me.

ELEC. O ye in the house, my dear warriors, will ye not take your prey?

HERM. Alas me! who are these I see?

ORES. *(advancing)* Thou must be silent; for thou art come to preserve us, not thyself.

ELEC. Hold her, hold her; and pointing a sword to her neck be silent, that Menelaus may know, that having found men, not Phrygian cowards, he has treated them in a manner he should treat cowards. What ho! what ho! my friends, make a noise, a noise, and shout before the palace, that the murder that is perpetrated spread not a dread alarm among the Argives, so that they run to assist to the king's palace, before I plainly see the slaughtered Helen lying weltering in her blood within the house, or else we hear the report from some of her attendants. For part of the havoc I know, and part not accurately.

CHOR. With justice came the vengeance of the Gods on Helen. For she filled the whole of Greece with tears on account of the ruthless, ruthless Idean Paris, who brought the Grecian state to Ilium. But be silent, for the bolts of the royal mansion resound, for some one of the Phrygians comes forth, from whom we shall hear of the affairs within the house, in what state they are.

PHRYGIAN, CHORUS.

PHRY. I have escaped from death by the Argive sword in these barbaric slippers, *climbing* over the cedar beams of the bed and the Doric triglyphs, by the flight of a barbarian. Thou art gone, thou art gone, O my country, my country! Alas me! whither can I escape, O strangers, flying through the hoary air, or the sea, which the Ocean, with head in shape like a bull's, rolling with his arms encircles the earth?

CHOR. But what is the matter, O attendant of Helen, thou man of Ida?

PHRY. O Ilion, Ilion! alas me! O thou fertile Phrygian city, thou sacred mount of Ida, how do I lament for thee destroyed, a sad, sad strain for my barbaric voice, on account of that form of the hapless, hapless Helen, born from a bird, the offspring of the beauteous Leda in shape of a swan, the fiend of the splendid Apollonian Pergamus! Alas! Oh! lamentations! lamentations! O wretched Dardania, warlike school of Ganymede, the companion of Jove!

CHOR. Relate to us clearly each circumstance that happened in the house, for I do not understand your former account, but merely conjecture.

PHRY. Αιλινον, αιλινον, the Barbarians begin the song of death in the language of Asia, Alas! alas! when the blood of kings has been poured on the earth by the ruthless swords of death. There came to the palace *(that I may relate each circumstance)* two Grecians, lions, of the one the leader of the Grecian host was said to be the father, the other the son of Strophius, a man of dark design; such was Ulysses, secretly treacherous, but faithful to his friends, bold in battle, skilled in war, cruel as the dragon. May he perish for his deep concealed design, the worker of evil! But they having advanced within her chamber, whom the archer Paris had as his wife, their eyes bathed with tears, they sat down in humble mien, one on each side of her, on the right and on the left, armed with swords. And around her knees did they both fling their suppliant hands, around the knees of Helen did they fling them. But the Phrygian attendants sprung up, and fled in amazement: and one called out to another in terror, *See*, lest there be treachery. To some indeed there appeared no danger; but to others the dragon stained with his mother's blood appeared bent to infold in his closest toils the daughter of Tyndarus.

CHOR. But where wert thou then, or hadst thou long before fled through fear?

PHRY. After the Phrygian fashion I chanced with the close circle of feathers to be fanning the gale, *that sported* in the ringlets of Helen, before her cheek, after the barbaric fashion. But she was winding with her fingers the flax round the distaff, but what she had spun she let fall on the ground,

desirous of making from the Phrygian spoils a robe of purple as an ornament for the tomb, a gift to Clytæmnestra. But Orestes entreated the Spartan girl; “O daughter of Jove, here, place thy footstep on the ground, rising from thy seat, come to the place of our ancestor Pelops, the ancient altar, that thou mayest hear my words.” And he leads her, but she followed, not dreaming of what was about to happen. But his accomplice, the wicked Phocian, attended to other points. “Will ye not depart from out of the way, but are the Phrygians always vile?” and he bolted us out scattered in different parts of the house, some in the stables of the horses, and some in the outhouses, and some here and there, dispersing them some one way, some another, afar from their mistress.

CHOR. What calamity took place after this?

PHRY. O powerful, powerful Idean mother, alas! alas! the murderous sufferings, and the lawless evils, which I saw, I saw in the royal palace! From beneath their purple robes concealed having their drawn swords in their hands, they turned each his eye on either side, lest any one might chance to be present. But like mountain boars standing over against the lady, they say, “Thou shalt die, thou shalt die! thy vile husband kills thee, having given up the offspring of his brother to die at Argos.” But she shrieked out, Ah me! ah me! and throwing her white arm on her breast inflicted on her head miserable blows, and, her feet turned to flight, she stepped, she stepped with her golden sandals; but Orestes thrusting his fingers into her hair, outstripping her flight, bending back her neck over his left shoulder, was about to plunge the black sword into her throat.

CHOR. Where then were the Phrygians, who dwell under the same roof, to assist her?

PHRY. With a clamor having burst by means of bars the doors and cells where we were waiting, we run to her assistance, each to different parts of the house, one bringing stones, another spears, another having a long-handled sword in his hand. But Pylades came against us, impetuous, like as the Phrygian Hector or Ajax in his triple-crested helmet, whom I saw, I saw at the gates of Priam: but we clashed together the points of our swords: then indeed, then did the Phrygians give clear proof how inferior we were in the force of Mars to the spear of Greece. One indeed turning away, a fugitive,

but another wounded, and another deprecating the death that threatened him: but under favor of the darkness we fled: and the corses fell, but some staggered, and some lay prostrate. But the wretched Hermione came to the house at the time when her murdered mother fell to the ground, that unhappy woman that gave her birth. And running upon her as Bacchanals without their thyrsus, as a heifer in the mountains they bore her away in their hands, and again eagerly rushed upon the daughter of Jove to slay her. But she vanished altogether from the chamber through the palace. O Jupiter and O earth, and light, and darkness! or by her enchantments, or by the art of magic, or by the stealth of the Gods. But of what followed I know no farther, for I sped in stealth my foot from the palace. But Menelaus having endured many, many severe toils, has received back from Troy the violated rites of Helen to no purpose.

CHOR. And see something strange succeeds to these strange things, for I see Orestes with his sword drawn walking before the palace with agitated step,

ORESTES, PHRYGIAN, CHORUS.

ORES. Where is he that fled from my sword out of the palace?

PHRY. I supplicate thee, O king, falling prostrate before thee after the barbaric fashion.

ORES. The case before us is not in Ilium, but the Argive land.

PHRY. In every region to live is sweeter than to die, in the opinion of the wise.

ORES. Didst thou not raise a cry for Menelaus to come with succor?

PHRY. I indeed am present on purpose to assist thee; for thou art the more worthy.

ORES. Perished then the daughter of Tyndarus justly?

PHRY. Most justly, even had she three lives for vengeance.

ORES. With thy tongue dost thou flatter, not having these sentiments within?

PHRY. For ought she not? She who utterly destroyed Greece as well as the Phrygians themselves?

ORES. Swear, I will kill thee else, that thou art not speaking to curry favor with me.

PHRY. By my life have I sworn, which I should wish to hold a sacred oath.

ORES. Was the steel thus dreadful to all the Phrygians at Troy also?

PHRY. Remove thy sword, for being so near me it gleams horrid slaughter.

ORES. Art thou afraid, lest thou shouldest become a rock, as though looking on the Gorgon?

PHRY. Lest I should become a corse, but I know not of the Gorgon's head.

ORES. Slave as thou art, dost thou fear death, which will rid thee from thy woes?

PHRY. Every one, although a man be a slave, rejoices to behold the light.

ORES. Thou sayest well; thy understanding; saves thee, but go into the house.

PHRY. Thou wilt not kill me then?

ORES. Thou art pardoned.

PHRY. This is good word thou hast spoken.

ORES. Yet we may change our measures.

PHRY. But this thou sayest not well.

ORES. Thou art a fool, if thou thinkest I could endure to defile me by smiting thy neck, for neither art thou a woman, nor oughtest thou to be ranked among men. But that thou mightest not raise a clamor came I forth out of the house: for Argos, when it has heard a noise, is soon roused, but we have no dread in meeting Menelaus, as far as swords go; but let him come exulting with his golden ringlets flowing over his shoulders, for if he collects the Argives, and brings them against the palace seeking revenge for the death of Helen, and is not willing to let me be in safety, and my sister, and Pylades my accomplice in this affair, he shall see two corses, both the virgin and his wife.

CHORUS.

Alas! alas! O fate, the house of the Atridæ again falls into another, another fearful struggle.

SEMICHOR. What shall we do? shall we carry these tidings to the city, or shall we keep in silence?

SEMICHOR. This is the safer plan, my friends.

SEMICHOR. Behold before the house, behold this smoke leaping aloft in the air portends *something*.

SEMICHOR. They are lighting the torches, as about to burn down the mansion of Tantalus, nor do they forbear from murder.

CHOR. The God rules the events that happen to mortals, whichsoever way he wills. But some vast power by the instigation of the Furies has struck, has struck these palaces to the shedding of blood on account of the fall of Myrtilus from the chariot.

But lo! I see Menelaus also here approaching the house with a quick step, having by some means or other perceived the calamity which now is present. Will ye not anticipate him by closing the gates with bolts, O ye children of Atreus, who are in the palace? A man in prosperity is a terrible thing to those in adversity, as now them art in misery, Orestes.

MENELAUS *below*, ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA, HERMIONE *above*, CHORUS.

MEN. I am present, having heard the horrid and atrocious deeds of the two lions, for I call them not men. For I have now heard of my wife, that she died not, but vanished away, this that I heard was empty report, which one deceived by fright related; but these are the artifices of the matricide, and much derision. Open some one the door, my attendants I command to burst open these gates here, that my child at least we may deliver from the hand of these blood-polluted men, and may receive my unhappy, my miserable lady, with whom those murderers of my wife must die by my hand.

ORES. What ho there! Touch not these gates with thine hands: to Menelaus I speak, that thou towerest in thy boldness, or with this pinnacle will I crush thy head, having rent down the ancient battlement, the labor of the builders. But the gates are made fast with bolts, which will hinder thee from thy purpose of bringing aid, so that thou canst not pass within the palace.

MEN. Ha! what is this? I see the blaze of torches, and these stationed on the battlements, on the height of the palace, and the sword placed over the neck of my daughter to guard her.

ORES. Whether is it thy will to question, or to hear me?

MEN. I wish neither, but it is necessary, as it seems, to hear thee.

ORES. I am about to slay thy daughter if thou wish to know.

MEN. Having slain Helen, dost thou perpetrate murder on murder?

ORES. For would I had gained my purpose not being deluded, as I was, by the Gods.

MEN. Thou hast slain her, and deniest it, and speakest these things to insult me.

ORES. It is a denial that gives me pain, for would that —

MEN. Thou had done what deed? for thou callest forth alarm.

ORES. I had hurled to hell the fury of Greece.

MEN. Give back the body of my wife, that I may bury her in a tomb.

ORES. Ask her of the Gods; but I will slay thy daughter.

MEN. The matricide contrives murder on murder.

ORES. The avenger of his father, whom thou gavest up to die.

MEN. Was not the blood of thy mother formerly shed sufficient for thee?

ORES. I should not be weary of slaying wicked women, were I to slay them forever.

MEN. Art thou also, Pylades, a partaker in this murder?

ORES. By his silence he assents, but if I speak, it will be sufficient.

MEN. But not with impunity, unless indeed thou fliest on wings.

ORES. We will not fly, but will set fire to the palace?

MEN. What! wilt thou destroy thy father's mansion?

ORES. Yes, that thou mayest not possess it, will I, having stabbed this virgin here over the flames.

MEN. Slay her; since having slain thou shalt at least give me satisfaction for these deeds.

ORES. It shall be so then.

MEN. Alas! on no account do this!

ORES. Be silent then; but bear to suffer evil justly.

MEN. What! is it just for thee to live?

ORES. Yes, and to rule over the land.

MEN. What land!

ORES. Here, in Pelasgian Argos.

MEN. Well wouldst thou touch the sacred lavers!

ORES. And pray why not?

MEN. And wouldst slaughter the victim before the battle!

ORES. And thou wouldst most righteously.

MEN. Yes, for I am pure as to my hands.

ORES. But not thy heart.

MEN. Who would speak to thee?

ORES. Whoever loves his father.

MEN. And whoever reveres his mother.

ORES. — Is happy.

MEN. Not thou at least.

ORES. For wicked women please me not.

MEN. Take away the sword from my daughter.

ORES. Thou art false in thy expectations.

MEN. But wilt thou kill my daughter?

ORES. Thou art no longer false.

MEN. Alas me! what shall I do?

ORES. Go to the Argives, and persuade them.

MEN. With what persuasion?

ORES. Beseech the city that we may not die.

MEN. Otherwise ye will slay my daughter?

ORES. The thing is so.

MEN. O wretched Helen! —

ORES. And am I not wretched?

MEN. I brought thee hither from the Trojans to be a victim.

ORES. For would this were so!

MEN. Having endured ten thousand toils.

ORES. Except on my account.

MEN. I have met with dreadful treatment.

ORES. For then, *when thou oughtest*, thou wert of no assistance.

MEN. Thou hast me.

ORES. Thou at least hast caught thyself. But, ho there! set fire to the palace, Electra, from beneath: and thou, Pylades, the most true of my friends, light up these battlements of the walls.

MEN. O land of the Danai, and inhabitants of warlike Argos, will ye not, ho there! come in arms to my succor? For this man here, having perpetrated the shocking murder of his mother, brings destruction on your whole city, that he may live.

APOLLO.

Menelaus, cease from thy irritated state of mind; I Phœbus the son of Latona, in thy presence, am addressing thee. Thou too, Orestes, who standest over that damsel with thy sword drawn, that thou mayest know what commands I bring with me. Helen indeed, whom thou minded to destroy, working Menelaus to anger, didst fail of thy purpose, she is here, whom ye see wrapt in the bosom of the sky, preserved, and not slain by thy hands. Her I preserved, and snatched from thy sword, commanded by my father Jove. For being the daughter of Jove, it is right that she should live immortal. And she shall have her seat by Castor and Pollux in the bosom of the sky, the guardian of mariners. But take to thyself another bride, and lead her home, since for the beauty of this woman the Gods brought together the Greeks and Trojans, and caused deaths, that they might draw from off the earth the pride of mortals, who had become an infinite multitude. Thus is it with regard to Helen; but thee, on the other hand, Orestes, it behooveth, having passed beyond the boundaries of this land, to inhabit the Parrhasian plain during the revolution of a year, and it shall be called by a name after thy flight, so that the Azanes and Arcadians shall call it Oresteum: and thence having departed to the city of the Athenians, undergo the charge of shedding thy mother's blood laid by the three Furies. But the Gods the arbiters of the cause shall pass on thee most sacredly their decree on the hill of Mars, in which it behooveth thee to be victorious. But Hermione, to whose neck thou art holding the sword, it is destined for thee, Orestes, to wed, but Neoptolemus, who thinks to marry her, shall never marry her. For it is fated to him to die by the Delphic sword, as he is demanding of me satisfaction for his father Achilles. But to Pylades give thy sister's hand, as thou didst formerly agree, but a happy life now coming on awaits him. But, O Menelaus, suffer Orestes to reign over Argos. But depart and rule over the Spartan land, having it as thy wife's dowry, who exposing thee to numberless evils always was bringing thee to this. But what regards the city I will make all right for him, I, who compelled him to slay his mother.

ORES. O Loxian prophet, thou wert not then a false prophet in thine oracles, but a true one. And yet a fear comes upon me, that having heard one of the Furies, I might think that I have been hearing thy voice. But it is well fulfilled, and I will obey thy words. Behold I let go Hermione from slaughter, and approve her alliance, whenever her father shall give her.

MEN. O Helen, daughter of Jove, hail! but I bless thee inhabiting the happy mansions of the Gods. But to thee, Orestes, do I betroth my daughter at Phœbus's commands, but illustrious thyself marrying from an illustrious family, be happy, both thou and I who give her.

APOL. Now depart each of you whither we have appointed, and dissolve your quarrels.

MEN. It is our duty to obey.

ORES. I too entertain the same sentiments, and I receive with friendship thee in thy sufferings, O Menelaus, and thy oracles, O Apollo.

APOL. Go now, each his own way, honoring the most excellent goddess Peace; but I will convey Helen to the mansions of Jove, passing through the pole of the shining stars, where sitting by Juno, and Hercules's Hebe, a goddess, she shall ever be honored by mortals with libations, in conjunction with the Tyndaridæ, the sons of Jove, presiding over the sea to the benefit of mariners.

CHOR. O greatly glorious Victory, mayest thou uphold my life, and cease not from crowning me!

BACCHAE

Translated by Theodore Alois Buckley

Composed during Euripides' final years in Macedonia, at the court of Archelaus I of Macedon, this play was first performed posthumously at the Theatre of Dionysus in 405 BC as part of a tetralogy that also included *Iphigenia at Aulis* and *Alcmaeon in Corinth*. *Bacchae* was most likely first directed by Euripides' son and the drama won first prize in the City Dionysia festival competition. The play concerns the mythological story of King Pentheus of Thebes and his mother Agauë, who refuse to worship the god Dionysus and are therefore duly punished.

The Dionysus in Euripides' play is portrayed as a young god, angry that his mortal family, the royal house of Cadmus, has denied him a place of honour as a deity. As the play opens, Dionysus appears on stage to tell the audience who he is and his reasons for coming to Thebes. He explains the story of his birth and how the god Zeus had come down from Mount Olympus to lie with his mother. When she became pregnant, however, none of her family believed her story regarding her child's father. Zeus' wife, Hera, angry by his betrayal, disguised herself as an old nurse and convinced Semele to ask Zeus to appear to her in his true form. Zeus appeared to Semele as a lightning bolt and therefore killed her instantly. At the moment of her death however, Hermes saved the unborn Dionysus. To hide the baby from Hera, Zeus had the fetus sewn into his thigh until the child was ready to be born. However, Semele's family — her sisters Agave, Autonoe, and Ino, and her father, Cadmus — still doubted her story regarding the identity of the baby's father. Dionysus now explains that he has come to Thebes to vindicate his mother and establish his cult, though at first he meets grave resistance from the disbelieving King Pentheus.

‘Pentheus torn apart by Ino and Agave’, lekanis lid, c. 450-450 BC

Another contemporary depiction of Pentheus' death

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THE ARGUMENT.

Bacchus, the son of Jove by Semele, had made Thebes, his mother's birth-place, his favorite place of abode and worship. Pentheus, the then reigning king, who, as others say, preferred the worship of Minerva, slighted the new God, and persecuted those who celebrated his revels. Upon this, Bacchus excited his mother Agave, together with the sisters of Semele, Autonoe and Ino, to madness, and visiting Pentheus in disguise of a Bacchanal, was at first imprisoned, but, easily escaping from his bonds, he persuaded Pentheus to intrude upon the rites of the Bacchants. While surveying them from a lofty tree, the voice of Bacchus was heard inciting the Bacchants to avenge themselves upon the intruder, and they tore the miserable Pentheus piecemeal. The grief and banishment of Agave for her unwitting offense conclude the play.

THE BACCHÆ.

BACCHUS.

I, Bacchus, the son of Jove, am come to this land of the Thebans, whom formerly Semele, the daughter of Cadmus, brought forth, delivered by the lightning-bearing flame. And having taken a mortal form instead of a God's, I am present at the fountains of Dirce and the water of Ismenus. And I see the tomb of my thunder-stricken mother here near the palace, and the remnants of the house smoking, and the still living name of Jove's fire, the everlasting insult of Juno against my mother. But I praise Cadmus, who has made this place hallowed, the shrine of his daughter; and I have covered it around with the cluster-bearing leaf of the vine. And having left the wealthy lands of the Lydians and Phrygians, and the sun-parched plains of the Persians, and the Bactrian walls; and having come over the stormy land of the Medes, and the happy Arabia, and all Asia which lies along the coast of the salt sea, having fair-towered cities full of Greeks and barbarians mingled together; and there having danced and established my mysteries, that I might be a God manifest among men, I have come to this city first of the Grecian [cities,] and I have raised my shout first in Thebes of this land of Greece, fitting a deer-skin on my body, and taking a thyrsus in my hand, an ivy-clad weapon, because the sisters of my mother, whom, it least of all became, said that I, Bacchus, was not born of Jove; but that Semele, having conceived by some mortal, charged the sin of her bed upon Jove, a trick of Cadmus; on which account they said that Jove had slain her, because she told a false tale about her marriage. Therefore I have now driven them from the house with frenzy, and they dwell on the mountain, insane of mind; and I have compelled them to wear the dress of my mysteries. And all the female seed of the Cadmeans, as many as are women, have I driven maddened from the house. And they, mingled with the sons of Cadmus, sit on the roofless rocks beneath the green pines. For this city must know, even though it be unwilling, that it is not initiated into my Bacchanalian rites, and that I plead the cause of my mother, Semele, in appearing manifest to mortals as a God whom she bore to Jove. Cadmus then gave his honor and power to Pentheus, born from his daughter, who fights against the Gods as far as I am concerned, and drives me from sacrifices, and in his prayers makes no mention of me; on which account I will show him and all the

Thebans that I am a God. And having set matters here aright, manifesting myself, I will move to another land. But if the city of the Thebans should in anger seek by arms to bring down the Bacchæ from the mountain, I, general of the Mænads, will join battle. On which account I have changed my form to a mortal one, and transformed my shape into the nature of a man. But, O ye who have left Tmolus, the bulwark of Lydia; ye women, my assembly, whom I have brought from among the barbarians as assistants and companions to me; take your drums, your native instruments in the Phrygian cities, the invention of the mother Rhea and myself, and coming beat them around this royal palace of Pentheus, that the city of Cadmus may see it. And I, with the Bacchæ, going to the dells of Cithæron, where they are, will share their dances.

CHOR. Coming from the land of Asia, having left the sacred Tmolus, I dance in honor of Bromius, a sweet labor and a toil easily borne, celebrating the god Bacchus. Who is in the way? who is in the way? who is in the halls? Let him depart. And let every one be pure as to his mouth speaking propitious things; for now I will with hymns celebrate Bacchus according to custom: — Blessed is he, whoever being favored, knowing the mysteries of the gods, keeps his life pure, and has his soul initiated into the Bacchic revels, dancing o'er the mountains with holy purifications, and reverencing the mysteries of the mighty mother Cybele, and brandishing the thyrsus, and being crowned with ivy, serves Bacchus! Go, ye Bacchæ; go, ye Bacchæ, escorting Bromius, a God, the son of a God, from the Phrygian mountains to the broad streets of Greece! Bromius! whom formerly, being in the pains of travail, the thunder of Jove flying upon her, his mother cast from her womb, leaving life by the stroke of the thunder-bolt. And immediately Jupiter, the son of Saturn, received him in a chamber fitted for birth; and covering him in his thigh, shuts him with golden clasps hidden from Juno. And he brought him forth, when the Fates had perfected the horned God, and crowned him with crowns of snakes, whence the thyrsus-bearing Mænads are wont to cover their prey with their locks. O Thebes, thou nurse of Semele, crown thyself with ivy, flourish, flourish with the verdant yew bearing sweet fruit, and be ye crowned in honor of Bacchus with branches of oak or pine, and adorn your garments of spotted deer-skin with fleeces of white-haired sheep, and sport in holy games with the insulting wands, straightway shall all the earth dance, when Bromius leads

the bands to the mountain, to the mountain, where the female crowd abides, away from the distaff and the shuttle, driven frantic by Bacchus. O dwelling of the Curetes, and ye divine Cretan caves, parents to Jupiter, where the Corybantes with the triple helmet invented for me in their caves this circle o'erstretched with hide; and with the constant sweet-voiced breath of Phrygian pipes they mingled a sound of Bacchus, and put the instrument in the hand of Rhea, resounding with the sweet songs of the Bacchæ. And hard by the raving satyrs went through the sacred rites of the mother Goddess. And they added the dances of the Trieterides; in which Bacchus rejoices; pleased on the mountains, when after the running dance he falls upon the plain, having a sacred garment of deer-skin, seeking a sacrifice of goats, a raw-eaten delight, on his way to the Phrygian, the Lydian mountains; and the leader is Bromius, Evoe! but the plain flows with milk, and flows with wine, and flows with the nectar of bees; and the smoke is as of Syrian frankincense. But Bacchus bearing a flaming torch of pine on his thyrsus, rushes about arousing in his course the wandering Choruses, and agitating them with shouts, casting his rich locks loose in the air, — and with his songs he shouts out such words as this: O go forth, ye Bacchæ; O go forth, ye Bacchæ, delight of gold-flowing Tmolus. Sing Bacchus 'neath the loud drums, Evoe, celebrating the God Evius in Phrygian cries and shouts. When the sweet-sounding sacred pipe sounds a sacred playful sound suited to the frantic wanderers, to the mountain, to the mountain — and the Bacchant rejoicing like a foal with its mother at pasture, stirs its swift foot in the dance.

TIRESIAS. Who at the doors will call out Cadmus from the house, the son of Agenor, who, leaving the city of Sidon, erected this city of the Thebans? Let some one go, tell him that Tiresias seeks him; but he himself knows on what account I come, and what agreement I, an old man, have made with him, yet older; to twine the thyrsi, and to put on the skins of deer, and to crown the head with ivy branches.

CADMUS. O dearest friend! how I, being in the house, was delighted, hearing your voice, the wise voice of a wise man; and I am come prepared, having this equipment of the God; for we needs must extol him, who is the son sprung from my daughter, Bacchus, who has appeared as a God to men, as much as is in our power. Whither shall I dance, whither direct the foot,

and wave the hoary head? Do you lead me, you, an old man! O Tiresias, direct me, an old man; for you are wise. Since I shall never tire, neither night nor day, striking the earth with the thyrsus. Gladly we forget that we are old.

TI. You have the same feelings indeed as I; for I too feel young, and will attempt the dance.

CA. Then we will go to the mountain in chariots.

TI. But thus the God would not have equal honor.

CA. I, an old man, will lead you, an old man.

TI. The God will without trouble guide us thither.

CA. But shall we alone of the city dance in honor of Bacchus?

TI. [Ay,] for we alone think rightly, but the rest ill.

CA. We are long in delaying; but take hold of my hand.

TI. See, take hold, and join your hand to mine.

CA. I do not despise the Gods, being a mortal.

TI. We do not show too much wiseness about the Gods. Our ancestral traditions, and those which we have kept throughout our life, no argument will overturn them; not if any one were to find out wisdom with the highest genius. Some one will say that I do not respect old age, being about to dance, having crowned my head with ivy; for the God has made no distinction as to whether it becomes the young man to dance, or the elder; but wishes to have common honors from all; but does not at all wish to be extolled by a few.

CA. Since you, O Tiresias, do not see this light, I will be to you an interpreter of things. Hither is Pentheus coming to the house in haste, the son of Echion, to whom I give power over the land. How fluttered he is! what strange thing will he say?

PENTHEUS. I happened to be at a distance from this land, and I hear of strange evils in this city, that the women have left our palace in mad-wandering Bacchic rites; and that they are rushing about in the shady mountains, honoring with dances this new God Bacchus, whoever he is; and that full goblets stand in the middle of their assemblies, and that flying each different ways into secrecy, they yield to the embraces of men, on pretence, indeed, as [being] worshiping Mænads; but that they consider Venus before Bacchus. As many then as I have taken, the servants keep them bound as to their hands in the public strong-holds, and as many as are absent I will hunt from the mountain, Ino, and Agave who bore me to Echion, and the mother of Actæon, I mean Autonoe; and having bound them in iron fetters, I will soon stop them from this ill-working revelry. And they say that some stranger has come hither, a juggler, a charmer, from the Lydian land, fragrant in hair with golden curls, florid, having in his eyes the graces of Venus, who days and nights is with them, alluring the young maidens with Bacchic mysteries — but if I catch him under this roof, I will stop him from making a noise with the thyrsus, and waving his hair, by cutting off his neck from his body. He says he is the God Bacchus, [He was once on a time sown in the thigh of Jove,] who was burned in the flame of lightning, together with his mother, because she falsely claimed nuptials with Jove. Are not these things deserving of a terrible halter, for a stranger to insult us with these insults, whoever he be? But here is another marvel — I see Tiresias the soothsayer, in dappled deer-skins, and the father of my mother, most great absurdity, raging about with a thyrsus — I deprecate it, O father, seeing your old age destitute of sense; will you not dash away the ivy? will you not, O father of my mother, put down your hand empty of the thyrsus? Have you persuaded him to this, O Tiresias? do you wish, introducing this new God among men, to examine birds and to receive rewards for fiery omens? If your hoary old age did not defend you, you should sit as a prisoner in the midst of the Bacchæ, for introducing these wicked rites; for where the joy of the grape-cluster is present at a feast of women, I no longer say any thing good of their mysteries.

CHOR. Alas for his impiety! O host, do you not reverence the Gods! and being son of Echion, do you disgrace your race and Cadmus, who sowed the earth-born crop?

TI. When any wise man takes a good occasion for his speech, it is not a great task to speak well; but you have a rapid tongue, as if wise, but in your words there is no wisdom; but a powerful man, when bold, and able to speak, is a bad citizen if he has not sense. And this new God, whom you ridicule, I am unable to express how great he will be in Greece. For, O young man, two things are first among men; Ceres, the goddess, and she is the earth, call her whichever name you will. She nourishes mortals with dry food; but he who is come as a match to her, the son of Semele, has invented the liquid drink of the grape, and introduced it among mortals, which delivers miserable mortals from grief, when they are filled with the stream of the vine; and gives sleep an oblivion of daily evils: nor is there any other medicine for troubles. He who is a God is poured out in libations to the Gods, that by his means men may have good things — and you laugh at him, as to how he was sewn up in the thigh of Jove; I will teach you that this is well — when Jove snatched him out of the lightning flame, and bore him, a young infant, up to Olympus, Juno wished to cast him down from heaven; but Jove had a counter contrivance, as being a God. Having broken a part of the air which surrounds the earth, he placed in it, giving him as a pledge, Bacchus, safe from Juno's enmity; and in time, mortals say, that he was nourished in the thigh of Jove; changing his name, because a God gave him formerly as a pledge to a Goddess, they having made agreement. But this God is a prophet — for Bacchanal excitement and frenzy have much divination in them. For when the God comes violent into the body, he makes the frantic to foretell the future; and he also possesses some quality of Mars; for terror flutters sometimes an army under arms and in its ranks, before they touch the spear; and this also is a frenzy from Bacchus. Then you shall see him also on the Delphic rocks, bounding with torches along the double-pointed district, tossing about, and shaking the Bacchic branch, mighty through Greece. But be persuaded by me, O Pentheus; do not boast that sovereignty has power among men, nor, even if you think so, and your mind is disordered, believe that you are at all wise. But receive the God into the land, and sacrifice to him, and play the Bacchanal, and crown your head. Bacchus will not compel women to be modest with regard to Venus, but in his nature modesty in all things is ever innate. This you must needs consider, for she who is modest will not be corrupted by being at Bacchanalian revels. Dost see? Thou rejoicest when many stand at thy gates, and the city extols the name of Pentheus; and he, I ween, is pleased,

when honored. I, then, and Cadmus whom you laugh to scorn, will crown ourselves with ivy, and dance, a hoary pair; but still we must dance; and I will not contend against the Gods, persuaded by your words — for you rave most grievously; nor can you procure any cure from medicine, nor are you now afflicted beyond their power.

CHOR. O old man, thou dost not shame Apollo by thy words, and honoring Bromius, the mighty God, thou art wise.

CAD. My son, well has Tiresias advised you; dwell with us, not away from the laws. For now you flit about, and though wise are wise in naught; for although this may not be a God, as you say, let it be said by you that he is; and tell a glorious falsehood, that Semele may seem to have borne a God, and that honor may redound to all our race. You see the hapless fate of Actæon, whom his blood-thirsty hounds, whom he had reared up, tore to pieces in the meadows, having boasted that he was superior in the chase to Diana. This may you not suffer; come, that I may crown thy head with ivy, with us give honor to the God —

PEN. Do not bring your hand toward me; but departing, play the Bacchanal, and wipe not off your folly on me; but I will follow up with punishment this teacher of your madness; let some one go as quickly as possible, and going to his seat where he watches the birds, upset and overthrow it with levers, turning every thing upside down; and commit his crowns to the winds and storms; for doing this, I shall gnaw him most. And some of you going along the city, track out this effeminate stranger, who brings this new disease upon women, and pollutes our beds. And if you catch him, convey him hither bound; that meeting with a judgment of stoning he may die, having seen a bitter revelry of Bacchus in Thebes.

TI. O wretched man! how little knowest thou what thou sayest! You are mad now, and before you was out of your mind. Let us go, O Cadmus, and entreat the God, on behalf of him, savage though he be, and on behalf of the city, to do him no ill: but follow me with the ivy-clad staff, and try to support my body, and I will yours; for it would be shameful for two old men to fall down: but let that pass, for we must serve Bacchus, the son of Jove; but beware lest Pentheus bring grief into thy house, O Cadmus. I do not

speak in prophecy, but judging from the state of things, for a foolish man says foolish things.

CHOR. O holy venerable Goddess! holy, who bearest thy golden pinions along the earth, hearest thou these words of Pentheus? Hearest thou his unholy insolence against Bromius, the son of Semele, the first deity of the Gods, at the banquets where the guests wear beautiful chaplets! who has this office, to join in dances, and to laugh with the flute, and to put an end to cares, when the juice of the grape comes at the feast of the Gods, and in the ivy-bearing banquets the goblet sheds sleep over man? Of unbridled mouths and lawless folly misery is the end, but the life of quiet and wisdom remains unshaken, and supports a house; for the heavenly powers are afar indeed, but still inhabiting the air, they behold the deeds of mortals. But cleverness is not wisdom, nor is the thinking on things unfit for mortals. Life is short; and in it who, pursuing great things, would not enjoy the present? These are the manners of maniacs; and of ill-disposed men, in my opinion. Would that I could go to Cyprus, the island of Venus, where the Loves dwell, soothing the minds of mortals, and to Paphos, which the waters of a foreign river flowing with an hundred mouths, fertilize without rain — and to the land of Pieria, where is the beautiful seat of the Muses, the holy hill of Olympus. Lead me thither, O Bromius, Bromius, O master thou of Bacchanals! There are the Graces, and there is Love, and there is it lawful for the Bacchæ to celebrate their orgies; the God, the son of Jove, delights in banquets, and loves Peace, giver of riches, the Goddess the nourisher of youths. And both to the rich and the poor has she granted to enjoy an equal delight from wine, banishing grief; and he who does not care for these things, hates to lead a happy life by day and by friendly night — but it is wise to keep away the mind and intellect proceeding from over-curious men; what the baser multitude thinks and adopts, that will I say.

SERVANT. Pentheus, we are here; having caught this prey, for which you sent us: nor have we gone in vain; but the beast was docile in our hands, nor did he withdraw his foot in flight, but yielded not unwillingly; nor did he [turn] pale nor change his wine-complexioned cheek, but laughing, allowed us to bind and lead him away; and remained still, making my work easy; and I for shame said, O stranger, I do not take you of my own will, but by order of Pentheus who sent me. And the Bacchæ whom you shut up, whom

you carried off and bound in the chains of the public prison, they being set loose are escaped, and are dancing in the meadows, invoking Bromius as their God, and of their own accord the fetters were loosed from their feet, and the keys opened the doors without mortal hand, and full of many wonders is this man come to Thebes; but the rest must be thy care.

PEN. Take hold of him by the hands; for being in the toils, he is not so swift as to escape me: but in your body you are not ill-formed, O stranger, for women's purposes, on which account you have come to Thebes. For your hair is long, not through wrestling, scattered over your cheeks, full of desire, and you have a white skin from careful preparation; hunting after Venus by your beauty not exposed to strokes of the sun, but [kept] beneath the shade. First then tell me who thou art in family.

BAC. There is no boast; but this is easy to say; thou knowest by hearsay of the flowery Tmolus?

PEN. I know, [the hill] which surrounds the city of Sardis.

BAC. Thence am I; and Lydia is my country.

PEN. And whence do you bring these rites into Greece?

BAC. Bacchus persuaded us, the son of Jove.

PEN. Is Jove then one who begets new Gods?

BAC. No, but having married Semele here, —

PEN. Did he compel you by night, or in your sight [by day]?

BAC. Seeing me who saw him; and he gave me orgies.

PEN. And what appearance have these orgies?

BAC. It is unlawful for the uninitiated among mortals to know.

PEN. And have they any profit to those who sacrifice?

BAC. It is not lawful for you to hear, but they are worth knowing.

PEN. You have well coined this story, that I may wish to hear.

BAC. The orgies of the God hate him who works impiety.

PEN. For you say, forsooth, that you saw the God clearly what he was like?

BAC. As he chose; I did not order this.

PEN. This too you have well contrived, saying mere nonsense.

BAC. One may seem, speaking wisely to one ignorant, not to be wise.

PEN. And did you come hither first, bringing the God?

BAC. Every one of the barbarians celebrates these orgies.

PEN. [Ay,] for they are much less wise than Greeks.

BAC. In these things they are wiser, but their laws are different.

PEN. Do you practice these rites at night, or by day?

BAG. Most of them at night; darkness conveys awe.

PEN. This is treacherous toward women, and unsound.

BAC. Even by day some may devise base things.

PEN. You must pay the penalty of your evil devices.

BAC. And you of your ignorance, being impious to the God.

PEN. How bold is Bacchus, and not unpracticed in speech.

BAC. Say what I must suffer, what ill wilt thou do me?

PEN. First I will cut off your delicate hair.

BAC. The hair is sacred, I cherish it for the God.

PEN. Next yield up this thyrsus out of your hands.

BAC. Take it from me yourself, I bear it as the ensign of Bacchus.

PEN. And we will guard your body within in prison.

BAC. The God himself will release me when I wish.

PEN. Ay, when you call him, standing among the Bacchæ.

BAC. Even now, being near, he sees what I suffer.

PEN. And where is he? for at least he is not apparent to my eyes.

BAC. Near me, but you being impious, see him not.

PEN. Seize him, he insults me and Thebes!

BAC. I warn you not to bind me: I in my senses command you not in your senses.

PEN. And I bid them to bind you, as being mightier than you.

BAC. You know not why you live, nor what you do, nor who you are.

PEN. Pentheus, son of Agave, and of my father Echion.

BAC. You are suited to be miserable according to your name.

PEN. Begone! confine him near the stable of horses that he may behold dim darkness! There dance; and as for these women whom you bring with you, the accomplices in your wickedness, we will either sell them away, or stopping their hand from this noise and beating of skins, I will keep them as slaves at the loom.

BAC. I will go — for what is not right it is not right to suffer; but as a punishment for these insults Bacchus shall pursue you, who you say exists

not; for, injuring us, you put him in bonds.

CHOR. O daughter of Achelous, venerable Dirce, happy virgin, for thou didst receive the infant of Jove in thy fountains when Jove who begat him saved him in his thigh from the immortal fire; uttering this shout: Go, O Dithyrambus, enter this my male womb, I will make you illustrious, O Bacchus, in Thebes, so that they shall call you by this name. But you, O happy Dirce, reject me having a garland-bearing company about you. Why dost thou reject me? Why dost thou avoid me? Yet, I swear by the clustering delights of the vine of Bacchus, yet shall you have a care for Bacchus. What rage, what rage does the earth-born race show, and Pentheus once descended from the dragon, whom the earth-born Echion begat, a fierce-faced monster, not a mortal man, but like a bloody giant, an enemy to the Gods, who will soon bind me, the handmaid of Bacchus, in halters, he already has within the house my fellow-reveler, hidden in a dark prison. Dost thou behold this, O son of Jove, Bacchus, thy prophets in the dangers of restraint? Come, O thou of golden face, brandishing your thyrsus along Olympus, and restrain the insolence of the blood-thirsty man. Where art thou assembling thy bands of thyrsus-bearers, O Bacchus, is it near Nysa which nourishes wild beasts, or in the summits of Corycus? or perhaps in the deep-wooded lairs of Olympus, where formerly Orpheus playing the lyre drew together the trees by his songs, collected the beasts of the fields; O happy Pieria, Evius respects you, and will come to lead the dance with revelings having crossed the swiftly-flowing Axius, he will bring the dancing Mænads, and [leaving] Lydia the giver of wealth to mortals, and the father whom I have heard fertilizes the country renowned for horses with the fairest streams.

BAC. Io! hear ye, hear ye my song, Io Bacchæ! O Bacchæ!

CHOR. Who is here, who? from what quarter did the shout of Evius summon me?

BAC. Io, Io, I say again! I, the son of Semele, the son of Jove!

CHOR. Io! Io! Master, master! come now to our company. O Bromius! Bromius! Shake this place, O holy Earth! O! O! quickly will the palace of Pentheus be shaken in ruin — Bacchus is in the halls. Worship him. We

worship him. Behold these stone buttresses shaken with their pillars. Bacchus will shout in the palace.

BAC. Light the burning fiery lamp; burn, burn the house of Pentheus.

SEM. Alas! Dost thou not behold the fire, nor perceive around the sacred tomb of Semele the flame which formerly the bolt-bearing thunder of Jupiter left?

SEM. Cast on the ground your trembling bodies, cast them down, O Mænads, for the king turning things upside down is coming to this palace, [Bacchus,] the son of Jupiter.

BAC. O barbarian women! have ye fallen to the ground thus stricken with fear? Ye have felt, it seems, Bacchus shaking the house of Pentheus; but lift up your bodies, and take courage, casting off fear from your flesh.

CHOR. O thou most mighty light to us of Evian Bacchic rites, how gladly do I see thee, being before alone and desolate!

BAC. Ye came to despair, when I was sent in, as about to fall into the dark prison of Pentheus.

CHOR. How not? — who was my guardian if you met with misfortune? but how were you liberated, having met with an impious man?

BAC. I delivered myself easily without trouble.

CHOR. And did he not bind your hands in links of chains?

BAC. In this too I mocked him; for, thinking to bind me, he neither touched nor handled me, but fed on hope; and finding a bull in the stable, where having taken me, he confined me, he cast halters round the knees of that, and the hoofs of its feet; breathing out fury, stilling sweat from his body, gnashing his teeth in his lips. But I, being near, sitting quietly, looked on; and, in the mean time, Bacchus coming, shook the house, and kindled flame on the tomb of his mother; and he, when he saw it, thinking the house was burning, rushed to and fro, calling to the servants to bring water, and every

servant was at work toiling in vain; and letting go this labor, I having escaped, seizing a dark sword he rushes into the house, and then Bromius, as it seems to me, I speak my opinion, made an appearance in the palace, and he rushing toward it, rushed on and stabbed at the bright air, as if slaying me; and besides this, Bacchus afflicts him with these other things; and threw down his house to the ground, and every thing was shivered in pieces, while he beheld my bitter chains; and from fatigue dropping his sword, he falls exhausted — for he being a man, dared to join battle with a God: and I quietly getting out of the house am come to you, not regarding Pentheus. But, as it seems to me, a shoe sounds in the house; he will soon come out in front of the house. What will he say after this? I shall easily bear him, even if he comes vaunting greatly, for it is the part of a wise man to practice prudent moderation.

PEN. I have suffered terrible things, the stranger has escaped me, who was lately coerced in bonds. Hollo! here is the man; what is this? how do you appear near my house, having come out?

BAC. Stay your foot; and substitute calm steps for anger.

PEN. How come you out, having escaped your chains?

BAC. Did I not say, or did you not hear, that some one would deliver me?

PEN. Who? for you are always introducing strange things.

BAC. He who produces the rich-clustering vine for mortals.

PEN. This is a fine reproach you charge on Bacchus; I order ye to close every tower all round.

BAC. Why? do not Gods pass over walls too?

PEN. You are wise, wise at least in all save what you should be wise in.

BAC. In what I most ought, in that I was born wise; but first learn, hearing his words who is come from the mountain to bring a message to you; but we will await you, we will not fly.

MESSENGER. Pentheus, ruler o’er this Theban land, I come, having left Cithæron, where never have the brilliant flakes of white snow fallen.

PEN. But bringing what important news are you come?

MESS. Having seen the holy Bacchæ, who driven by madness have darted their fair feet from this land, have I come, wishing to tell you and the city, O king, what awful things they do, things beyond marvel; and I wish to hear whether in freedom of speech I shall tell you the matters there, or whether I shall repress my report, for I fear, O king, the hastiness of thy mind, and your keen temper, and too imperious disposition.

PEN. Speak, as you shall be in all things blameless as far as I am concerned; for it is not meet to be wrath with the just; and in proportion as you speak worse things of the Bacchæ, so much the more will we punish this man who has taught these tricks to the women.

MESS. I was just now driving up to the heights the herd of calves, when the sun sends forth his rays warming the land, and I see three companies of dances of women, of one of which Autonoe was chief; of a second, thy mother, Agave; and Ino led the third dance; and they were all sleeping, relaxed in their bodies, some resting their locks against the leaves of pine, and some laying their heads at random on the leaves of oak in the ground, modestly, not, as you say, that, drunk with the goblet and the noise of the flute, they solitary hunt Venus through the wood. But thy mother standing in the midst of the Bacchæ, raised a shout, to wake their bodies from sleep, when she heard the lowing of the horned oxen; but they, casting off refreshing sleep from their eyes, started upright, a marvel to behold for their elegance, young, old, and virgins yet unyoked, And first they let loose their hair over their shoulders; and arranged their deer-skins, as many as had had the fastenings of their knots unloosed, and they girded the dappled hides with serpents licking their jaws — and some having in their arms a kid, or the wild whelps of wolves, gave them white milk, all those who, having lately had children, had breasts still full, having left their infants, and they put on their ivy chaplets, and garlands of oak and blossoming yew; and one having taken a thyrsus, struck it against a rock, whence a dewy stream of water springs out; another placed her wand on the ground, and then the God sent up a spring of wine. And as many as had craving for the white drink,

scratching the earth with the tips of their fingers, obtained abundance of milk; and from the ivy thyrsus sweet streams of honey dropped, so that, had you been present, beholding these things, you would have approached with prayers that God whom you now blame. And we came together, herdsmen and shepherds, to reason with one another concerning this strange matter, what terrible things and worthy of marvel they do; and some one, a wanderer about the city, and practiced in speaking, said to us all, O ye who inhabit the holy downs of the mountains, will ye that we hunt out Agave, the mother of Pentheus, back from the revels, and do the king a pleasure? And he seemed to us to speak well, and hiding ourselves, we lay in ambush in the foliage of the thickets; and they, at the appointed hour, waved the thyrsus in their solemnities, calling on Bacchus with united voice, the son of Jove, Bromius; and the whole mountain and the beasts were in a revel; and nothing was unmoved by their running; and Agave was bounding near to me, and I sprang forth, as wishing to seize her, leaving my ambush where I was hidden. But she cried out, O my fleet hounds, we are hunted by these men; but follow me, follow, armed with thyrsi in your hands. We then flying, avoided the tearing of the Bacchæ, but they sprang on the heifers browsing the grass with unarmed hand, and you might see one rending asunder a fatted lowing calf, and others rent open cows, and you might see either ribs, or a cloven-footed hoof, tossed here and there, and hanging beneath the pine-trees the fragments were dripping, dabbled in gore; and the fierce bulls before showing their fury with their horns, were thrown to the ground, overpowered by myriads of maiden hands; and quicker were the coverings of flesh torn asunder by the royal maids than you could shut your eyes; and like birds raised in their course, they proceed along the level plain, which by the streams of the Asopus produce the fertile crop of the Thebans, and falling on Hysiæ and Erythræ, which, are below Cithæron, they turned every thing upside down; they dragged children from the houses; and whatever they put on their shoulders stuck there without chains, and fell not on the dark plain, neither brass nor iron; and they bore fire on their tresses, and it burned not; but some from rage betook themselves to arms, being plundered by the Bacchæ, the sight of which was fearful to behold, O king! For their pointed spear was not made bloody, but the women hurling the thyrsi from their hands, wounded them, and turned their backs to flight, women [defeating] men; not without the aid of some God. And they went back again to whence they had departed, to the same

fountains which the God had caused to spring up for them, and they washed off the blood; and the snakes with their tongues cleaned off the drops from their cheeks. Receive then, O master, this deity, whoever he be, in this city, since he is mighty in other respects, and they say this too of him, as I hear, that he has given mortals the vine which puts an end to grief, — for where wine exists not there is no longer Venus, nor any thing pleasant to men.

CHOR. I fear to speak unshackled words to the king, but still they shall be spoken; Bacchus is inferior to none of the Gods.

PEN. Already like fire does this insolence of the Bacchæ extend thus near, a great reproach to the Greeks. But I must not hesitate; go to the Electra gates, bid all the shield-bearers and riders of swift-footed horses to assemble, and all who brandish the light shield, and twang with their hand the string of the bow, as we will make an attack upon the Bacchæ; but it is too much, if we are to suffer what we are suffering at the hands of women.

BAC. O Pentheus, you obey not at all hearing my words; but although suffering ill at your hands, still I say that you ought not to take up arms against a God, but to rest quiet; Bromius will not endure your moving the Bacchæ from their Evian mountains.

PEN. You shall not teach me; but be content, having escaped from prison, or else I will again bring punishment upon you.

BAC. I would rather sacrifice to him than, being wrath, kick against the pricks; a mortal against a God.

PEN. I will sacrifice, making a great slaughter of the women, as they deserve, in the glens of Cithæron.

BAC. You will all fly, *(and that will be shameful,)* so as to yield your brazen shields to the thyrsi of the Bacchæ.

PEN. We are troubled with this impracticable stranger, who neither suffering nor doing will be silent.

BAC. My friend, there is still opportunity to arrange these things well.

PEN. By doing what? being a slave to my slaves?

BAC. I will bring the women here without arms.

PEN. Alas! you are contriving some trick against me.

BAC. Of what sort, if I wish to save you by my contrivances?

PEN. You have devised this together, that ye may have your revelings forever.

BAC. And indeed, know this, I agreed on it with the God.

PEN. Bring hither the arms! and do you cease to speak.

BAC. Hah! Do you wish to see them sitting on the mountains?

PEN. Very much, if I gave countless weight of gold for it.

BAC. But why? have you fallen into a great wish for this?

PEN. I should like to see them drunk grievously [for them].

BAC. Would you then gladly see what is grievous to you?

PEN. To be sure, sitting quietly under the pines.

BAC. But they will track you out, even though you come secretly.

PEN. But [I will come] openly, for you have said this well.

BAC. Shall I then guide you? and will you attempt the way?

PEN. Lead me as quickly as possible; for I do not grudge you the time.

BAC. Put on then linen garments on your body.

PEN. What then, shall I be reckoned among women, being a man?

BAC. Lest they slay you if you be seen there, being a man.

PEN. You say this well, and you have been long wise.

BAC. Bacchus taught me this wisdom.

PEN. How then can these things which you advise me be well done?

BAC. I will attire you, going into the house.

PEN. With what dress — a woman's? but shame possesses me.

BAC. Do you no longer wish to be a spectator of the Mænads?

PEN. But what attire do you bid me put on my body?

BAC. I will spread out your hair at length on your head.

PEN. And what is the next point of my equipment?

BAC. A garment down to your feet; and you shall have a turban on your head.

PEN. Shall you put any thing else on me besides this?

BAC. A thyrsus in your hand, and the dappled hide of a deer.

PEN. I can not wear a woman's dress.

BAC. But you will shed blood if you join battle with the Bacchæ.

PEN. True; we must first go and see.

BAC. That is wiser at least than to hunt evils with evils.

PEN. And how shall I go through the city escaping the notice of the Cadmeans?

BAC. We will go by deserted roads, and I will guide you.

PEN. Every thing is better than for the Bacchæ to mock me.

BAC. We will go into the house and consider what seems best.

PEN. We can do what we like; my part is completely prepared. Let us go; for either I will go bearing arms, or I will be guided by your counsels.

BAC. O women! the man is in the toils, and he will come to the Bacchæ, where, dying, he will pay the penalty. Now, Bacchus, 'tis thine office, for you are not far off. Let us punish him; but first drive him out of his wits, inspiring vain frenzy, since, being in his right mind, he will not be willing to put on a female dress, but driving him out of his senses he will put it on; and I wish him to furnish laughter to the Thebans, being led in woman's guise through the city, after his former threats, with which he was terrible. But I will go to fit on Pentheus the dress, which, having taken, he shall die, slain by his mother's hand. And he shall know Bacchus, the son of Jupiter, who is in fact to men at once the most terrible, and the mildest of deities.

CHOR. Shall I move my white foot in the night-long dance, honoring Bacchus, exposing my neck to the dewy air, sporting like a fawn in the verdant delights of the mead, when it has escaped a fearful chase beyond the watch of the well-woven nets, *(and the huntsman cheering hastens on the course of his hounds,)* and with toil like the swift storm rushes along the plain that skirts the river, exulting in the solitude apart from men, and in the thickets of the shady-foliaged wood? What is wisdom, what is a more glorious gift from the Gods among mortals than to hold one's hand on the heads of one's enemies? What is good is always pleasant; divine strength is roused with difficulty, but still is sure, and it chastises those mortals who honor folly, and do not extol the Gods in their insane mind. But the Gods cunningly conceal the long foot of time, and hunt the impious man; for it is not right to determine or plan any thing beyond the laws: for it is a light expense to deem that that has power whatever is divine, and that what has been law for a long time has its origin in nature. What is wisdom, what is a more noble gift from the Gods among men, than to hold one's hand on the heads of one's enemies? what is honorable is always pleasant. Happy is he who has escaped from the wave of the sea, and arrived in harbor. Happy, too, is he who has overcome his labors; and one surpasses another in different ways, in wealth and power. Still are there innumerable hopes to

innumerable men, some result in wealth to mortals, and some fail, but I call him happy whose life is happy day by day.

BAC. You, who are eager to see what you ought not, and hasty to do a deed not of haste, I mean Pentheus, come forth before the house, be seen by me, having the costume of a woman, of a frantic Bacchant, as a spy upon your mother and her company! In appearance, you are like one of the daughters of Cadmus.

PEN. And indeed I think I see two suns, and twin Thebes, and seven-gated city; and you seem to guide me, being like a bull, and horns seem to grow on your head. But were you ever a beast? for you look like a bull.

BAC. The God accompanies us, not propitious formerly, but now at truce with us. You see what you should see.

PEN. How do I look? Does not my standing seem like that of Ino, or of Agave, my mother?

BAC. I seem to see them as I behold you; but this lock of hair of yours is out of its place, not as I dressed it beneath the turban.

PEN. Moving it within doors backward and forward, and practicing Bacchic revelry, I disarranged it.

BAC. But we who ought to wait upon you will again rearrange it. But hold up your head.

PEN. Look, do you arrange it, for we depend on you.

BAC. And your girdle is loosened, and the fringes of your garments do not extend regularly round your legs.

PEN. They seem so to me, too, about the right foot at least; but on this side the robe sits well along the leg.

BAC. Will you not think me the first of your friends when, contrary to your expectation, you see the Bacchæ acting modestly?

PEN. But shall I be more like a Bacchant holding the thyrsus in my right hand, or in this?

BAC. You should [hold it in] your right hand, and raise it at the same time with your right foot; and I praise you for having changed your mind.

PEN. Could I bear on my shoulders the glens of Cithæron, Bacchæ and all?

BAC. You could if you were willing; but you had your mind unsound before; but now you have such as you ought.

PEN. Shall we bring levers, or shall I tear them up with my hands, putting my shoulder or arm under the summits?

BAC. No, lest you ruin the habitations of the Nymphs, and the seats of Pan where he plays his pipes.

PEN. You speak well, — it is not with strength we should conquer women; but I will hide my body among the pines.

BAC. Hide you the hiding in which you should be hidden, coming as a crafty spy on the Mænads.

PEN. And, indeed, I think to catch them in the thickets, like birds in the sweet nets of beds.

BAC. You go then as a watch for this very thing; and perhaps you will catch them, if you be not caught first.

PEN. Conduct me through the middle of the Theban land, for I am the only man of them who would dare these things.

BAC. You alone labor for this city, you alone; therefore the labors, which are meet, await you. But follow me, I am your saving guide, some one else will guide you away from thence.

PEN. Yes, my mother.

BAC. Being remarkable among all.

PEN. For this purpose do I come.

BAC. You will depart being borne.

PEN. You allude to my delicacy.

BAC. In the hands of your mother.

PEN. And wilt thou compel me to be effeminate?

BAC. Ay, with such effeminacy.

PEN. I lay mine hands to worthy things.

BAC. You are terrible, terrible: and you go to terrible sufferings; so that you shall find a renown reaching to heaven. Spread out, O Agave, your hands, and ye, her sister, daughters of Cadmus! I lead this young man to a mighty contest; and the conqueror shall be I and Bacchus! The rest the matter itself will show.

CHOR. Go, ye fleet hounds of madness, go to the mountain where the daughters of Cadmus hold their company; drive them raving against the frantic spy on the Mænads, — him in woman's attire. First shall his mother from some smooth rock or paling, behold him in ambush; and she will cry out to the Mænads: Who is this of the Cadmeans who has come to the mountain, the mountain, as a spy on us, who are on the mountain? Io Bacchæ! Who brought him forth? for he was not born of the blood of women: but, as to his race, he is either born of some lion, or of the Libyan Gorgons. Let manifest justice go forth, let it go with sword in hand, slaying the godless, lawless, unjust, earth-born offspring of Echion through the throat; who, with wicked mind and unjust rage about your orgies, O Bacchus, and those of thy mother, with raving heart and mad disposition proceeds as about to overcome an invincible deity by force. To possess without pretext a wise understanding in respect to the Gods, and [a disposition] befitting mortals, is a life ever free from grief. I joyfully hunt after wisdom, if apart from envy, but the other conduct is evidently ever great throughout life, directing one rightly the livelong day, to reverence things honorable. Appear as a bull, or a many-headed dragon, or a fiery

lion, to be seen. Go, O Bacchus! cast a snare around the hunter of the Bacchæ, with a smiling face falling upon the deadly crowd of the Mænads.

MESS. O house, which wast formerly prosperous in Greece! house of the Sidonian old man, who sowed in the land the earth-born harvest of the dragon; how I lament for you, though a slave. But still the [calamities] of their masters are a grief to good servants.

CHOR. But what is the matter? Tellest thou any news from the Bacchæ?

MESS. Pentheus is dead, the son of his father Echion.

CHOR. O, king Bacchus! truly you appear a great God!

MESS. How sayest thou? Why do you say this? Do you, O woman, delight at my master being unfortunate?

CHOR. I, a foreigner, celebrate it in foreign strains; for no longer do I crouch in fear under my fetters.

MESS. But do you think Thebes thus void of men?

CHOR. Bacchus, Bacchus, not Thebes, has my allegiance.

MESS. You, indeed may be pardoned; still, O woman, it is not right to rejoice at the misfortunes which have been brought to pass.

CHOR. Tell me, say, by what fate is the wicked man doing wicked things dead, O man?

MESS. When having left Therapnæ of this Theban land, we crossed the streams of Asopus, we entered on the height of Cithæron, Pentheus and I, for I was following my master, and the stranger who was our guide in this search, for the sight: first, then, we sat down in a grassy vale, keeping our steps and tongues in silence, that we might see, not being seen; and there was a valley surrounded by precipices, irrigated with streams, shaded around with pines, where the Mænads were sitting employing their hands in pleasant labors, for some of them were again crowning the worn-out thyrsus, so as to make it leafy with ivy; and some, like horses quitting the

painted yoke, shouted in reply to another a Bacchic melody. And the miserable Pentheus, not seeing the crowd of women, spake thus: O stranger, where we are standing, I can not come at the place where is the dance of the Mænads; but climbing a mound, or pine with lofty neck, I could well discern the shameful deeds of the Mænads. And on this I now see a strange deed of the stranger; for seizing hold of the extreme lofty branch of a pine, he pulled it down, pulled it, pulled it to the dark earth, and it was bent like a bow, or as a curved wheel worked by a lathe describes a circle as it revolves, thus the stranger, pulling a mountain bough with his hands, bent it to the earth; doing no mortal's deed; and having placed Pentheus on the pine branches, he let it go upright through his hands steadily, taking care that it should not shake him off; and the pine stood firm upright to the sky, bearing on its back my master, sitting on it; and he was seen rather than saw the Mænads, for sitting on high he was apparent, as not before. And one could no longer see the stranger, but there was a certain voice from the sky; Bacchus, as one might conjecture, shouted out: O youthful women, I bring you him who made you and me and my orgies a laughing-stock: but punish ye him. And at the same time he cried out, and sent forth to heaven and earth a light of holy fire; and the air was silent, and the fair meadowed grove kept its leaves in silence, and you could not hear the voice of the beasts; but they not distinctly receiving the voice, stood upright, and cast their eyes around. And again he proclaimed his bidding. And when the daughters of Cadmus' recognized the distinct command of Bacchus, they rushed forth, having in the eager running of their feet a speed not less than that of a dove; his mother, Agave, and her kindred sisters, and all the Bacchæ: and frantic with the inspiration of the God, they bounded through the torrent-streaming valley, and the clefts. But when they saw my master sitting on the pine, first they threw at him handfuls of stones, striking his head, mounting on an opposite piled rock; and with pine branches some aimed, and some hurled their thyrsi through the air at Pentheus, wretched mark; but they failed of their purpose; for he having a height too great for their eagerness, sat, wretched, destitute through perplexity. But at last thundering together some oaken branches, they tore up the roots with levers not of iron; and when they could not accomplish the end of their labors, Agave said, Come, standing round in a circle, seize each a branch, O Mænads, that we may take the beast who has climbed aloft, that he may not tell abroad the secret dances of the God. And they applied their innumerable

hands to the pine, and tore it up from the ground; and sitting on high, Pentheus falls to the ground from on high, with numberless lamentations; for he knew that he was near to ill. And first his mother, as the priestess, began his slaughter, and falls upon him; but he threw the turban from his hair, that the wretched Agave, recognizing him, might not slay him; and touching her cheek, he says, I, indeed, O mother, am thy child, Pentheus, whom you bore in the house of Echion; but pity me, O mother! and do not slay me, thy child, for my sins. But she, foaming and rolling her eyes every way, not thinking as she ought to think, was possessed by Bacchus, and he did not persuade her; and seizing his left hand with her hand, treading on the side of the unhappy man, she tore off his shoulder, not by [her own] strength, but the God gave facility to her hands; and Ino completed the work on the other side, tearing his flesh. And Autonoe and the whole crowd of the Bacchæ pressed on; and there was a noise of all together; he, indeed, groaning as much as he had life in him, and they shouted; and one bore his arm, another his foot, shoe and all; and his sides were bared by their tearings, and the whole band, with gory hands, tore to pieces the flesh of Pentheus: and his body lies in different places, part under the rugged rocks, part in the deep shade of the wood, not easy to be sought; and as to his miserable head, which his mother has taken in her hands, having fixed it on the top of a thyrsus, she is bearing it, like that of a savage lion, through the middle of Cithæron, leaving her sisters in the dances of the Mænads; and she goes along rejoicing in her unhappy prey, within these walls, calling upon Bacchus, her fellow-huntsman, her fellow-workman in the chase, of glorious victory, by which she wins a victory of tears. I, therefore, will depart out of the way of this calamity before Agave comes to the palace; but to be wise, and to reverence the Gods, this, I think, is the most honorable and wisest thing for mortals who adopt it.

CHOR. Let us dance in honor of Bacchus; let us raise a shout for what has befallen Pentheus, the descendant of the dragon, who assumed female attire and the wand with the beautiful thyrsus, — a certain death, having a bull as his leader to calamity. Ye Cadmean Bacchants, ye have accomplished a glorious victory, illustrious, yet for woe and tears. It is a glorious contest to plunge one’s dripping hand in the blood of one’s son. But — for I see Agave, the mother of Pentheus, coining to the house with starting eyes; receive the revel of the Evian God.

AGAVE. O Asiatic Bacchæ!

CHOR. To what dost thou excite me? O!

AG. We bring from the mountains a fresh-culled wreathing to the house, a blessed prey.

CHOR. I see it, and hail you as a fellow-reveler, O!

AG. I have caught him without a noose, a young lion, as you may see.

CHOR. From what desert?

AG. Cithæron.

CHOR. What did Cithæron?

AG. Slew him.

CHOR. Who was it who first smote him?

AG. The honor is mine. Happy Agave! We are renowned in our revels.

CHOR. Who else?

AG. Cadmus's.

CHOR. What of Cadmus?

AG. Descendants after me, after me laid hands on this beast.

CHOR. You are fortunate in this capture.

AG. Partake then of our feast.

CHOR. What shall I, unhappy, partake of?

AG. The whelp is young about the chin; he has just lost his soft-haired head-gear.

AG. For it is beautiful as the mane of a wild beast.

CHOR. Bacchus, a wise huntsman, wisely hurried the Mænads against this beast.

CHOR. For the king is a huntsman.

AG. Do you praise?

CHOR. What? I do praise.

AG. But soon the Cadmeans.

CHOR. And thy son Pentheus his mother —

AG. — will praise, as having caught this lion-born prey.

CHOR. An excellent prey.

AG. Excellently.

CHOR. You rejoice.

AG. I rejoice greatly, having accomplished great and illustrious deeds for this land.

CHOR. Show now, O wretched woman, thy victorious booty to the citizens, which you have come bringing with you.

AG. O, ye who dwell in the fair-towered city of the Theban land, come ye, that ye may behold this prey, O daughters of Cadmus, of the wild beast which we have taken; not by the thonged javelins of the Thessalians, not by nets, but by the fingers, our white arms; then may we boast that we should in vain possess the instruments of the spear-makers; but we, with this hand, slew this beast, and tore its limbs asunder. Where is my aged father? let him come near; and where is my son Pentheus? let him take and raise the ascent of a wattled ladder against the house, that he may fasten to the triglyphs this head of the lion which I am present having caught.

CAD. Follow me, bearing the miserable burden of Pentheus; follow me, O servants, before the house; whose body here, laboring with immeasurable search, I bear, having found it in the defiles of Cithæron, torn to pieces, and finding nothing in the same place, lying in a thicket, difficult to be searched. For I heard from some one of the daring deeds of my daughters just as I came to the city within the walls, with the old Tiresias, concerning the Bacchæ; and having returned again to the mountain, I bring back my child, slain by the Mænads. And I saw Autonoe, who formerly bore Actæon to Aristæus, and Ino together, still mad in the thicket, unhappy creatures; but some one told me that Agave was coming hither with frantic foot; nor did I hear a false tale, for I behold her, an unhappy sight.

AG. O father! you may boast a great boast, that you of mortals have begotten by far the best daughters; I mean all, but particularly myself, who, leaving my shuttle at the loom, have come to greater things, to catch wild beasts with my hands. And having taken him, I bear in my arms, as you see, these spoils of my valor, that they may be suspended against your house. And do you, O father, receive them in your hands; and rejoicing over my successful capture, invite your friends to a feast; for you are blessed, blessed since I have done such deeds.

CAD. O, woe! and not to be seen, of those who have accomplished a slaughter not to be measured by wretched hands; having stricken down a glorious victim for the Gods, you invite Thebes and me to a banquet. Alas me, first for thy ills, then for mine own; how justly, but how severely, has king Bromius destroyed us, being one of our own family!

AG. How morose is old age in men! and sullen to the eye; would that my son may be fond of hunting, resembling the disposition of his mother, when with the Theban youths he would strive after the beasts — but he is only fit to contend with Gods. He is to be admonished, O father, by you and me, not to rejoice in clever evil. Where is he? Who will summon him hither to my sight, that he may see me, that happy woman?

CAD. Alas, alas! knowing what ye have done, ye will grieve a sad grief; but if forever ye remain in the condition in which ye are, not fortunate, you will seem not to be unfortunate.

AG. But what of these matters is not well, or what is grievous?

CAD. First cast your eyes up to this sky.

AG. Well; why do you bid me look at it?

CAD. Is it still the same, or think you it is changed?

AG. It is brighter than formerly, and more divine.

CAD. Is then this fluttering still present to your soul?

AG. I understand not your word; but I become somehow sobered, changing from my former mind.

CAD. Can you then hear any thing, and answer clearly?

AG. How I forget what we said before, O father!

CAD. To what house did you come in marriage?

AG. You gave me, as they say, to the sown Echion.

CAD. What son then was born in your house to your husband?

AG. Pentheus, by the association of myself and his father.

CAD. Whose head then have you in your arms?

AG. That of a lion, as those who hunted him said.

CAD. Look now rightly; short is the toil to see.

AG. Ah! what do I see? what is this I bear in my hands?

CAD. Look at it, and learn more clearly.

AG. I see the greatest grief, wretch that I am!

CAD. Does it seem to you to be like a lion?

AG. No: but I, wretched, hold the head of Pentheus.

CAD. Ay, much lamented before you recognized him.

AG. Who slew him, how came he into my hands?

CAD. O wretched truth, how unseasonably art thou come!

AG. Tell me, since delay causes a quivering at my heart.

CAD. You and your sisters slew him.

AG. And where did he die, in the house, or in what place?

CAD. Where formerly the dogs tore Actæon to pieces.

AG. But why did he, unhappy, go to Cithæron?

CAD. He went deriding the God and your Bacchic revels.

AG. But on what account did we go thither?

CAD. Ye were mad, and the whole city was frantic with Bacchus.

AG. Bacchus undid us — now I perceive.

CAD. Being insulted with insolence — for ye thought him not a God.

AG. But the dear body of my child, O father!

CAD. I having with difficulty traced it, bring it all.

AG. What! rightly united in its joints? * * * *

AG. But what part had Pentheus in my folly?

CAD. He was like you, not reverencing the God, therefore he joined all in one ruin, both ye and this one, so as to ruin the house, and me, who being childless of male children, see this branch of thy womb, O unhappy woman!

most miserably and shamefully slain — whom the house respected; you, O child, who supported my house, born of my daughter, and was an object of fear to the city; and no one wished to insult the old man, seeing you; for he would have received a worthy punishment. But now I shall be cast out of my house dishonored, I, the mighty Cadmus, who sowed the Theban race, and reaped a most glorious crop; O dearest of men, for although no longer in being, still thou shalt be counted by me as dearest of my children; no longer touching this, my chin, with thy hand, addressing me, your mother's father, wilt thou embrace me, my son, saying, Who injures, who insults you, O father, who harasses your heart, being troublesome I say, that I may punish him who does you wrong, O father. But now I am miserable, and thou art wretched, and thy mother is pitiable, and thy relations are wretched. But if there is any one who despises the Gods, looking on this man's death, let him acknowledge the Gods.

CHOR. I grieve for thy state, O Cadmus; but your child has the punishment of your daughter, deserved indeed, but grievous to you.

AG. O father, for you see how I am changed ...

BAC ... changing, you shall become a dragon, and your wife becoming a beast, shall receive in exchange the form of a serpent, Harmonia, the daughter of Mars, whom you had, being a mortal. And as the oracle of Jove says, you shall drive with your wife a chariot of heifers, ruling over barbarians; and with an innumerable army you shall sack many cities; and when they plunder the temple of Apollo, they shall have a miserable return, but Mars shall defend you and Harmonia, and shall settle your life in the islands of the blessed. I say this, I, Bacchus, not born of a mortal father, but of Jove; and if ye had known how to be wise when ye would not, ye would have been happy, having the son of Jupiter for your ally.

CAD. Bacchus, we beseech thee, we have erred.

BAC. Ye have learned it too late; but when it behooved you, you knew it not.

CAD. I knew it, but you press on us too severely.

BAC. [Ay,] for I, being a God, was insulted by you.

CAD. It is not right for Gods to resemble mortals in anger.

BAC. My father, Jove, long ago decreed this.

AG. Alas! a miserable banishment is the decree [for us,] old man.

BAC. Why do ye then delay what must needs be?

CAD. O child, into what terrible evil have we come; both you wretched and your * * * * sisters, and I miserable, shall go, an aged sojourner, to foreigners. Still it is foretold that I shall bring into Greece a motley barbarian army, and leading their spears, I, a dragon, shall lead the daughter of Mars, Harmonia, my wife, having the fierce nature of a dragon, to the altars and tombs of the Greeks. Nor shall I, wretched, rest from ills, nor even sailing over the Acheron below shall I be at rest.

AG. O, my father! and I being deprived of you shall be banished.

CAD. Why do you embrace me with your hands, O unhappy child, as a white swan does its exhausted parent?

AG. For whither can I turn, cast out from my country?

CAD. I know not, my child; your father is a poor ally.

AG. Farewell, O house! farewell, O ancestral city! I leave you in misfortune a fugitive from my chamber.

CAD. Go then, my child, to the land of Aristæus * * * *.

AG. I bemoan thee, O father!

CAD. And I thee, my child; and I lament your sisters.

AG. Terribly indeed has king Bacchus brought this misery upon thy house.

BAC. [Ay,] for I have suffered terrible things from ye, having a name unhonored in Thebes.

AG. Farewell, my father.

CAD. And you farewell, O miserable daughter; yet you can not easily arrive at this.

AG. Lead me, O guides, where I may take my miserable sisters as the companions of my flight; and may I go where neither accursed Cithæron may see me, nor I may see Cithæron with my eyes, and where there is no memory of the thyrsus hallowed, but they may be a care to other Bacchæ.

CHOR. There are many forms of divine things; and the Gods bring to pass many in an unexpected manner: both what has been expected has not been accomplished, and God has found out a means for doing things unthought of. So, too, has this event turned out.

IPHIGENIA AT AULIS

Translated by Theodore Alois Buckley

Written between 408 and 406 BC, the year of Euripides' death, *Iphigenia at Aulis* was first produced in 409 BC in a trilogy with *The Bacchae* and the lost *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, winning the first place at the Dionysia. The play involves the mythological story of Agamemnon, the leader of the Greek army, and his decision to sacrifice his daughter, Iphigenia, to appease the goddess Artemis and allow his troops to set sail to Troy. The conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles over the fate of the young woman foreshadows a similar conflict between the two characters at the beginning of the *Iliad*.

The play as it exists in the manuscripts ends with a messenger reporting that Iphigenia has been replaced on the altar by a deer. It is, however, generally considered that this is not an authentic part of Euripides' original text. A fragment of the play may indicate that Artemis appeared to console Clytemnestra and assure her that her daughter had not been sacrificed after all, but this Euripidean end, if it existed, is not extant.

A Roman fresco depicting the sacrifice of Iphigenia

'The Sacrifice of Iphigeneia' by Leonaert Bramer, c. 1623

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THE ARGUMENT.

When the Greeks were detained at Aulis by stress of weather, Calchas declared that they would never reach Troy unless the daughter of Agamemnon, Iphigenia, was sacrificed to Diana. Agamemnon sent for his daughter with this view, but repenting, he dispatched a messenger to prevent Clytæmnestra sending her. The messenger being intercepted by Menelaus, an altercation between the brother chieftains arose, during which Iphigenia, who had been tempted with the expectation of being wedded to Achilles, arrived with her mother. The latter, meeting with Achilles, discovered the deception, and Achilles swore to protect her. But Iphigenia, having determined to die nobly on behalf of the Greeks, was snatched away by the Goddess, and a stag substituted in her place. The Greeks were then enabled to set sail.

IPHIGENIA IN AULIS.

AGAMEMNON. Come before this dwelling, O aged man.

OLD MAN. I come. But what new thing dost thou meditate, king Agamemnon?

AG. You shall learn.

OLD M. I hasten. My old age is very sleepless, and sits wakeful upon mine eyes.

AG. What star can this be that traverses this way?

OLD M. Sirius, flitting yet midway *(between the heavens and the ocean,)* close to the seven Pleiads.

AG. No longer therefore is there the sound either of birds or of the sea, but silence of the winds reigns about this Euripus.

OLD M. But why art thou hastening without the tent, king Agamemnon? But still there is silence here by Aulis, and the guards of the fortifications are undisturbed. Let us go within.

AG. I envy thee, old man, and I envy that man who has passed through a life without danger, unknown, unglorious; but I less envy those in honor.

OLD M. And yet ’tis in this that the glory of life is.

AG. But this very glory is uncertain, for the love of popularity is pleasant indeed, but hurts when present. Sometimes the worship of the Gods not rightly conducted upturns one’s life, and sometimes the many and dissatisfied opinions of men harass.

OLD M. I praise not these remarks in a chieftain. O Agamemnon, Atreus did not beget thee upon a condition of complete good fortune. But thou needs must rejoice and grieve; [in turn,] for thou art a mortal born, and even

though you wish it not, the will of the Gods will be thus. But thou, opening the light of a lamp, art both writing this letter, which thou still art carrying in thy hands, and again you blot out the same characters, and seal, and loose again, and cast the tablet to the ground, pouring abundant tears, and thou lackest naught of the unwonted things that tend to madness. Why art thou troubled, why art thou troubled? What new thing, what new thing [has happened] concerning thee, O king? Come, communicate discourse with me. But thou wilt speak to a good and faithful man, for to thy wife Tyndarus sent me once on a time, as a dower-gift, and disinterested companion.

AG. To Leda, daughter of Thestias, were born three virgins, Phœbe, and Clytæmnestra my spouse, and Helen. Of this latter, the youths of Greece that were in the first state of prosperity came as suitors. But terrible threats of bloodshed arose against one another, from whoever should not obtain the virgin. But the matter was difficult for her father Tyndarus, whether to give, or not to give [her in marriage,] and how he might best deal with the circumstances, when this occurred to him; that the suitors should join oaths and plight right hands with one another, and over burnt-offerings should enter into treaty, and bind themselves by this oath, "Of whomsoever the daughter of Tyndarus shall become wife, that they will join to assist him, if any one should depart from his house taking [her] with him, and excluding the possessor from his bed, and that they will make an expedition in arms, and sack the city [of the ravisher,] Greek or barbarian alike." But after they had pledged themselves, the old man Tyndarus somehow cleverly overreached them by a cunning plan. He permits his daughter to choose one of the suitors, toward whom the friendly gales of Venus might impel her. But she chose *(whom would she had never taken!)* Menelaus. And he who, according to the story told by men, once judged the Goddesses, coming from Phrygia to Lacedæmon, flowered in the vesture of his garments, and glittering with gold, barbarian finery, loving Helen who loved him, he stole and bore her away to the bull-stalls of Ida, having found Menelaus abroad. But he, goaded hastily through Greece, calls to witness the old oath given to Tyndarus, that it behooves to assist the aggrieved. Henceforth the Greeks hastening with the spear, having taken their arms, come to this Aulis with its narrow straits, with ships and shields together, and accoutred with many horses and chariots. And they chose me general of the host, out of regard

for Menelaus, being his brother forsooth. And would that some other than I had obtained the dignity. But when the army was assembled and levied, we sat, having no power of sailing, at Aulis. But Calchas the seer proclaimed to us, being at a loss, that we should sacrifice Iphigenia, whom I begat, to Diana, who inhabits this place, and that if we sacrificed her, we should have both our voyage, and the sacking of Troy, but that this should not befall us if we did not sacrifice her. But I hearing this in rousing proclamation, bade Talthybius dismiss the whole army, as I should never have the heart to slay my daughter. Upon this, indeed, my brother, alleging every kind of reasoning, persuaded me to dare the dreadful deed, and having written in the folds of a letter, I sent word to my wife to send her daughter as if to be married to Achilles, both enlarging on the dignity of the man, and asserting that he would not sail with the Greeks, unless a wife for him from among us should come to Phthia. For I had this means of persuading my wife, having made up a pretended match for the virgin. But we alone of the Greeks know how these matters are, Calchas, Ulysses, and Nestor. But the things which I then determined not well, I am now differently writing so as to be well, in this letter, which by the shadow of night thou beheldest me opening and closing, old man. But come, go thou, taking these letters, to Argos. But as to what the letter conceals in its folds, I will tell thee in words all that is written therein; for thou art faithful to my wife and house.

OLD M. Speak, and tell me, that with my tongue I may also say what agrees with your letter.

AG. *(reading)* “I send to thee, O germ of Leda, besides my former dispatches, not to send thy daughter to the bay-like wing of Eubœa, waveless Aulis. For we will delay the bridals of our daughter till another season.”

OLD M. And how will not Achilles raise up his temper against thee and thy wife, showing great wrath at failing of his spouse? This also is terrible. Show what thou meanest.

AG. Achilles, furnishing the pretext, not the reality, knows not these nuptials, nor what we are doing; nor that I have professed to give my daughter into the nuptial chain of his arms by marriage.

OLD M. Thou venturest terrible things, king Agamemnon, who, having promised thy daughter as wife to the son of the Goddess, dost lead her as a sacrifice on behalf of the Greeks.

AG. Ah me! I was out of my senses. Alas! And I am falling into calamity. But go, plying thy foot, yielding naught to old age.

OLD M. I hasten, O king.

AG. Do not thou either sit down by the woody fountains, nor repose in sleep.

OLD M. Speak good words.

AG. But every where as you pass the double track, look about, watching lest there escape thee a chariot passing with swift wheels, bearing my daughter hither to the ships of the Greeks.

OLD M. This shall be.

AG. And go out of the gates quickly,† for if you meet with the procession,† again go forth, shake the reins, going to the temples reared by the Cyclops.

OLD M. But tell me, how, saying this, I shall obtain belief from thy daughter and wife.

AG. Preserve the seal, this which thou bearest on this letter. Go: morn, already dawning forth this light, grows white, and the fire of the sun's four steeds. Aid me in my toils. But no one of mortals is prosperous or blest to the last, for none hath yet been born free from pain.

CHORUS. I came to the sands of the shore of marine Aulis, having sailed through the waves of Euripus, quitting Chalcis with its narrow strait, my city, the nurse of the sea-neighboring waters of renowned Arethusa, in order that I might behold the army of the Greeks, and the ship-conveying oars of the Grecian youths, whom against Troy in a thousand ships of fir, our husbands say that yellow-haired Menelaus and Agamemnon of noble birth, are leading in quest of Helen, whom the herdsman Paris bore from reed-

nourishing Eurotas, a gift of Venus, when at the fountain dews Venus held contest, contest respecting beauty with Juno and Pallas. But I came swiftly through the wood of Diana with its many sacrifices, making my cheek red with youthful modesty, wishing to behold the defense of the shield, and the arm-bearing tents of the Greeks, and the crowd of steeds. But I saw the two Ajaces companions, the son of Oileus, and the son of Telamon, the glory of Salamis, and Protesilaus and Palamedes, whom the daughter of Neptune bore, diverting themselves with the complicated figures of draughts, and Diomede rejoicing in the pleasures of the disk, and by them Merione, the blossom of Mars, a marvel to mortals, and the son of Laertes from the mountains of the isle, and with them Nireus, fairest of the Greeks, and Achilles, tempest-like in the course, fleet as the winds, whom Thetis bore, and Chiron trained up, I beheld him on the shore, coursing in arms along the shingles. And he toiled through a contest of feet, running against a chariot of four steeds for victory. But the charioteer cried out, Eumelus, the grandson of Pheres, whose most beauteous steeds I beheld, decked out with gold-tricked bits, hurried on by the lash, the middle ones in yoke dappled with white-spotted hair, but those outside, in loose harness, running contrariwise in the bendings of the course, bays, with dappled skins under their legs with solid hoofs. Close by which Pelides was running in arms, by the orb and wheels of the chariot. And I came to the multitude of ships, a sight not to be described, that I might satiate the sight of my woman's eyes, a sweet delight. And at the right horn [of the fleet] was the Phthiotic army of the Myrmidons, with fifty valiant ships. And in golden effigies the Nereid Goddesses stood on the summit of the poops, the standard of the host of Achilles. And next to these there stood the Argive ships, with equal number of oars, of which [Euryalus] the grandson of Mecisteus was general, whom his father Talaus trains up, and Sthenelus son of Capaneus. But [Acamas] son of Theseus, leading sixty ships from Athens, kept station, having the Goddess Pallas placed in her equestrian winged chariot, a prosperous sign to sailors. But I beheld the armament of the Bœotians, fifty sea-bound ships, with signs at the figure-heads, and their sign was Cadmus, holding a golden dragon, at the beaks of the ships, and Leitus the earth-born was leader of the naval armament, and [I beheld] those from the Phocian land. But the son of Oileus, leading an equal number of Locrian ships, came, having left the Thronian city. But from Cyclopian Mycenæ the son of Atreus sent the assembled mariners of a hundred ships. And with him was

Adrastus, as friend with friend, in order that Greece might wreak vengeance on those who fled their homes, for the sake of barbarian nuptials. But from Pylos we beheld on the poops of Gerenian Nestor, a sign bull-footed to view, his neighbor Alpheus. But there were twelve beaks of Ænian ships, which king Gyneus led, and near these again the chieftains of Elis, whom all the people named Epeians, and o'er these Eurytus had power. But the white-oared Taphian host * * * * led, which Meges ruled, the offspring of Phyleus, leaving the island Echinades, inaccessible to sailors. And Ajax, the foster-child of Salamis, joined the right horn to the left, to which he was stationed nearest, joining them with his furthermost ships, with twelve most swift vessels, as I heard, and beheld the naval people. To which if any one add the barbarian barks, * * * * it will not obtain a return. * * * * Where I beheld the naval expedition, but hearing other things at home I preserve remembrance of the assembled army.

OLD M. Menelaus, thou art daring dreadful deeds thou shouldst not dare.

MENELAUS. Away with thee! thou art too faithful to thy masters.

OLD M. An honorable rebuke thou hast rebuked me with!

MEN. To thy cost shall it be, if thou dost that thou shouldst not do.

OLD M. You have no right to open the letter which I was carrying.

MEN. Nor shouldst thou bear ills to all the Greeks.

OLD M. Contest this point with others, but give up this [letter] to me.

MEN. I will not let it go.

OLD M. Nor will I let it go.

MEN. Then quickly with my sceptre will I make thine head bloody.

OLD M. But glorious it is to die for one's masters.

MEN. Let go. Being a slave, thou speakest too many words.

OLD M. O master, I am wronged, and this man, having snatched thy letter out of my hands, O Agamemnon, is unwilling to act rightly.

MEN. Ah! what is this tumult and disorder of words?

OLD M. My words, not his, are fittest to speak.

AG. But wherefore, Menelaus, dost thou come to strife with this man and art dragging him by force?

MEN. Look at me, that I may take this commencement of my speech.

AG. What, shall I through fear not open mine eyelids, being born of Atreus?

MEN. Seest thou this letter, the minister of writings most vile?

AG. I see it, and do thou first let it go from thy hands.

MEN. Not, at least, before I show to the Greeks what is written therein.

AG. What, knowest thou what ’tis unseasonable thou shouldst know, having broken the seal?

MEN. Ay, so as to pain thee, having unfolded the ills thou hast wrought privily.

AG. But where didst thou obtain it? O Gods, for thy shameless heart!

MEN. Expecting thy daughter from Argos, whether she will come to the army.

AG. What behooves thee to keep watch upon my affairs? Is not this the act of a shameless man?

MEN. Because the will [to do so] teased me, and I am not born thy slave.

AG. Is it not dreadful? Shall I not be suffered to be master of my own family?

MEN. For thou thinkest inconsistently, now one thing, before another, another thing presently.

AG. Well hast thou talked evil. Hateful is a too clever tongue.

MEN. But an unstable mind is an unjust thing to possess, and not clear for friends. I wish to expostulate with thee, but do not thou in wrath turn away from the truth, nor will I speak overlong. Thou knowest when thou wast making interest to be leader of the Greeks against Troy — in seeming indeed not wishing it, but wishing it in will — how humble thou wast, taking hold of every right hand, and keeping open doors to any of the people that wished, and giving audience to all in turn even if one wished it not, seeking by manners to purchase popularity among the multitude. But when you obtained the power, changing to different manners, you were no longer the same friend as before to your old friends, difficult of access, and rarely within doors. But it behooves not a man who has met with great fortune to change his manners, but then chiefly to be firm toward his friends, when he is best able to benefit them, being prosperous. I have first gone over these charges against thee, in which I first found thee base. But when thou afterward camest into Aulis and to the army of all the Greeks, thou wast naught, but wast in stupefaction at the fortune which then befell us from the Gods, lacking a favorable breeze for the journey. But the Greeks demanded that you should dismiss the ships, and not toil vainly at Aulis. But how cheerless and distressed a countenance you wore, because you were not able to land your army at Priam's land, having a thousand ships under command. And thou besoughtest me, "What shall I do?" "But what resource shall I find from whence?" so that thou mightest not lose an ill renown, being deprived of the command. And then, when Calchas o'er the victims said that thou must sacrifice thy daughter to Diana, and that there would [then] be means of sailing for the Greeks, delighted in heart, you gladly promised to sacrifice your child, and of your own accord, not by compulsion — do not say so — you send to your wife to convoy your daughter hither, on a pretext of being wedded to Achilles. And then changing [your mind] you are caught altering to other writings, to the effect that you will not now be the slayer of your daughter. Very pretty, forsooth! This is the same air which heard these very protestations from thee. But innumerable men experience this in their affairs; they persevere in labor

when in power, and then make a bad result, sometimes through the foolish mind of the citizens, but sometimes with reason, themselves becoming incapable of preserving the state, I indeed chiefly groan for hapless Greece, who, wishing to work some doughty deed against these good-for-nothing barbarians, will let them, laughing at us, slip through her hands, on account of thee and thy daughter. I would not make any one ruler of the land for the sake of necessity, nor chieftain of armed men. It behooves the general of the state to possess sense, for every man is a ruler who possesses sense.

CHOR. 'Tis dreadful for words and strife to happen between brothers, when they fall into dispute.

AG. I wish to address thee in evil terms, but mildly, in brief, not uplifting mine eyelids too much aloft through insolence, but moderately, as being my brother. For a good man is wont to show respect [to others.] Tell me, why dost thou burst forth thus violently, having thy face suffused with rage? Who wrongs thee? What lackest thou? Wouldst fain gain a good wife! I can not supply thee, for thou didst ill rule over the one you possessed. Must I therefore pay the penalty of your mismanagement, who have made no mistake? Or does my ambition annoy thee? But wouldst thou fain hold in thine arms a fair woman, forgetting discretion and honor? Evil pleasures belong to an evil man. But if I, having before resolved ill, have changed to good counsel, am I mad? Rather art thou [mad,] who, having lost a bad wife, desirest to recover her, when God has well prospered thy fortune. The nuptial-craving suitors in their folly swore the oath to Tyndarus, but hope, I ween, was their God, and wrought this more than thyself and thy strength. Whom taking make thou the expedition, but I think thou wilt know [that it is] through the folly of their hearts, for the divinity is not ignorant, but is capable of discerning oaths ill plighted and perforce. But I will not slay my children, so that thy state will in justice be well, revenge upon the worst of wives, but nights and days will waste me away in tears, having wrought lawless, unjust deeds against the children whom I begat. These words are briefly spoken to thee, both plain and easy, but if thou art unwilling to be wise, I will arrange my own affairs well.

CHOR. These words are different from those before spoken, but they are to a good effect, that the children be spared.

MEN. Alas! alas! have I then wretched no friends?

AG. [Yes, you have,] at least, if you do not wish to ruin your friends.

MEN. But how will you show that you are born of the same sire with me?

AG. I am born to be wise with you, not foolish.

MEN. It behooves friends to grieve in common with friends.

AG. Admonish me by well doing, not by paining me.

MEN. Dost thou not then think fit to toil through this with Greece?

AG. But Greece, with thee, is sickening through some deity.

MEN. Vaunt then on thy sceptre, having betrayed thy brother. But I will seek some other schemes, and other friends.

[*Enter a Messenger*.]

MESSENGER. O Agamemnon, king of all the Greeks, I am come, bringing thy daughter to thee, whom thou didst name Iphigenia in thy palace. But her mother follows, the person of thy [wife] Clytæmnestra, and the boy Orestes, that thou mayest be pleased at the sight, being away from thine home a long season. But as they have come a long way, they and their mares are refreshing their female feet by the fair-flowing fountain, and we let loose the mares in a grassy meadow, that they might taste fodder. But I am come before them to prepare you [for their reception,] for a swift report passed through the army, that thy daughter had arrived. And all the multitude comes out hastily to the spectacle, that they may behold thy child. For prosperous men are renowned and conspicuous among all mortals. And they say, “Is there a marriage on foot? or what is going on?” Or, “Has king Agamemnon, having a yearning after his daughter, brought his child hither?” But from some you would have heard this: “They are initiating the damsel in honor of Artemis, queen of Aulis, who will marry her.” But come, get ready the baskets, which come next, crown thine head. And do thou, king Menelaus, prepare a nuptial lay, and through the house let the

pipe sound and let there be noise of feet, for this day comes blessed upon the virgin.

AG. I commend [your words,] but go thou within the house, and it shall be well, as fortune takes its course. Alas! what shall I wretched say? Whence shall I begin? Into what fetters of necessity have I fallen! Fortune has upturned me, so as to become far too clever for my cleverness. But lowness of birth has some advantage thus. For such persons are at liberty to weep, and speak unhappy words, but to him that is of noble birth, all these things belong. We have our dignity as ruler of our life, and are slaves to the multitude. For I am ashamed indeed to let fall the tear, yet again wretched am I ashamed not to weep, having come into the greatest calamities. Well! what shall I say to my wife? How shall I receive her? What manner of countenance shall I present? And truly she hath undone me, coming uncalled amidst the ills which before possessed me. And with reason did she follow her daughter, being about to deck her as a bride, and to perform the dearest offices, where she will find us base. But for this hapless virgin — why [call her] virgin? Hades, as it seems, will speedily attend on her nuptials, — how do I pity her! For I think that she will beseech me thus: O father, wilt thou slay me? Such a wedding mayest thou thyself wed, and whosoever is a friend to thee. But Orestes being present will cry out knowingly words not knowing, for he is yet an infant. Alas! how has Priam's son, Paris, undone me by wedding the nuptials of Paris, who has wrought this!

CHOR. And I also pity her, as it becomes a stranger woman to moan for the misfortune of her lords.

MEN. Brother, give me thy right hand to touch.

AG. I give it, for thine is the power, but I am wretched.

MEN. I swear by Pelops, who was called the sire of my father and thine, and my father Atreus, that I indeed will tell thee plainly from my heart, and not any thing out of contrivance, but only what I think. I, beholding thee letting fall the tear from thine eyes, pitied thee, and myself let fall [a tear] for thee in return. And I have changed my old determinations, not being wrath against you, but I will place myself in your present situation, and I

recommend you neither to slay your child, nor to take my part; for it is not just that thou shouldst groan, but my affairs be in a pleasant state, and that thine should die, but mine behold the light. For what do I wish? Might I not obtain another choice alliance, if I crave nuptials? But, having undone my brother, whom it least behooved me, shall I receive Helen, an evil in place of a good? I was foolish and young, before that, viewing the matter closely, I saw what it is to beget children. Besides, pity came over me, considering our connection, for the hapless girl, who is about to be sacrificed because of my marriage. But what has thy virgin [daughter] to do with Helen? Let the army go, being disbanded from Aulis. But cease thou bedewing thine eyes with tears, my brother, and exciting me to tears. But if I have any concern in the oracle respecting thy daughter, let me have none: to thee I yield my part. But I have come to a change from terrible resolutions. I have experienced what was meet. I have changed to regard him who is sprung from a common source. Such changes belong not to a bad man, [viz.] to follow the best always.

CHOR. Thou hast spoken generous words, and becoming Tantalus the son of Jove. Thou disgracest not thine ancestors.

AG. I commend thee, Menelaus, in that, contrary to my expectation, you have subjoined these words, rightly, and worthily of thee.

MEN. A certain disturbance between brothers arises on account of love, and avarice in their houses. I abhor such a relationship, mutually sore.

AG. But [consider,] for we are come into circumstances that render it necessary to accomplish the bloody slaughter of my daughter.

MEN. How? Who will compel thee to slay thy child?

AG. The whole assembly of the armament of the Greeks.

MEN. Not so, if at least thou dismiss it back to Argos.

AG. In this matter I might escape discovery, but in that I can not.

MEN. What? One should not too much fear the multitude.

AG. Calchas will proclaim his prophecy to the army of the Greeks.

MEN. Not if he die first — and this is easy.

AG. The whole race of seers is an ambitious ill.

MEN. And in naught good or profitable, when at hand.

AG. But dost thou not fear that which occurs to me?

MEN. How can I understand the word you say not?

AG. The son of Sisyphus knows all these matters.

MEN. It can not be that Orestes can pain thee and me.

AG. He is ever changeable, and with the multitude.

MEN. He is indeed possessed with the passion for popularity, a dreadful evil.

AG. Do you not then think that he, standing in the midst of the Greeks, will tell the oracles which Calchas pronounced, and of me, that I promised to offer a sacrifice to Diana, and then break my word. With which [words] having carried away the army, he will bid the Greeks slay thee and me, and sacrifice the damsel. And if I flee to Argos, they will come and ravage and raze the land, Cyclopean walls and all. Such are my troubles. O unhappy me! How, by the Gods, am I at a loss in these present matters! Take care of one thing for me, Menelaus, going through the army, that Clytæmnestra may not learn these matters, before I take and offer my daughter to Hades, that I may fare ill with as few tears as possible. But do ye, O stranger women, preserve silence.

CHORUS. Blest are they who share the nuptial bed of the Goddess Aphrodite, when she is moderate, and with modesty, obtaining a calm from the maddening stings, when Love with his golden locks stretches his twin bow of graces, the one for a prosperous fate, the other for the upturning of life. I deprecate this [bow,] O fairest Venus, from our beds, but may mine be a moderate grace, and holy endearments, and may I share Aphrodite, but

reject her when excessive. But the natures of mortals are different, and their manners are different, but that which is clearly good is ever plain. And the education which trains [men] up, conduces greatly to virtue, for to have reverence is wisdom, and it possesses an equivalent advantage, viz. to perceive what is fitting by one's mind, where report bears unwasting glory to life. 'Tis a great thing to hunt for [the praise of] virtue, among women indeed, by a secret affection, but among men, on the other hand, honor being inherent, [bears that praise, honor,] which increases a state to an incalculable extent.

Thou earnest, O Paris, † where thou wast trained up a shepherd with the white heifers of Ida, trilling a barbarian lay, breathing an imitation of the Phrygian pipes of Olympus on a reed. And the cows with their well-filled udders browsed, when the judgment of the Goddesses drove thee mad, which sends thee into Greece,† before the ivory-decked palaces, thou who didst strike love into the eyes of Helen which were upon thee, and thyself wast fluttered with love. Whence strife, strife brings Greece against the bulwarks of Troy with spears and ships.† Alas! alas! great are the fortunes of the great. Behold the king's daughter, Iphigenia, my queen, and Clytæmnestra, daughter of Tyndarus, how are they sprung from the great, and to what suitable fortune they are come. The powerful, in sooth, and the wealthy, are Gods to those of mortals who are unblest. [Let us stand still, ye children of Chalcis, let us receive the queen from her chariot to the earth, not unsteadily, but gently with the soft attention of our hands, lest the renowned daughter of Agamemnon, newly coming to me, be alarmed, nor let us, as strangers to strangers, cause disturbance or fear to the Argive ladies.]

[*Enter* Clytæmnestra, IPHIGENIA, *and probably* ORESTES *in a chariot. They descend from it, while the Chorus make obeisance*.]

CLY. I regard both your kindness and your favorable words as a good omen, and I have some hope that I am here as escort [of my daughter] to honorable nuptials. But take out of my chariot the dower-gifts which I bear for my girl, and send them carefully into the house. And do thou, my child, quit the horse-chariot, setting [carefully] thy foot delicate and at the same time tender. But you, maidens, receive her in your arms, and lift her from the

chariot. And let some one give me the firm support of his hand, that I may beseemingly leave the chariot-seat. But do some of you stand in front of the horses' yoke, for the uncontrolled eye of horses is timorous, and take this boy, the son of Agamemnon, Orestes, for he is still an infant. Child! dost sleep, overcome by the ride? Wake up happily for thy sisters' nuptials. For thou thyself being noble shalt obtain relationship with a good man, the God-like son of the daughter of Nereus. [Next come thou close to my foot, O daughter, to thy mother, Iphigenia, and standing near, show these strangers how happy I am, and come hither indeed, and address thy dear father.] O thou most great glory to me, king Agamemnon, we are come, not disobeying thy bidding.

IPH. O mother, running indeed, *(but be thou not angry,)* I will apply my breast to my father's breast. [But I wish, rushing to embrace thy breast, O father, after a long season. For I long for thy face. But do not be angry.]

CLY. But, O my child, enjoy [thine embraces,] but thou wert ever most fond of thy father, of all the children I bore.

IPH. O father, joyous do I behold thee after a long season.

AG. And I, thy father, [joyously behold] thee. Thou speakest thus equally in respect to both.

IPH. Hail! But well hast thou done in bringing me to thee, O father.

AG. I know not how I shall say, yet not say so, my child.

IPH. Ah! how uneasily dost thou regard me, joyfully beholding me [before.]

AG. A king and general has many cares.

IPH. Give thyself up to me now, and turn not thyself to cares.

AG. But I am altogether concerned with thee, and on no other subject.

IPH. Relax thy brow, and open thy eyes in joy.

AG. See, I rejoice as I rejoice, at seeing thee, child.

IPH. And then dost let fall a tear from thine eyes?

AG. For long to us is the coming absence.

IPH. I know not what you mean, I know not, dearest father mine.

AG. Speaking sensibly, thou movest me the more to pity.

IPH. I will speak foolishly, if I so may rejoice you.

AG. Alas! I can not keep silence, but I commend thee.

IPH. Remain, O father, in the house with thy children,

AG. I fain would, but not having what I would, I am pained.

IPH. Perish war and the ills of Menelaus!

AG. What has undone me will first undo others.

IPH. How long a time wast thou absent in the recesses of Aulis!

AG. And now also there is something hinders me from sending on the army.

IPH. Where say they that the Phrygians dwell, father?

AG. Where would that Paris, Priam's son, had never dwelt.

IPH. And dost thou go a long distance, O father, when thou leavest me?

AG. Thou art come, my daughter, to the same state with thy father.

IPH. Alas! would that it were fitting me and thee to take me with thee as thy fellow-sailor.

AG. But there is yet a sailing for thee, where thou wilt remember thy father.

IPH. Shall I go, sailing with my mother, or alone?

AG. Alone, apart from thy father and mother.

IPH. What, art thou going to make me dwell in other houses, father?

AG. Cease. It is not proper for girls to know these matters.

IPH. Hasten back from Phrygia, do, my father, having settled matters well there.

AG. It first behooves me to offer a certain sacrifice here.

IPH. But it is with the priests that thou shouldst consider sacred matters.

AG. [Yet] shalt thou know it, for thou wilt stand round the altar.

IPH. What, shall we stand in chorus round the altar, my father?

AG. I deem thee happier than myself, for that thou know-est nothing. But go within the house, that the girls may behold thee, having given me a sad kiss and thy right hand, being about to dwell a long time away from thy sire. O bosom and cheeks, O yellow tresses, how has the city of the Phrygians proved a burden to us, and Helen! I cease my words, for swift does the drop trickle from mine eyes when I touch thee. Go into the house. But I, I crave thy pardon, *(to Clytæmnestra,)* daughter of Leda, if I showed too much feeling, being about to bestow my daughter on Achilles. For the departure [of a girl] is a happy one, but nevertheless it pains the parents, when a father, who has toiled much, delivers up his children to another home.

CLY. I am not so insensible — but think thou that I shall experience the same feelings, *(so that I should not chide thee,)* when I lead forth my girl with nuptial rejoicings, but custom wears away these thoughts in course of time. I know, however, the name of him to whom thou hast promised thy daughter, but I would fain know of what race, and whence [he is.]

AG. Ægina was the daughter of her father Asopus.

CLY. And who of mortals or of Gods wedded her?

AG. Jove, and she gave birth to Æacus, prince of Œnone.

CLY. But what son obtained the house of Æacus?

AG. Peleus, and Peleus obtained the daughter of Nereus.

CLY. By the gift of the God, or taking her in spite of the Gods?

AG. Jove acted as a sponsor, and bestowed her, having the power.

CLY. And where does he wed her? In the wave of the sea?

AG. Where Chiron dwells at the sacred foot of Pelion.

CLY. Where they say that the race of Centaurs dwells?

AG. Here the Gods celebrated the nuptial feast of Peleus.

CLY. But did Thetis, or his father, train up Achilles?

AG. Chiron, that he might not learn the manners of evil mortals.

CLY. Hah! wise was the instructor, and wiser he who intrusted him.

AG. Such a man will be the husband of thy child.

CLY. Not to be found fault with. But what city in Greece does he inhabit?

AG. Near the river Apidanus in the confines of Phthia.

CLY. Thither will he lead thy virgin [daughter] and mine.

AG. This shall be the care of him, her possessor.

CLY. And may the pair be happy; but on what day will he wed her?

AG. When the prospering orb of the moon comes round.

CLY. But hast thou already sacrificed the first offerings for thy daughter to the Goddess?

AG. I am about to do so. In this matter we are now engaged.

CLY. And wilt thou then celebrate a wedding-feast afterward?

AG. [Ay,] having sacrificed such offerings as it behooves me to sacrifice to the Gods.

CLY. But where shall we set out a banquet for the women?

AG. Here, by the fair-pooped ships of the Greeks.

CLY. Well, and poorly, forsooth! but may it nevertheless turn out well.

AG. Do then thou knowest what, O lady, and obey me.

CLY. In what? for I am accustomed to obey thee.

AG. We indeed in this place, where the bridegroom is —

CLY. Will do what without the mother, [of those things] which it behooves me to do?

AG. — will bestow your daughter among the Greeks.

CLY. But where must I be in the mean time?

AG. Go to Argos, and take care of your virgins.

CLY. Leaving my child? And who will bear the [nuptial] torch?

AG. I will furnish the light that becomes the nuptials.

CLY. The custom is not thus, but you think these matters trifles.

AG. It is not proper that thou shouldst mingle in the crowd of the army.

CLY. It is proper that I, the mother, should bestow at least my own daughter.

AG. And it [is proper] that the damsels at home should not be alone.

CLY. They are well guarded in their close chambers.

AG. Obey me.

CLY. [No,] by the Argive Goddess queen. But go you, and attend to matters abroad, but I [will mind] the affairs at home, as to the things which should be present to virgins at their wedding.

AG. Alas! In vain have I toiled, and have been frustrated in my hope, wishing to send my wife out of my sight. But I am using stratagems, and finding contrivances against those I best love, overcome at all points. But nevertheless with the prophet Calchas I will go and ask the pleasure of the Goddess, not fortunate for me, the trouble of Greece. But it behooves a wise man either to support a useful and good wife in his house or not to marry at all.

CHORUS. The assembly of the Grecian army will come to Simois, and to the silver eddies, both with ships and with arms, to Ilium, and to the Phœbeian plain of Troy, where I hear that Cassandra, adorned with a green-blossoming crown of laurel, lets loose her yellow locks, when the prophetic influence of the Gods breathes upon her. And the Trojans will stand upon the towers of Troy and around its walls, when brazen-shielded Mars, borne over the sea in fair-prowed ships, approaches the beds of Simois by rowing, seeking to bear away Helen, [the sister] of the twain sons of Jove in heaven, into the land of Greece, by the war-toiling shields and spears of the Greeks. But having surrounded Pergamus, the city of the Phrygians, around its towers of stone, with bloody Mars, having torn off the heads [of the citizens] cut from their necks, having completely ravaged the city of Troy, he will make the daughters and wife of Priam shed many tears. But Helen, the daughter of Jove, will sit† in sad lamentation, having left her husband. Never upon me or upon my children's children may this expectation come, such as the wealthy Lydian and Phrygian wives possess while at their spinning, conversing thus with each other. Who, dragging out my fair-haired tresses, will choose me as his spoil despite my tears, while my country is perishing? Through thee [forsooth,] the offspring of the long-necked swan, if indeed the report is true, that Leda † met with a winged bird, when the body of Jove was transformed, and then in the tablets of the muses fables spread these reports among men, inopportunely, and in vain.

[*Enter* ACHILLES.]

ACHILLES. Where about here is the general of the Greeks? Who of the servants will tell him that Achilles, the son of Peleus, is seeking him at the gates? For we do not remain by the Euripus in equal condition; for some of us being unyoked in nuptials, having left our solitary homes, sit here upon the shore, but others, having wives and children: so violent a passion for this expedition has fallen upon Greece, not without the will of the Gods. It is therefore right that I should speak of what concerns me, and whoever else wishes will himself speak for himself. For leaving the Pharsalian land, and Peleus, I am waiting for these light gales of Euripus, restraining the Myrmidons, who are continually pressing me, and saying, "Achilles, why tarry we? what manner of time must the armament against Troy yet measure out? At any rate act, if you are going to do any thing, or lead the army home, not abiding the delays of the Atrides."

CLY. O son of the Goddess, daughter of Nereus, hearing from within thy words, I have come out before the house.

ACH. O hallowed modesty, who can this woman be whom I behold here, possessing a fair-seeming form?

CLY. It is no wonder that you know me not, whom you have never seen before, but I commend you because you respect modesty.

ACH. But who art thou? And wherefore hast thou come to the assembly of the Greeks, a woman to men guarded with shields?

CLY. I am the daughter of Leda, and Clytæmnestra is my name, and my husband is king Agamemnon.

ACH. Well hast thou in few words spoken what is seasonable. But it is unbecoming for me to converse with women. *(Is going.)*

CLY. Remain, *(why dost thou fly?)* at least join thy right hand with mine, as a happy commencement of betrothal.

ACH. What sayest thou? I [give] thee my right hand? I should be ashamed of Agamemnon, if I touched what is not lawful for me.

CLY. It is particularly lawful, since you are going to wed my daughter, O son of the sea Goddess, daughter of Nereus.

ACH. What marriage dost thou say? Surprise possesses me, lady, unless, being beside yourself, you speak this new thing.

CLY. This is the nature of all people, to be ashamed when they behold new friends, and are put in mind of nuptials.

ACH. I never wooed thy daughter, lady, nor has any thing been said to me on the subject of marriage by the Atrides.

CLY. What can it be? Do you in turn marvel at my words, for thine are a marvel to me.

ACH. Conjecture; these matters are a common subject for conjecture, for both of us perhaps are deceived in our words.

CLY. But surely I have suffered terrible things! I am acting as match-maker in regard to a marriage that has no existence. I am ashamed of this.

ACH. Perhaps some one has trifled with both me and thee. But pay no attention to it, and bear it with indifference.

CLY. Farewell, for I can no longer behold thee with uplifted eyes, having appeared as a liar, and suffered unworthy things.

ACH. And this same [farewell] is thine from me. But I will go seek thy husband within this house.

[*The* OLD MAN *appears at the door of the house*.]

OLD M. O stranger, grandson of Æacus, remain. Ho! thee, I say, the son of the Goddess, and thee, the daughter of Leda.

ACM. Who is it that calls, partially opening the doors? With what terror he calls!

OLD M. A slave. I will not be nice about the title, for fortune allows it not.

ACH. Of whom? for thou art not mine. My property and Agamemnon's are different.

OLD M. Of this lady who is before the house, the gift of her father Tyndarus.

ACH. We are still. Say if thou wantest any thing, for which thou hast stopped me.

OLD M. Are ye sure that ye alone stand before these gates?

CLY. Ay, so that you may speak to us only. But come out from the royal dwelling.

OLD M. *(Coming forward)* O fortune, and foresight mine, preserve whom I wish.

ACH. These words will do for a future occasion, for they have some weight.

CLY. By thy right hand [I beseech thee,] delay not, if thou hast aught to say to me.

OLD M. Thou knowest then, being what manner of man, I have been by nature well disposed to thee and thy children.

CLY. I know thee as being a faithful servant to my house.

OLD M. And that king Agamemnon received me among thy dowry.

CLY. Thou camest into Argos with us, and thou wast always mine.

OLD M. So it is, and I am well disposed to thee, but less so to thy husband.

CLY. Unfold now at least to me what words you are saying.

OLD M. The father who begat her is about to slay thy daughter with his own hand.

CLY. How? I deprecate thy words, old man, for thou thinkest not well.

OLD M. Cutting the fair neck of the hapless girl with the sword.

CLY. O wretched me! Is my husband mad?

OLD M. He is in his right mind, save with respect to thee and thy daughter, but in this he is not wise.

CLY. Upon what grounds? What maddening fiend impels him?

OLD M. The oracles, as at least Calchas says, in order that the army may be able to proceed.

CLY. Whither? Wretched me, and wretched she whom her father is about to slay?

OLD M. To the house of Dardanus, that Menelaus may recover Helen.

CLY. To the destruction, then, of Iphigenia, was the return of Helen foredoomed?

OLD M. Thou hast the whole story. Her father is going to offer thy daughter to Diana.

CLY. What! what pretext had the marriage, that brought me from home?

OLD M. That thou rejoicing mightest bring thy child, as if about to wed her to Achilles.

CLY. O daughter, both thou and thy mother are come to meet with destruction.

OLD M. Ye twain are suffering sad things, and dreadful things hath Agamemnon dared.

CLY. I wretched am undone, and my eyes no longer restrain the tear.

OLD M. For bitter ’tis to mourn, deprived of one’s children.

CLY. But whence, old man, sayest thou that thou hast learned and knowest these things?

OLD M. I went to bear a letter to thee, in reference to what was before written.

CLY. Not allowing, or bidding me to bring my child, that she might die?

OLD M. [It was] that you should not bring her, for your husband then thought well.

CLY. And how was it then, that, bearing the letter, thou gavest it not to me?

OLD M. Menelaus, who is the cause of these evils, took it from me.

CLY. O child of Nereus’ daughter, O son of Peleus, dost hear these things?

ACH. I hear that thou art wretched, and I do not bear my part indifferently.

CLY. They will slay my child, having deceived her with thy nuptials.

ACH. I also blame thy husband, nor do I bear it lightly.

CLY. I will not be ashamed to fall down at thy knee, mortal, to one born of a Goddess. For wherefore should I make a show of pride? Or what should I study more than my children? But, O son of the Goddess, aid me in my unhappiness, and her who is called thy wife, vainly indeed, but nevertheless, having decked her out, I led her as if to be married, but now I lead her to sacrifice, and reproach will come upon thee, who gavest no aid. For though thou wast not yoked in nuptials, at least thou wast called the beloved husband of the hapless virgin. By thy beard, by thy right hand, by thy mother [I beseech] thee, for thy name hath undone me, to whom thou

shouldst needs give assistance. I have no other altar to fly to, but thy knee, nor is any friend near me, but thou hearest the cruel and all-daring conduct of Agamemnon. But I a woman, as thou seest, have come to a naval host, uncontrolled, and bold for mischief, but useful, when they are willing. But if thou wilt venture to stretch thine hand in my behalf, we are saved, but if not, we are not saved.

CHOR. A terrible thing it is to be a mother, and it bears a great endearment, and one common to all, so as to toil on behalf of their children.

ACH. My mind is high-lifted in its thoughts, and knows both how to grieve [moderately] in troubles, and to rejoice moderately in high prosperity. For the discreet among mortals are such as pass through life correctly with wisdom. Now there are certain cases where it is pleasant not to be too wise, and also where it is useful to possess wisdom. But I, being nurtured [in the dwelling] of a most pious man, Chiron, have learned to possess a candid disposition. And I will obey the Atrides, if indeed they order well, but when not well, I obey not. But here in Troy showing a free nature I will glorify Mars with the spear, as far as I can. But, O thou who hast suffered wretchedly at the hands of those dearest, in whatever can be done by a youth, I, showing so much pity, will set thee right, and thy daughter, having been called my bride, shall never be sacrificed by her father, for I will not furnish thy husband with my person to weave stratagems upon. For my name, even if he lift not up the sword, will slay thy daughter, but thy husband is the cause. But my body is no longer pure, if on my account, and because of my marriage, there perish a virgin who has gone through sad and unbearable troubles, and has been marvelously and undeservedly ill treated. I were the worst man among the Greeks, I were of naught *(but Menelaus would be among men)*, not as born from Peleus, but from some fiend, if my name acts the murderer for thy husband. By Nereus, nurtured in the damp waves, the father of Thetis, who begat me, king Agamemnon shall not lay hands on thy daughter, not so much as with a little finger, so as to touch her garments. I' faith, Sipylus, a fortress of barbarians, whence the [royal] generals trace their descent, shall be deemed a city, but the name of Phthia shall nowhere be named. And the seer Calchas will to his cost consecrate the sacrificial cakes and lustral waters. *(But what man is a prophet?)* who tells a few things true, *(but many falsely,)* when he has made a hit, but when

he fails, is undone. These words are not spoken for the sake of my wedding, *(ten thousand girls are hunting after alliance with me,)* but [because] king Agamemnon has been guilty of insult toward me. But it behooved him to ask [the use of] my name from me, as an enticement for his daughter, and Clytæmnestra would have been most readily persuaded to give her daughter to me as a husband. And I would have given her up to the Greeks, if on this account their passage to Troy had been impeded: I would not have refused to augment the common interest of those with whom I set out on the expedition. But now I am held as of no account by the generals, and it is a matter of indifference whether I benefit them or not. Soon shall my sword witness, which, before death came against the Phrygians, I stained with spots of blood, whether any one shall take thy daughter from me. But keep quiet, I have appeared to thee as a most mighty God, though not [a God,] but nevertheless I will be such.

CHOR. O son of Peleus, thou hast spoken both worthily of thyself, and of the marine deity, hallowed Goddess.

CLY. Alas! how can I praise thee neither too much in words, nor, being deficient in this respect, [not] lose thy favor? For in a certain wise the praised dislike their praisers, if they praise too much. But I am ashamed at alleging pitiable words, being troubled in myself, while thou art not diseased with my ills. But in fact the good man has some reason, even though he be unconnected with them, for assisting the unfortunate. But pity us, for we have suffered pitiably; I, who, in the first place, thinking to have thee for a kinsman, cherished a vain hope. — Moreover, my child, by dying, might perchance become an omen to thy future bridals, which thou must needs avoid. But well didst thou speak both first and last, for, if thou art willing, my child will be saved. Dost wish that she embrace thy knee as a suppliant? Such conduct is not virgin-like, but if thou wilt, she shall come, with her noble face suffused with modesty. Or shall I obtain these things from thee, without her presence?

ACH. Let her remain within doors, for with dignity she preserves her dignity.

CLY. Yet one must needs have modesty [only] as far as circumstances allow.

ACH. Do thou neither bring forth thy daughter into my sight, lady, not let us fall into reproach for inconsiderate conduct, for our assembled army, being idle from home occupations, loves evil and slanderous talk. But at all events you will accomplish the same, whether you come to me as a suppliant, or do not supplicate, for a mighty contest awaits me, to release you from these evils. Wherefore, having heard one thing, be persuaded that I will not speak falsely. But if I speak falsely, and vainly amuse you, may I perish; but may I not perish, if I preserve the virgin.

CLY. Mayest thou be blest, ever assisting the unhappy.

ACH. Hear me then, that the matter may be well.

CLY. What is this thou sayest? for one must listen to thee.

ACH. Let us again persuade her father to be wiser.

CLY. He is a coward, and fears the army too much.

ACH. But words can conquer words.

CLY. Chilly is the hope, but tell me what I must do.

ACH. Beseech him first not to slay his child, but if he oppose this, you must come to me. For if he will be persuaded what you wish, there is no occasion for my efforts, for this very [consent] contains her safety. And I also shall appear in a better light with my friend, and the army will not blame me, if I transact matters by discretion rather than force. And if this turn out well, these things, even without my help, may turn out satisfactorily to thy friends and thyself.

CLY. How wisely hast thou spoken! But what thou sayest must be done. But if I do not obtain what I seek, where shall I again see thee? Where must I wretched woman, coming, find thee an assistant in my troubles?

ACH. We guards will watch thee when there is occasion, lest any one behold thee going in agitation through the host of the Greeks. But do not

shame thy ancestral home, for Tyndarus is not worthy of an evil reputation, seeing he is great among the Greeks.

CLY. These things shall be. Command; it is meet that I obey thee. But if there are Gods, you, being a just man, will receive a good reward; but if not, why should one toil?

CHOR. What was that nuptial song that raised its strains on the Libyan reed, and with the dance-loving lyre, and the reedy syrinx, when o'er Pelion at the feast of the Gods the fair-haired muses, striking their feet with golden sandals against the ground, came to the wedding of Peleus, celebrating with melodious sounds Thetis, and the son of Æacus, on the mountains of the Centaurs, through the Palian wood.

But the Dardan, [Phrygian Ganymede,] dear delight of Jove's bed, poured out the nectar in the golden depths of the goblets, and along the white sands the fifty daughters of Nereus, entwining in circles, adorned the nuptials of Nereus with the dance. But with darts of fir, and crowns of grass, the horse-mounted troop of the Centaurs came to the banquet of the Gods and the cup of Bacchus. And the Thessalian girls shouted loud, "O daughter of Nereus," and the prophet Phœbus, and Chiron, skilled in letters, declared, "Thou shalt bring forth a mighty light, who shall come to the [Trojan] land with Myrmidons armed with spear and shield, to burn the renowned city of Priam, around his body armed with a covering of golden arms wrought by Vulcan, having them as a gift from his Goddess Thetis, who begat him blessed." Then the deities celebrated the nuptials of the noble daughter of Nereus first, and of Peleus. But thee, [O Iphigenia,] they will crown on the head with flowery garlands, like as a pure spotted heifer from a rocky cave, making bloody the mortal throat [of one] not trained up with the pipe, nor amidst the songs of herdsmen, but as a bride prepared by thy mother for some one of the Argives. Where has the face of shame, or virtue any power to prevail? Since impiety indeed has influence, but virtue is left behind and disregarded by mortals, and lawlessness governs law, and it is a common struggle for mortals, lest any envy of the Gods befall.

CLY. I have come out of the house to seek for my husband, who has been absent, and has quitted the house a long time. But my hapless daughter is in tears, casting forth many a change of complaint, having heard the death her

father devises for her. But I was mindful of Agamemnon who is now coming hither, who will quickly be detected doing evil deeds against his own children.

AG. Daughter of Leda, opportunely have I found you without the house, that I may tell thee, apart from the virgin, words which it is not meet for those to hear who are about to marry.

CLY. And what is it, on which your convenience lays hold?

AG. Send forth thy daughter from the house with her father, since the lustral waters are ready prepared, and the salt-cakes to scatter with the hands upon the purifying flame, and heifers, which needs must be slain in honor of the Goddess Diana before the marriage solemnities, a shedding of black gore.

CLY. In words, indeed, thou speakest well, but for thy deeds, I know not how I may say thou speakest well. But come without, O daughter, for thou knowest all that thy father meditates, and beneath thy robes bring the child Orestes, thy brother. See, she is here present to obey thee. But the rest I will speak on her behalf and mine.

AG. Child, why weepest thou, and no longer beholdest me cheerfully, but fixing thy face upon the ground, keepest thy vest before it?

CLY. Alas! What commencement of my sorrows shall I take? For I may use them all as first, [both last, and middle throughout.]

AG. But what is it? How all of you are come to one point with me, bearing disturbed and alarmed countenances.

CLY. Wilt thou answer candidly, husband, if I ask thee?

AG. There needs no admonition: I would fain be questioned.

CLY. Art thou going to slay thy child and mine?

AG. Ah! wretched things dost thou say, and thinkest what thou shouldst not.

CLY. Keep quiet, and first in turn answer me that.

AG. But if thou askest likely things, thou wilt hear likely.

CLY. I ask no other things, nor do thou answer me others.

AG. O revered destiny, and fate, and fortune mine!

CLY. Ay, and mine too, and this child's, one of three unfortunates!

AG. But in what art thou wronged?

CLY. Dost thou ask me this? This thy wit hath no wit.

AG. I am undone. My secret plans are betrayed.

CLY. I know and have learned all that you are about to do to me, and the very fact of thy silence, and of thy groaning much, is a proof that you confess it. Do not take the trouble to say any thing.

AG. Behold, I am silent: for what need is there that, falsely speaking, I add shamelessness to misfortune?

CLY. Listen, then, for I will unfold my story, and will no longer make use of riddles away from the purpose. In the first place, that I may first reproach thee with this — thou didst wed me unwilling, and obtain me by force, having slain Tantalus, my former husband, and having dashed my infant living to the ground, having torn him by force from my breast. And the twin sons of Jove, my brothers, glorying in their steeds, made war [against thee] but my old father Tyndarus saved you, when you had become a suppliant, and thou again didst possess me as a wife. When I, being reconciled to thee in respect to thy person and home, thou wilt bear witness how blameless a wife I was, both modest in respect to affection, and enriching thy house, so that thou both going within and without thy doors wast blessed. And 'tis a rare prize for a man to obtain such a wife, but there is no lack of getting a bad spouse. And I bear thee this son, besides three virgins, of one of whom thou art cruelly going to deprive me. And if any one ask thee on what account thou wilt slay her, say, what will you answer? or must I needs make

your plea, “that Menelaus may obtain Helen?” A pretty custom, forsooth, that children must pay the price of a bad woman. We gain the most hateful things at the hand of those dearest. Come, if thou wilt set out, leaving me at home, and then wilt be a long time absent, what sort of feelings dost think I shall experience, when I behold every seat empty of this child’s presence, and every virgin chamber empty, but myself sit in tears alone, ever mourning her [in such strains as these:] “My child, thy father, who begat thee, hath destroyed thee, himself, no other, the slayer, by no other hand, leaving such a reward for [my care of] the house.” Since there wants but a little reason for me and my remaining daughters to give thee such a reception as you deserve to receive. Do not, by the Gods, either compel me to act evilly toward thee, nor do thou thyself be so. Ah well! thou wilt sacrifice thy daughter — what prayers wilt thou then utter? What good thing wilt thou crave for thyself, slaying thy child? An evil return, seeing, forsooth, thou hast disgracefully set out from home. But is it right that I should pray for thee any good thing? Verily we must believe the Gods are senseless, if we feel well disposed to murderers. But wilt thou, returning to Argos, embrace thy children? But ’tis not lawful for thee. Will any of your children look upon you, if thou offerest one of them for slaughter? Thus far have I proceeded in my argument. What! does it only behoove thee to carry about thy sceptre and marshal the army? — whose duty it were to speak a just speech among the Greeks: “Do ye desire, O Greeks, to sail against the land of the Phrygians? Cast lots, whose daughter needs must die” — for this would be on equal terms, but not that you should give thy daughter to the Greeks as a chosen victim. Or Menelaus, whose affair it was, ought to slay Hermione for her mother’s sake. But now I, having cherished thy married life, shall be bereaved of my child, but she who has sinned, bearing her daughter under her care to Sparta, will be blest. As to these things, answer me if I say aught not rightly, but if I have spoken well, do not then slay thy child and mine, and thou wilt be wise.

CHOR. Be persuaded, Agamemnon, for ’tis right to join in saving one’s children. No one of mortals will gainsay this.

IPH. If, O father, I possessed the eloquence of Orpheus, that I might charm by persuasion, so that rocks should follow me, and that I might soften whom I would by my words, to this would I have resorted. But now I will

offer tears as all my skill, for these I can. And, as a suppliant bough, I press against thy knees my body, which this [my mother] bore thee, [beseeching] that thou slay me not before my time, for sweet it is to behold the light, nor do thou compel me to visit the places beneath the earth. And I first hailed thee sire, and thou [didst first call] me daughter, and first drawing nigh to thy knees, I gave and in turn received sweet tokens of affection. And such, were thy words: "My daughter, shall I some time behold thee prospering in a husband's home, living and flourishing worthily of me?" And mine in turn ran thus, as I hung about thy beard, which now with my hand I embrace: "But how shall I [treat] thee? Shall I receive thee when an old man, O father, with the hearty reception of my house, repaying thee the careful nurture of my youth?" Of such words have remembrance, but thou hast forgotten them, and fain wouldst slay me. Do not, [I beseech you] by Pelops and by thy father Atreus, and this my mother, who having before brought me forth with throes, now suffers this second throe. What have I to do with the marriage of Paris and Helen? Whence came he, father, for my destruction? Look upon me; give me one look, one kiss, that this memorial of thee at least I, dying, may possess, if thou wilt not be persuaded by my words. Brother, thou art but a little helpmate to those dear, yet weep with me, beseech thy sire that thy sister die not. Even in babes there is wont to be some sense of evil. Behold, O father, he silently implores thee. But respect my prayer, and have pity on my years. Yea, by thy beard we, two dear ones, implore thee; the one is yet a nursling, but the other grown up. In one brief saying I will overcome all arguments. This light of heaven is sweetest of things for men to behold, but that below is naught; and mad is he who seeks to die. To live dishonorably is better than to die gloriously.

CHOR. O wretched Helen, through thee and thy nuptials there is come a contest for the Atrides and their children.

AG. I can understand what merits pity, and what not; and I love my children, for [otherwise] I were mad. And dreadful 'tis for me to dare these things, O woman, and dreadful not to do so — for so I must needs act. Thou seest how great is this naval host, and how many are the chieftains of brazen arms among the Greeks, to whom there is not a power of arriving at the towers of Troy, unless I sacrifice you, as the seer Calchas says, nor can we take the renowned plain of Troy. But a certain passion has maddened the

army of the Greeks, to sail as quickly as possible upon the land of the barbarians, and to put a stop to the rapes of Grecian wives. And they will slay my daughters at Argos, and you, and me, if I break through the commands of the Goddess. It is not Menelaus who has enslaved me, O daughter, nor have I followed his device, but Greece, for whom I, will or nill, must needs offer thee. And I am inferior on this head. For it behooves her, [Helen,] as far as thou, O daughter, art concerned, to be free, nor for us, being Greeks, to be plundered perforce of our wives by barbarians.

CLY. O child! O ye stranger women! O wretched me for thy death! Thy father flees from thee, giving thee up to Hades.

IPH. Alas for me! mother, mother. The same song suits both of us on account of our fortunes, and no more to me is the light, nor this bright beam of the sun. Alas! alas! thou snow-smitten wood of Troy, and mountains of Ida, where once on a time Priam exposed a tender infant, having separated him from his mother, that he might meet with deadly fate, Paris, who was styled Idæan, Idæan [Paris] in the city of the Phrygians. Would that the herdsman Paris, who was nurtured in care of steers, had ne'er dwelt near the white stream, where are the fountains of the Nymphs, and the meadow flourishing with blooming flowers, and roseate flowers and hyacinths for Goddesses to cull. Where once on a time came Pallas, and artful Venus, and Juno, and Hermes, the messenger of Jove; Venus indeed, vaunting herself in charms, and Pallas in the spear, and Juno in the royal nuptials of king Jove, [these came] to a hateful judgment and strife concerning beauty; but my death, my death, O virgins, bearing glory indeed to the Greeks, Diana hath received as first-fruits [of the expedition] against Troy. But he that begot me wretched, O mother, O mother, has departed, leaving me deserted. O hapless me! having †beheld† bitter, bitter, ill-omened Helen, I am slain, I perish, by the impious slaughter of an impious sire. Would for me that Aulis had never received the poops of the brazen-beaked ships into these ports, the fleet destined for Troy, nor that Jove had breathed an adverse wind over Euripus, softening one breeze so that some mortals might rejoice in their [expanded] sails, but to others a pain, to others difficulty, to some to set sail, to others to furl their sails, but to others to tarry. In truth the race of mortals is full of troubles, is full of troubles, and it necessarily befalls men to find

some misfortune. Alas! alas! thou daughter of Tyndarus, who hast brought many sufferings, and many griefs upon the Greeks.

CHOR. I indeed pity you having met with an evil calamity, such as thou never shouldst have met with.

IPH. O mother, to whom I owe my birth, I behold a crowd of men near.

CLY. Ay, the son of the Goddess, my child, for whom thou camest hither.

IPH. Open the house, ye servants, that I may hide myself.

CLY. But why dost thou fly hence, my child?

IPH. I am ashamed to behold this Achilles.

CLY. On what account?

IPH. The unfortunate turn-out of my nuptials shames me.

CLY. Thou art not in a state to give way to delicacy in the present circumstances. But do thou remain, there is no use for punctilio, if we can [but save your life.]

ACH. O hapless lady, daughter of Leda.

CLY. Thou sayest not falsely.

ACH. Terrible things are cried out among the Greeks.

CLY. What cry? tell me.

ACH. Concerning thy child.

CLY. Thou speakest a word of ill omen.

ACH. That it is necessary to slay her.

CLY. Does no one speak the contrary to this?

ACH. Ay, I myself have got into trouble.

CLY. Into what [trouble,] O friend?

ACH. Of having my body stoned with stones.

CLY. What, in trying to save my daughter!

ACH. This very thing.

CLY. And who would have dared to touch thy person?

ACH. All the Greeks.

CLY. And was not the host of the Myrmidons at hand for thee?

ACH. That was the first that showed enmity.

CLY. Then are we utterly undone, my daughter.

ACH. For they railed at me as overcome by a betrothed —

CLY. And what didst thou reply?

ACH. That they should not slay my intended bride.

CLY. For so ’twas right.

ACH. [She] whom her father had promised me.

CLY. Ay, and had sent for from Argos.

ACH. But I was worsted by the outcry.

CLY. For the multitude is a terrible evil.

ACH. But nevertheless I will aid thee.

CLY. And wilt thou, being one, fight with many?

ACH. Dost see these men bearing [my] arms?

CLY. Mayest thou gain by thy good intentions.

ACH. But I will gain.

CLY. Then my child will not be slain?

ACH. Not, at least, with my consent.

CLY. And will any one come to lay hands on the girl?

ACH. Ay, a host of them, but Ulysses will conduct her.

CLY. Will it be the descendant of Sisyphus?

ACH. The very man.

CLY. Doing it of his own accord, or appointed by the army?

ACH. Chosen willingly.

CLY. A wicked choice forsooth, to commit slaughter!

ACH. But I will restrain him.

CLY. But will he lead her unwillingly, having seized her?

ACH. Ay, by her auburn locks.

CLY. But what must I then do?

ACH. Keep hold of your daughter.

CLY. As far as this goes she shall not be slain.

ACH. But it will come to this at all events.

IPH. Mother, do thou hear my words, for I perceive that thou art vainly wrathful with thy husband, but it is not easy for us to struggle with things

[almost] impossible. It is meet therefore to praise our friend for his willingness, but it behooves thee also to see that you be not an object of reproach to the army, and we profit nothing more, and he meet with calamity. But hear me, mother, thinking upon what has entered my mind. I have determined to die, and this I would fain do gloriously, I mean, by dismissing all ignoble thoughts. Come hither, mother, consider with me how well I speak. Greece, the greatest of cities, is now all looking upon me, and there rests in me both the passage of the ships and the destruction of Troy, and, for the women hereafter, if the barbarians do them aught of harm, to allow them no longer to carry them off from prosperous Greece, having avenged the destruction of Helen, whom Paris bore away. All these things I dying shall redeem, and my renown, for that I have freed Greece, will be blessed. Moreover, it is not right that I should be too fond of life; for thou hast brought me forth for the common good of Greece, not for thyself only. But shall ten thousand men armed with bucklers, and ten thousand, oars in hand, their country being injured, dare to do some deed against the foes, and perish on behalf of Greece, while my life, being but one, shall hinder all these things? What manner of justice is this? Have we a word to answer? And let me come to this point: it is not meet that this man should come to strife with all the Greeks for the sake of a woman, nor lose his life. And one man, forsooth, is better than ten thousand women, that he should behold the light. But if Diana hath wished to receive my body, shall I, being mortal, become an opponent to the Goddess! But it can not be. I give my body for Greece. Sacrifice it, and sack Troy. For this for a long time will be my memorial, and this my children, my wedding, and my glory. But it is meet that Greeks should rule over barbarians, O mother, but not barbarians over Greeks, for the one is slavish, but the others are free.

CHOR. Thy part, indeed, O virgin, is glorious; but the work of fortune and of the Gods sickens.

ACH. Daughter of Agamemnon, some one of the Gods destined me to happiness, if I obtained thee as a wife, and I envy Greece on thy account, and thee on account of Greece. For well hast thou spoken this, and worthily of the country, for, ceasing to strive with the deity, who is more powerful than thou art, thou hast considered what is good and useful. But still more does a desire of thy union enter my mind, when I look to thy nature, for

thou art noble. But consider, for I wish to benefit you, and to receive you to my home, and, Thetis be my witness, I am grieved if I shall not save you, coming to conflict with the Greeks. Consider: death is a terrible ill.

IPH. I speak these words, no others, with due foresight. Enough is the daughter of Tyndarus to have caused contests and slaughter of men through her person: but do not thou, O stranger, die in my behalf, nor slay any one. But let me preserve Greece, if I am able.

ACH. O best of spirits, I have naught further to answer thee, since it seems thus to thee, for thou hast noble thoughts; for wherefore should not one tell the truth? But nevertheless thou mayest perchance repent these things. In order, therefore, that thou mayest all that lies in my power, I will go and place these my arms near the altar, as I will not allow you to die, but hinder it. And thou too wilt perhaps be of my opinion, when thou seest the sword nigh to thy neck. I will not allow thee to die through thy wild determination, but going with these mine arms to the temple of the Goddess, I will await thy presence there.

IPH. Mother, why dost thou silently bedew thine eyes with tears?

CLY. I wretched have a reason, so as to be pained at heart.

IPH. Cease; do not daunt me, but obey me in this.

CLY. Speak, for thou shalt not be wronged at my hands, my child.

IPH. Neither then do thou cut off the locks of thine hair, [nor put on black garments around thy body.]

CLY. Wherefore sayest thou this, my child? Having lost thee —

IPH. Not you indeed — I am saved, and thou wilt be glorious as far as I am concerned.

CLY. How sayest thou? Must I not bemoan thy life?

IPH. Not in the least, since no tomb will be upraised for me.

CLY. Why, what then is death? Is not a tomb customary?

IPH. The altar of the Goddess, daughter of Jove, will be my memorial.

CLY. But, O child, I will obey thee, for thou speakest well.

IPH. Ay, as prospering like the benefactress of Greece.

CLY. What then shall I tell thy sisters?

IPH. Neither do thou clothe them in black garments.

CLY. But shall I speak any kind message from thee to the virgins?

IPH. Ay, [bid them] fare well, and do thou, for my sake, train up this [boy] Orestes to be a man.

CLY. Embrace him, beholding him for the last time.

IPH. O dearest one, thou hast assisted thy friends to the utmost in thy power.

CLY. Can I, by doing any thing in Argos, do thee a pleasure?

IPH. Hate not my father, yes, thy husband.

CLY. He needs shall go through terrible trials on thy account.

IPH. Unwillingly he hath undone me on behalf of the land of Greece.

CLY. But ungenerously, by craft, and not in a manner worthy of Atreus.

IPH. Who will come and lead me, before I am torn away by the hair?

CLY. I will go with thee.

IPH. Not you indeed, thou sayest not well.

CLY. Ay [but I will,] clinging to thy garments.

IPH. Be persuaded by me, mother. Remain, for this is more fitting both for me and thee. But let some one of these my father's followers conduct me to the meadow of Diana, where I may be sacrificed.

CLY. O child, thou art going.

IPH. Ay, and I shall ne'er return.

CLY. Leaving thy mother —

IPH. As thou seest, though, not worthily.

CLY. Hold! Do not leave me.

IPH. I do not suffer thee to shed tears. But, ye maidens, raise aloft the pæan for my sad hap, [celebrate] Diana, the daughter of Jove, and let the joyful strain go forth to the Greeks. And let some one make ready the baskets, and let flame burn with the purifying cakes, and let my father serve the altar with his right hand, seeing I am going to bestow upon the Greeks safety that produces victory.

Conduct me, the conqueror of the cities of Troy and of the Phrygians. Surround me with crowns, bring them hither. Here is my hair to crown. And [bear hither] the lustral fountains. Encircle [with dances] around the temple and the altar, Diana, queen Diana, the blessed, since by my blood and offering I will wash out her oracles, if it needs must be so. O revered, revered mother, thus † indeed † will we [now] afford thee our tears, for it is not fitting during the sacred rites. O damsels, join in singing Diana, who dwells opposite Chalcis, where the warlike ships have been eager [to set out,] being detained in the narrow harbors of Aulis here through my name. Alas! O my mother-land of Pelasgia, and my Mycenian handmaids.

CHOR. Dost thou call upon the city of Perseus, the work of the Cyclopean hands?

IPH. Thou hast nurtured me for a glory to Greece, and I will not refuse to die.

CHOR. For renown will not fail thee.

IPH. Alas! alas! lamp-bearing day, and thou too, beam of Jove, another, another life and state shall we dwell in. Farewell for me, beloved light!

CHOR. Alas! alas! Behold the destroyer of the cities of Troy and of the Phrygians, wending her way, decked as to her head with garlands and with lustral streams, to the altar of the sanguinary Goddess, about to stream with drops of gore, being stricken on her fair neck. Fair dewy streams, and lustral waters from ancestral sources await thee, and the host of the Greeks eager to reach Troy. But let us celebrate Diana, the daughter of Jove, queen of the Gods, as upon a prosperous occasion. O hallowed one, that rejoicest in human sacrifices, send the army of the Greeks into the land of the Phrygians, and the territory of deceitful Troy, and grant that by Grecian spears Agamemnon may place a most glorious crown upon his head, a glory ever to be remembered.

[*Enter a* MESSENGER.]

MESS. O daughter of Tyndarus, Clytæmnestra, come without the house, that thou mayest hear my words.

CLY. Hearing thy voice, I wretched came hither, terrified and astounded with fear, lest thou shouldst be come, bearing some new calamity to me in addition to the present one.

MESS. Concerning thy daughter, then, I wish to tell thee marvelous and fearful things.

CLY. Then delay not, but speak as quickly as possible.

MESS. But, my dear mistress, thou shalt learn every thing clearly, and I will speak from the very commencement, unless my memory, in something failing, deceive my tongue. For when we came to the inclosure and flowery meads of Diana, the daughter of Jove, where there was an assembly of the army of the Greeks, leading thy daughter, the host of the Greeks was straightway convened. But when king Agamemnon beheld the girl wending her way to the grove for slaughter, he groaned aloud, and turning back his

head, he shed tears, placing his garments before his eyes. But she, standing near him that begot her, spake thus: “O father, I am here for thee, and I willing give my body on behalf of my country, and of the whole land of Greece, that, leading it to the altar of the Goddess, they may sacrifice it, since this is ordained. And, as far as I am concerned, may ye be fortunate, and obtain the gift of victory, and reach your native land. Furthermore, let no one of the Greeks lay hands on me, for with a stout heart I will present my neck in silence.” Thus much she spoke, and every one marveled on hearing the courage and valor of the virgin. But Talthybius, whose office this was, standing in the midst, proclaimed good-omened silence to the people. And the seer Calchas placed in a golden canister a sharp knife, which he had drawn out,† within its case,† and crowned the head of the girl. But the son of Peleus ran around the altar of the Goddess, taking the canister and lustral waters at the same time. And he said: “O Diana, beast-slaying daughter of Jove, that revolvest thy brilliant light by night, receive this offering which we bestow on thee, [we] the army of the Greeks, and king Agamemnon, the pure blood from a fair virgin’s neck; and grant that the sail may be without injury to our ships, and that we may take the towers of Troy by the spear.” But the Atrides and all the army stood looking on the ground, and the priest, taking the knife, prayed, and viewed her neck, that he might find a place to strike. And no little pity entered my mind, and I stood with eyes cast down, but suddenly there was a marvel to behold. For every one could clearly perceive the sound of the blow, but beheld not the virgin, where on earth she had vanished. But the priest exclaimed, and the whole army shouted, beholding an unexpected prodigy from some one of the Gods, of which, though seen, they had scarcely belief. For a stag lay panting on the ground, of mighty size to see and beautiful in appearance, with whose blood the altar of the Goddess was abundantly wetted. And upon this Calchas *(think with what joy!)* thus spake: “O leaders of this common host of the Greeks, behold this victim which the Goddess hath brought to her altar, a mountain-roaming stag. This she prefers greatly to the virgin, lest her altar should be denied with generous blood. And she hath willingly received this, and grants us a prosperous sail, and attack upon Troy. Upon this do every sailor take good courage, and go to his ships, since on this day it behooves us, quitting the hollow recesses of Aulis, to pass over the Ægean wave.” But when the whole victim was reduced to ashes, he prayed what was meet, that the army might obtain a passage. And

Agamemnon sends me to tell thee this, and to say what a fortune he hath met with from the Gods, and hath obtained unwaning glory through Greece. But I speak, having been present, and witnessing the matter. Thy child has evidently flown to the Gods; away then with grief, and cease wrath against your husband. But the will of the Gods is unforeseen by mortals, and them they love, they save. For this day hath beheld thy daughter dying and living [in turn.]

CHOR. How delighted am I at hearing this from the messenger; but he says that thy daughter living abides among the Gods.

CLY. O daughter, of whom of the Gods art thou the theft? How shall I address thee? What shall I say that these words do not offer me a vain comfort, that I may cease from my mournful grief on thy account?

CHOR. And truly king Agamemnon draws hither, having this same story to tell thee.

[*Enter* AGAMEMNON.]

AG. Lady, as far as thy daughter is concerned, we may be happy, for she really possesses a companionship with the Gods. But it behooves thee, taking this young child [Orestes,] to go home, for the army is looking toward setting sail. And fare thee well, long hence will be my addresses to thee from Troy, and may it be well with thee.

CHOR. Atrides, rejoicing go thou to the land of the Phrygians, and rejoicing return, having obtained for me most glorious spoils from Troy.

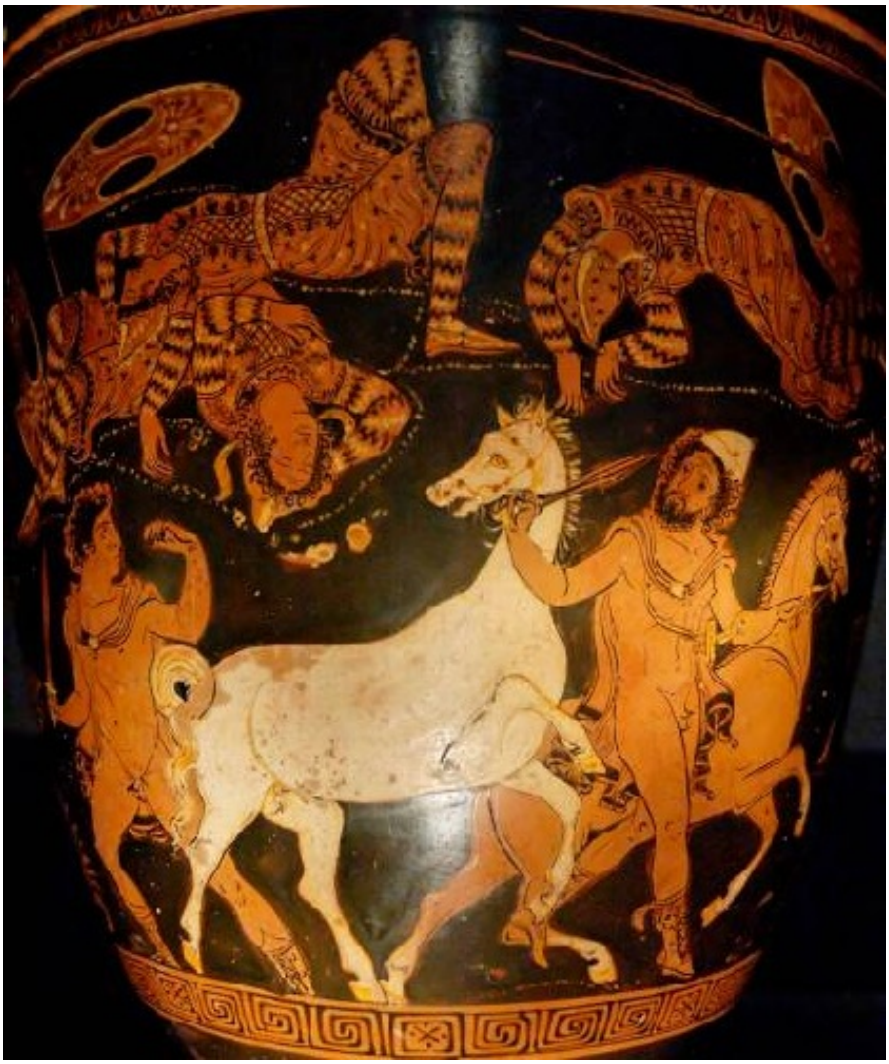
RHESUS

Translated by Gilbert Murray

Of unknown date, the play *Rhesus* takes place during the Trojan War, on the night when Odysseus and Diomedes steal into the Trojan camp, as previously recounted in Book 10 of Homer's *Iliad*. There has been much debate about the genuine authorship of this tragedy, which was originally understood to be by Euripides in the Hellenistic, Imperial and Byzantine periods, but by the seventeenth century the play's authenticity was challenged largely on stylistic grounds. However, modern scholars now agree with the classical authorities, ascribing the play to Euripides.

The play opens in the middle of the night, as Trojan guards discern suspicious activity from the Greek camp. They promptly inform Hector, who almost issues a general call to arms before Aeneas makes him see how ill-advised this would be. Aeneas argues that they should send someone to spy on the Greek camp and see what the enemy is doing. Dolon volunteers to spy on the Greeks in exchange for Achilles' horses when the war is won. Hector accepts the arrangement and sends him out. Dolon leaves wearing the skin of a wolf, and plans to deceive the Greeks by walking on all fours.

At this point Rhesus, the neighbouring king of Thrace, arrives to assist the Trojans. Hector berates him for coming so many years late, though he ultimately accepts the new ally. Rhesus says he intended on coming in the beginning, but was preoccupied defending his own land from an attack by the Scythians. However, Rhesus' involvement in the war turns out to be much shorter than he had expected, following a surprise night attack.



Odysseus and Diomedes stealing Rhesus' horses, red-figure situla by the Lycurgus Painter, c. 360 BC.

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Odysseus and Diomedes stealing the horses of Rhesus, as depicted on an Apulian red-figure krater, c. 340 BC

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

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Dolon, *a Trojan*.
Paris, *also called* Alexander, *brother of Hector*.
Rhêsus, *King of Thrace, son of the River Strŷmon and the Muse of the Mountains*.
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Diomêdês, *a Greek chieftain, famous for valour*.
A Shepherd.
The Goddess Athêna.
The Muse of the Mountains.
Chorus *of Trojan Guards with their* Leader.
Some Thracians *with their* Captain, *Attendants, &c.*

The date and authorship of the play are unknown; it probably belongs to the Fifth Century B.C., and is attributed to Euripides.

RHESUS

It is a cloudy but moonlight night on the plain before Troy. The Trojans and their allies have won a decisive victory and are camping on the open field close to the Greek outposts. The scene is in front of a rude tent or hut that has been set up for Hector, *the Trojan leader. A watch-fire burns low in front. Far off at the back can be seen rows of watch-fires in the Greek camp. The road to Troy is in front to the left; the road to Mount Ida leads far away to the right.*
All is silence; then a noise outside. Enter tumultuously a band of Trojan Pickets.

Various Voices.
(The dash — in these passages indicates a new speaker.)
On to the Prince's quarters! — Ho!
Who is awake? What man-at-arms,
Or squire or groom? — Let Hector know
New rumour of alarms
From sentinels who stand at mark
The four long watches of the dark,
While others sleep. — Uplift thine head,
O Hector! On thine elbow rise,
Unhood the eagle of thine eyes,
Up from thy leaf-strewn bed! —
Lord Hector!

Hector (coming out from the tent).
Who goes there? Who cries?
A friend? The watchword! . . . By what right
Do men come prowling in the night
Across my quarters? Come! Speak out.

Leader.
A picket, Lord.

Hector.
In such a rout?

Leader.
Be not afraid, Lord.

Hector.
I am not.
Is there an ambush? No? Then what,
In God's name, brings you from your post
With no clear tale to speak,
To spread this turmoil through a host
That lies in harness — do ye all
Know nothing? — out against the wall
And gateways of the Greek?
Chorus *(various voices confusedly)*. [*Strophe.*
To arms! To arms, Lord Hector! — Send
First where the allied armies lie,
Bid them draw sword and make an end
Of sleep. — Let someone fly
And get the horses' armour on! —
Who goes with me to Panthoös' son? —
Who's for Sarpêdon and the Lycians? — None
Hath seen the priest go by? —
Ho, Captain of the Runners, ho! —
Ho, Trojans of the hornèd bow!
String, string! For need is nigh.

Hector.
Ha, silence there! . . .
First words of fear,
Then comfort. All an empty swell!
It seems the lash of trembling Pan
Hath caught you. Speak, if speak ye can.
What tidings? Not a word is clear
Of the whole tale ye tell.
[*The turmoil subsides, the* Leader *comes forward*.

Leader. [*Antistr.*
Great beacons in the Argive line
Have burned, my chief, through half the night.
The shipyard timbers seemed to shine.
Then, clear against the light,
Toward Agamemnon's tent the whole
Army in tumult seemed to roll,
As stirred by some strange voice, shoal after shoal.
A night of such discord
Was never seen. And we, in dread
What such things boded, turned and sped
Hither; dost blame us, Lord?

Hector (after a moment of thought).
No! Welcome, friend, with all thy tale of fear!
It shows they mean to fly: they mean to clear
Decks in the dark and so delude my sight . . .
I like that beacon-burning in the night.
O Zeus above, who checked my conquering way,
Who baulked the hungry lion of his prey
Or ever I could sweep my country clear
Of these despoilers, dost thou hate my spear?
Had but the sun's bright arrows failed me not,
I ne'er had rested till the ships were hot
With fire, and through the tents upon the plain
This bloody hand had passed and passed again!
Myself, I longed to try the battle-cast
By night, and use God's vantage to the last,
But sage and prophet, learned in the way
Of seercraft, bade me wait for dawn of day,
And then — leave no Greek living in the land.
They wait not, they, for what my prophets planned
So sagely. In the dark a runaway
Beats a pursuer.
Through our whole array
Send runners! Bid them shake off sleep and wait
Ready with shield and spear. 'Tis not too late

To catch them as they climb on board, and slash
Their crouching shoulders till the gangways splash
With blood, or teach them, fettered leg and arm,
To dig the stiff clods of some Trojan farm.

Leader.
My Prince, thy words run fast. Nor thou nor I
Have knowledge yet that the Greeks mean to fly.

Hector.
What makes them light their beacons? Tell me, what?

Leader.
God knows! And, for my part, I like it not.

Hector.
God knows! And, for my part, I like it not.

Leader.
God knows! And, for my part, I like it not.

Hector.
They never fled, man, in such wild dismay.

Leader (yielding).
'Twas all thy work. — Judge thou, and we obey.

Hector.
My word is simple. Arm and face the foe.
[*A sound of marching without.*

Leader.
Who comes? Aeneas, and in haste, as though
Fraught with some sudden tiding of the night.
Enter Aeneas.

Aeneas.
Hector, what means it? Watchers in affright

Who gather shouting at thy doors, and then
Hold midnight council, shaking all our men?

Hector.
To arms, Aeneas! Arm from head to heel!

Aeneas.
What is it? Tidings? Doth the Argive steal
Some march, some ambush in the day's eclipse?

Hector.
'Tis flight, man! They are marching to the ships.

Aeneas.
How know'st thou? — Have we proof that it is flight?

Hector.
They are burning beacon-fires the livelong night.
They never mean to wait till dawn. Behind
That screen of light they are climbing in the blind
Dark to their ships — unmooring from our coast.

Aeneas (looking toward the distant fires: after a pause).
God guide them! — Why then do you arm the host?

Hector.
I mean to lame them in their climbing, I
And my good spear, and break them as they fly.
Black shame it were, and folly worse than shame,
To let these spoilers go the road they came
Unpunished, when God gives them to us here.

Aeneas.
Brother, I would thy wit were like thy spear!
But Nature wills not one man should be wise
In all things; each must seek his separate prize.
And thine is battle pure. There comes this word
Of beacons, on the touch thy soul is stirred:

“They fly! Out horse and chariots!” — Out withal
Past stake and trench, while night hangs like a pall!
Say, when we cross that coiling depth of dyke,
We find the foe not fled, but turned to strike;
One check there, and all hope of good return
Is gone. How can our men, returning, learn
The tricks of the palisade? The chariots how
Keep to the bridges on the trenches’ brow,
Save with jammed wheels and broken axles? Aye,
And say thou conquer: other wars yet lie
Before thee. Peleus’ son, for all his ire,
Will never let thee touch the ships with fire
Or pounce on his Greek lambs. The man will bide
No wrong and standeth on a tower of pride.
Nay, brother, let the army, head on shield,
Sleep off its long day’s labour in the field:
Then, send a spy; find someone who will dare
Creep to yon Argive camp. Then, if ’tis clear
They mean flight, on and smite them as they fly.
Else, if the beacons hide some strategy,
The spy will read it out, and we can call
A council. — Thus speak I, my general.

Chorus. [*Strophe.*

’Tis good! ’Tis wisdom! Prince, give heed
And change the word thy passion gave.
No soldier loveth, in his need,
The glory of a chief too brave.
A spy is best: a spy, to learn
For what strange work those beacons burn
All night beside the guarded wave.

Hector.

Ye all so wish it? — Well, ye conquer me.
(To Aeneas) Go thou and calm the allies. There will be
Some stir among them, hearing of these high
And midnight councils. — I will seek the spy
To send to the Greek camp. If there we learn

Of some plot hatching, on the man's return
I straight will call thee and share counsels. So.
But wait attentive. If he says they go
Shipward and plan to escape, one trumpet call
Shall warn thee, and I wait no more, but fall
On camp and hulls, or ever dawn can rise.

Aeneas.
Aye, haste and send him. Now thy plans are wise,
And when need comes I am with thee, sword by sword.
[*Exit* Aeneas.

Hector (turning to the Guards and other soldiers).
Ye gathered Trojans, sharers of my word,
Who dares to creep through the Greek lines alone?
Who will so help his fatherland?
Doth none
Offer? Must I do everything, one hand
Alone, to save our allies and our land?
[*A lean dark man pushes forward from the back.*

Dolon.
I, Prince! — I offer for our City's sake
To go disguised to the Greek ships, to make
Their counsels mine, and here bring word to thee.
If that be thy full service, I agree.

Hector.
Dolon the Wolf! A wise wolf and a true!
Thy father's house was praised when first I knew
Troy: this shall raise it twofold in our eyes.

Dolon.
'Tis wise to do good work, but also wise
To pay the worker. Aye, and fair reward
Makes twofold pleasure, though the work be hard.

Hector.
So be it: an honest rule. Do thou lay down
What guerdon likes thee best — short of my crown.

Dolon.
I care not for thy crowned and care-fraught life.

Hector.
Wouldst have a daughter of the King to wife?

Dolon.
I seek no mate that might look down on me.

Hector.
Good gold is ready, if that tempteth thee.

Dolon.
We live at ease and have no care for gold.

Hector.
Well, Troy hath other treasures manifold.

Dolon.
Pay me not now, but when the Greeks are ta'en.

Hector.
The Greeks! . . . Choose any save the Atridae twain.

Dolon.
Kill both, an it please thee. I make prayer for none.

Hector.
Thou wilt not ask for Ajax, Îleus' son?

Dolon.
A princely hand is skilless at the plough.

Hector.
'Tis ransom, then? . . . What prisoner cravest thou?

Dolon.
I said before, of gold we have our fill.

Hector.
For spoils and armour . . . thou shalt choose at will.

Dolon.
Nail them for trophies on some temple wall.

Hector.
What seeks the man? What prize more rich than all?

Dolon.
Achilles' horses! [*Murmurs of surprise.*
Yes, I need a great

Prize. I am dicing for my life with Fate.

Hector.
'Fore God, I am thy rival, if thy love
Lies there. Undying was the breed thereof,
And these shall never die, who bear to war
Great Peleus' son, swift gleaming like a star.
Poseidon, rider of the wild sea-drift,
Tamed them, men say, and gave them for his gift
To Peleus. — None the less, since I have stirred
Hopes, I will baulk them not. I pledge my word,
Achilles' steeds, a rare prize, shall be thine.

Dolon.
I thank thee.— 'Tis indeed a prize more fine
Than all in Troy. — Grudge me not that; there be
Guerdons abundant for a Prince like thee.
[*Exit* Hector.
Chorus. [*Antistr.*
O peril strange, O fearful prize!
Yet win it and thy life hath wings:
A deed of glory in men's eyes,

And greatness, to be wooed of kings.
If God but hearken to the right,
Thou drinkest to the full this night
The cup of man's imaginings.

Dolon.
[*He stands waiting a moment looking out into the dark.*
There lies the way. — But first I must go find
At home some body-shelter to my mind;
Then, forward to the ships of Argolis!

Leader.
What other raiment wilt thou need than this?

Dolon.
A garb for work, for night; a thieving guise.

Leader.
'Tis good to learn the wisdoms of the wise.
What will thy wrapping be?

Dolon.
A grey wolf's hide
Shall wrap my body close on either side;
My head shall be the mask of gleaming teeth,
My arms fit in the forepaws, like a sheath,
My thighs in the hinder parts. No Greek shall tell
'Tis not a wolf that walks, half visible,
On four feet by the trenches and around
The ship-screen. When it comes to empty ground
It stands on two. — That is the plan, my friend!

Leader.
Now Maian Hermes guide thee to thy end
And home safe! Well he loves all counterfeit . . .
Good work is there; may good luck go with it!

Dolon (to himself gazing out toward the Greek camp).
There, and then back! . . . And on this belt shall bleed
Odysseus' head — or why not Diomede? —
To prove my truth. Ere dawn can touch the land
I shall be here, and blood upon my hand.
[*Exit* Dolon.

Chorus.
Thymbraean, Delian, Birth divine,
That walkest Lycia's inmost shrine,
Come, strong to guard, to guide, to follow,
Come, bow in hand and girt with night,
To help thy Dardans as of old,
When stone by stone thy music rolled —
O conquering Strength, O Sire Apollo! —
Young Ilion into towers of light.
Grant that he reach the shipyard, creep
Keen-eyed through all that host asleep,
Then back to home and hearth, yet living,
Where now his father prays alone:
Yea, grant that, when the Greeks are slain,
Our wolf shall mount with scourge and rein
Those coursers of the sea-god's giving,
Whom Peleus drove in days foregone.

Alone in those Greek ships to stake
His life, for home and country's sake:
'Tis wondrous! Few be hearts so true
When seas across the bulwark break,
And sunlight sickens o'er the crew.
Ah, Phrygia still hath hearts of rock!
The Phrygian spear flies fast and far!
Where shall ye find the fool to mock
Our works in war?

Whom will he stab a-sleeping, whom,
The quick grey wolf, the crawling doom?
Grant that he slay the Spartan! Nay,
Or Agamemnon's head and plume
To Helen bear at dawn of day!
A lightsome dawn to hear her wail
Her brother sworn, her King who came
To Ilion with his thousand sail,
And swords, and flame!

[*As the song ends* Dolon *reappears, in the disguise of a wolf. The Guards gather round him, bidding him godspeed as he crawls off in the dark towards the Greek camp. Meantime from the direction of Mount Ida has entered a* Shepherd *who goes to* Hector's *door and calls. The Guards seeing him return to their places.*

Shepherd.
Ho, Master!
[*Enter* Hector *from tent*.
I would it ofttimes were my luck to share
As goodly news with thee as now I bear.

Hector.
What dulness hangs about these shepherds! Block,
Com'st thou to us with tidings of thy flock
Here in the field in arms? Who wants thee here?
Thou know'st my house; thou know'st my father's.
There
Tell all about thy lucky lambs. — Now go.

Shepherd.
Dull wits, we shepherds! Aye, 'twas alway so.
Yet still, there is some good news to be told.

Hector.
A truce there to thy gossip of the fold!
Our dealings are of war, of sword and spear.
[*He turns to go.*

Shepherd.
Aye; so were mine. That is what brought me here.
[Hector's *manner changes*.
A chief comes yonder, leading a great band
Of spears, with help to thee and all the land.

Hector.
From whence? How do his name and lineage run?

Shepherd.
He comes from Thrace, the River Strymon's son.

Hector.
Rhesus! Not Rhesus, here on Trojan soil?

Shepherd.
Thou hast guessed. That eases me of half my toil.

Hector.
What makes he there towards Ida? All astray
Thus from the plain and the broad waggon-way!

Shepherd.
I know not rightly, though one well may guess.
'Tis hard to land at night, with such a press
Of spears, on a strange coast, where rumours tell
Of foes through all the plain-land. We that dwell
On Ida, in the rock, Troy's ancient root
And hearth-stone, were well frighted, through the mute
And wolfish thickets thus to hear him break.
A great and rushing noise those Thracians make,

Marching. We, all astonied, ran to drive
Our sheep to the upmost heights. 'Twas some Argive,
We thought, who came to sweep the mountain clear
And waste thy folds; till suddenly our ear
Caught at their speech, and knew 'twas nothing Greek.
Then all our terror fled. I ran to seek

Some scout or pioneer who led the van
And called in Thracian: “Ho, what child of man
Doth lead you? From what nation do ye bring
This host with aid to Ilion and her king?”
  He told me what I sought, and there I stood
Watching; and saw one gleaming like a God,
Tall in the darkness on a Thracian car.
A plate of red gold mated, like a bar,
His coursers’ necks, white, white as fallen snow.
A carven targe, with golden shapes aglow,
Hung o’er his back. Before each courser’s head
A Gorgon, to the frontlet riveted,
With bells set round — like stories that they tell
Of Pallas’ shield — made music terrible.
The numbers of that host no pen could write
Nor reckon; ’tis a multitudinous sight,
Long lines of horsemen, lines of targeteers,
Archers abundant; and behind them veers
A wavering horde, light-armed, in Thracian weed.
  A friend is come to Ilion in her need
‘Gainst whom no Argive, let him fly or stand,
Shall aught avail nor ‘scape his conquering hand.

Leader.
Lo, when the Gods breathe gently o’er a town,
All runs to good, as water-streams run down.

Hector (bitterly).
Aye, when my spear hath fortune, when God sends
His favour, I shall find abundant friends.
I need them not; who never came of yore
To help us, when we rolled to death before
The war-swell, and the wind had ripped our sail.
Then Rhesus taught us Trojans what avail
His words are. — He comes early to the feast;
Where was he when the hunters met the beast?
Where, when we sank beneath the Argive spear?

Leader.
Well may'st thou mock and blame thy friend. Yet here
He comes with help for Troy. Accept him thou.

Hector.
We are enough, who have held the wall till now.

Leader.
Master, dost think already that our foe
Is ta'en?

Hector.
I do. To-morrow's light will show.

Leader.
Have care. Fate often flings a backward cast.

Hector.
I hate the help that comes when need is past . . .
Howbeit, once come, I bid him welcome here
As guest — not war-friend; guest to share our cheer.
The thanks are lost, he might have won from us.

Leader.
My general, to reject an ally thus
Must needs make hatred.

Shepherd.
The mere sight of those
I saw would sure cast fear upon our foes.

Hector (yielding reluctantly, with a laugh).
Ah, well; thy words are prudent; and *(To Shepherd)* thine eyes
See glorious things. With all these panoplies
Of gold that filled our Shepherd's heart with joy,
Bid Rhesus welcome, as war-friend to Troy.
[*Exit* Shepherd; Hector *returns to his tent, amid the joy of the soldiers*.

Chorus.

Now Adrasteia be near and guard
Our lips from sin, lest the end be hard!
But he cometh, he cometh, the Child of the River!
The pride of my heart it shall roll unbarred.
We craved thy coming; yea, need was strong
In the Hall of thy lovers, O child of Song;
Thy mother the Muse and her fair-bridged River
They held thee from us so long, so long!
By Strymon's torrent alone she sang,
And Strymon shivered and coiled and sprang;
And her arms went wide to the wild sweet water,
And the love of the River around her rang.
We hail thee, Fruit of the River's seed,
Young Zeus of the Dawn, on thy starry steed!
O ancient City, O Ida's daughter,
Is God the Deliverer found indeed?
And men shall tell of thee, Ilion mine,
Once more a-harping at day's decline,
'Mid laughing of lovers and lays and dances
And challenge on challenge of circling wine?
When the Greek is smitten that day shall be,
And fled to Argolis over the sea:
O mighty of hand, O leader of lances,
Smite him, and heaven be good to thee!
Thou Rider golden and swift and sheer,
Achilles falters: appear! appear!
The car like flame where the red shield leapeth,
The fell white steeds and the burning spear!
No Greek shall boast he hath seen thy face
And danced again in the dancing place;
And the land shall laugh for the sheaves she reapeth,
Of spoilers dead by a sword from Thrace.

Enter Rhesus *in dazzling white armour, followed by his* Charioteer *and Attendants. The* Charioteer *carries his golden shield. The* Chorus *break into a shout of "All Hail!"*

Leader.
All hail, great King! A whelp indeed
Is born in Thracia's lion fold,
Whose leap shall make strong cities bleed.
Behold his body girt with gold,
And hark the pride of bells along
The frontlet of that targe's hold.

Chorus.
A God, O Troy, a God and more!
'Tis Ares' self, this issue strong
Of Strymon and the Muse of song,
Whose breath is fragrant on thy shore!
Re-enter Hector.

Rhesus.
Lord Hector, Prince of Ilion, noble son
Of noble sires, all hail! Long years have run
Since last we greeted, and 'tis joy this day
To see thy fortunes firm and thine array
Camped at the foe's gate. Here am I to tame
That foe for thee, and wrap his ships in flame.

Hector.
Thou child of Music and the Thracian flood,
Strymonian Rhesus, truth is alway good
In Hector's eyes. I wear no double heart.
Long, long ago thou shouldst have borne thy part
In Ilion's labours, not have left us here,
For all thy help, to sink beneath the spear.
Why didst thou — not for lack of need made plain! —
Not come, not send, not think of us again?
What grave ambassadors prayed not before
Thy throne, what herald knelt not at thy door?
What pride of gifts did Troy not send to thee?
And thou, a lord of Barbary even as we,
Thou, brother of our blood, like one at sup

Who quaffs his fill and flings away the cup,
Hast flung to the Greeks my city! Yet, long since,
’Twas I that found thee but a little prince
And made thee mighty, I and this right hand;
When round Pangaion and the Paiôn’s land,
Front against front, I burst upon the brood
Of Thrace and broke their targes, and subdued
Their power to thine. The grace whereof, not small,
Thou hast spurned, and when thy kinsmen, drowning, call,
Comest too late. Thou! Others there have been
These long years, not by nature of our kin . . .
Some under yon rough barrows thou canst see
Lie buried; they were true to Troy and me;
And others, yet here in the shielded line
Or mid the chariots, parching in the shine
Of noonday, starving in the winds that bite
Through Ilion’s winter, still endure and fight
On at my side. ’Twas not their way, to lie
On a soft couch and, while the cups go by,
Pledge my good health, like thee, in Thracian wine.
  I speak as a free man. With thee and thine
Hector is wroth, and tells thee to thy face.

Rhesus.
Thy way is mine, friend. Straight I run my race
In word and deed, and bear no double tongue.
  I tell thee, more than thine my heart was wrung,
Yea, angered past all durance, thus to stay
Back from thy battles. ’Twas a folk that lay
Hard on my borders, Scythians of the north;
Just when my host for Troy had started forth,
They fell upon our homes. I had reached the coast
Of the Friendless Sea and purposed to have crossed
My Thracians there. We turned; and all that plain
Is trampled in a mire of Scythian slain
Ploughed by our spears, and blood of Thrace withal
Not stinted. This it was that drowned thy call

For help and held me back from Ilion's need.
I broke their power; the princes of their breed
I took to hostage, made their elders swear
To bring my house due tribute, year by year,
Then, never lagging, crossed the Pontus mouth,
Marched by long stages through Bithynia south
And here am come . . . not drunken with the feast,
As thou wouldst have me be, not lulled to rest
In golden chambers. In this harness hard
I have borne my nights of winter storm that starred
The Euxine into ice and scared the strong

Paionians.

Long I have been, but not too long
To save thee yet. Friend, this is the tenth year
Thou labourest on unceasing, with no clear
Vantage; day creeps by day, and Ares throws
The same red dice for thee and for thy foes.
Now, hear my vow. Before one day's eclipse
I swear to break their wall, to burn their ships
And slay their princes. On the second day
I leave this soil and take my homeward way,
Thy pains relieved. No Trojan of the land
Need move, nor turn the buckler in his hand.
Alone my late-comers will turn the tide
And smite your Greeks, for all their bitter pride.

Chorus.

[*The Trojan soldiers, who have been listening with delight, here break out in irrepressible applause.*

All hail!
Sweet words and faithful heart!
Only may Zeus avert
From those proud lips the Wrath that none may bear!
Never a galleon bore,
Now, nor in days of yore,
Prince like to thee, so valiant and so fair.

How shall Achilles, how
Shall Ajax bear him now,
Or face thy lance? May I but stand that day
Watching to see him reel
Broken beneath thy steel,
And once in blood his many murders pay!

Rhesus.
Yea, more atonement thou shalt take from me
For this slow help. — May Adrasteia see
My heart and pardon! — When we two have set
Troy free from these who compass her with hate,
Soon as the Gods have had their first-fruits, I
With thee will sail — so help me Zeus on high! —
And sack all Hellas with the sword, till these
Doers of deeds shall know what suffering is.

Hector.
By heaven, could I once see this peril rolled
Past us, and live in Ilion as of old,
Untrembling, I would thank my gods! To seek
Argos and sack the cities of the Greek —
'Twere not such light work as thou fanciest.

Rhesus.
These Greeks that face thee, are they not their best?

Hector.
We seek not better. These do all we need.

Rhesus.
When these are beaten, then, we have done the deed.

Hector.
Lose not thy path watching a distant view.

Rhesus.
Thou seem'st content to suffer, not to do?

Hector.
I have a kingdom large by mine own right. . . .
What station will best please thee in this fight
To ground the targe and stablish thine array?
Right, left, or midmost in the allies? Say.

Rhesus.
'Twould please me best to fight these Greeks alone.
Yet, if 'twould irk thine honour not to have thrown
One firebrand on the ships with me, why, then
Set us to face Achilles and his men.

Hector.
Achilles? Nay, his spear ye cannot meet.

Rhesus.
How so? Fame said he sailed here with the fleet.

Hector.
He sailed, and he is here. But some despite
'Gainst the great King now keeps him from the fight.

Rhesus.
Who next to him hath honour in their host?

Hector.
Next, to my seeming, Ajax hath the most,
Or Diomede. — But Odysseus is a tough
And subtle fox, and brave; aye, brave enough.
No man of them hath harmed us more than he.
He climbed here to Athena's sanctuary
One night, and stole her image clean away
To the Argive ships. Yes, and another day,
Guised as a wandering priest, in rags, he came
And walked straight through the Gates, made loud acclaim
Of curses on the Greek, spied out alone
All that he sought in Ilion, and was gone —
Gone, and the watch and helpers of the Gate

Dead! And in every ambush they have set
By the old Altar, close to Troy, we know
He sits — a murderous reptile of a foe!

Rhesus.
No brave man seeks so dastardly to harm
His battle-foes; he meets them arm to arm.
This Greek of thine, this sitter like a thief
In ambush, I will make of him my chief

Care. I will take him living, drive a straight
Stake through him, and so star him at the Gate
To feed your wide-winged vultures. 'Tis the death
Most meet for a lewd thief, who pillageth
God's sanctuary, or so we hold in Thrace.

Hector (making no answer).
Seek first some sleep. There still remains a space
Of darkness. — I will show the spot that best
May suit you, somewhat sundered from the rest.
Should need arise, the password of the night
Is Phoebus: see your Thracians have it right.
[*Turning to the Guards before he goes.*
Advance beyond your stations, men, at some
Distance, and stay on watch till Dolon come
With word of the Argives' counsel. If his vow
Prosper, he should be nearing us by now.
[*Exeunt* Hector *and* Rhesus *and Attendants. The Guards, who have been below, come forward sleepily from the camp fire, and sit watching by* Hector's *tent.*

Chorus.
Say, whose is the watch? Who exchanges
With us? The first planets to rise
Are setting; the Pleiades seven
Move low on the margin of heaven,
And the Eagle is risen and ranges
The mid-vault of the skies.

Another.
No sleeping yet! Up from your couches
And watch on, the sluggards ye are!
The moon-maiden's lamp is yet burning.
Third Guard.
Oh, the morning is near us, the morning!
Even now his fore-runner approaches,
Yon dim-shining star.
Divers Guards *(talking)*.
Who drew the first night-watch?

Another.
'Twas one
Koroibos, called the Mygdon's Son.
The Guard.
And after?
The Other.
The Mount Taurus men
Had second watch: from them again
The Mysians took it. We came then.
A Guard.
'Tis surely time. Who will go tell
The fifth watch? 'Tis the Lycians' spell
By now; 'twas thus the portions fell.

Another.
Nay, hearken! Again she is crying
Where death-laden Simoïs falls,
Of the face of dead Itys that stunned her,
Of grief grown to music and wonder:
Most changeful and old and undying
The nightingale calls.

Another.
And on Ida the shepherds are waking
Their flocks for the upland. I hear
The skirl of a pipe very distant.

Another.
And sleep, it falls slow and insistent.
'Tis perilous sweet when the breaking
Of dawn is so near.
Divers Guards *(talking)*.
Why have we still no word nor sign
Of that scout in the Argive line?

Another.
I know not; he is long delayed.

Another.
God send he trip not on the blade
Of some Greek in an ambuscade!

Another.
It may be. I am half afraid.

Leader.
Our time is past! Up, men, and tell
The fifth watch. 'Tis the Lycians' spell
Now, as the portions fairly fell.
[*The Guards pass out to waken the Lycians. The stage is empty and dark except for the firelight, when a whisper is heard at the back. Presently enter* Odysseus *and* Diomede *in dull leather armour*, Diomede *carrying at his belt* Dolon's *wolf-skin and mask*.

Odysseus.
Diomede, hist! — A little sound of arms

Clanking. . . or am I full of void alarms?

Diomede.
No. 'Tis some horse tied to the chariot rail
That clanks his chain. — My heart began to fail
A moment, till I heard the horse's champ.
[*They steal on further, keeping in the shadow.*

Odysseus.
Mind — in that shade — the watchers of the camp.

Diomede.
I keep in shadow, but I am staring hard.

Odysseus.
Thou know'st the watchword, if we stir some guard?

Diomede.
Phoebus. 'Twas the last sign that Dolon gave.
[*They creep forward in silence to the entrance of* Hector's *tent*.

Odysseus.
Now, forward!
[*They dash into the tent, swords drawn; then return.*
God! All empty as the grave!

Diomede.
Yet Dolon told us Hector's couch was made
Just here. For none but him I drew this blade.

Odysseus.
What means it? To some ambush is he gone?

Diomede.
Maybe, to work some craft on us at dawn.

Odysseus.
He is hot with courage when he is winning, hot.

Diomede.
What must we do, Odysseus? — He was not
Laid where we thought him, and our hopes are lost.

Odysseus.
Back to our own ship-rampart at all cost!

The God who gave him victory saves him still.
We cannot force Fortune against her will.

Diomede.
Could we not find Aeneas? Or the bed
Of Paris the accurst, and have his head?

Odysseus.
Go by night searching through these lines of men
For chiefs to kill? ‘Twere death and death again.

Diomede.
But to go empty back — what shame ‘twill be! —
And not one blow struck home at the enemy!

Odysseus.
How not one blow? Did we not baulk and kill
Dolon, their spy, and bear his tokens still?
Dost think the whole camp should be thine to quell?
[Diomede *takes* Dolon’s *wolf-mask off his belt and hangs it in* Hector’s *tent, then turns*.

Diomede.
Good. Now for home! And may the end be well!
[*As they turn there appears at the back a luminous and gigantic shape, the Goddess* Athena.

Athena.
What make ye, from these sleepers thus to part
Desponding and with sorrow-wounded heart
If Hector be not granted you to slay
Nor Paris? Little know ye what great stay
Of help is found for Troy. This very night
Rhesus is come; who, if he see the light
Of morning, not Achilles nor the rack
Of Ajax’ spear hath power to hold him back,
Ere wall and gate be shattered and inside
Your camp a spear-swept causeway builded wide

To where beached galleys flame above the dead.
Him slay, and all is won. Let Hector's head
Sleep where it lies and draw unvexèd breath;
Another's work, not thine, is Hector's death.

Odysseus.
Most high Athena, well I know the sound
Of that immortal voice. 'Tis ever found
My helper in great perils. — Where doth lie
Rhesus, mid all this host of Barbary?

Athena.
Full near he lies, not mingled with the host
Of Troy, but here beyond the lines — a post
Of quiet till the dawn, that Hector found.
And near him, by his Thracian chariot bound,
Two snow-white coursers gleam against the wan
Moon, like the white wing of a river swan.
Their master slain, take these to thine own hearth,
A wondrous spoil; there hides not upon earth
A chariot-team of war so swift and fair.

Odysseus.
Say, Diomede, wilt make the men thy share,
Or catch the steeds and leave the fight to me?

Diomede.
I take the killing, thou the stablery:
It needs keen wit and a neat hand. The post
A man should take is where he helpeth most.

Athena.
Behold, 'tis Paris, hasting there toward
This tent. Methinks he knoweth from the guard
Some noise of prowling Argives hither blown.

Diomede.
Comes he alone or with his guards?

Athena.
Alone;
Toward Hector's quarters, as I deem, he plies
His message. He hath heard some tale of spies.

Diomede.
Then he shall be the first dead Trojan!

Athena.
No;
Beyond the ordainèd end thou canst not go.
Fate hath not willed that Paris by thy deed
Shall die; it is another who must bleed
To-night. Therefore be swift!
[*Exeunt* Odysseus *and* Diomede.
For me, my guise
Shall melt and change in Alexander's eyes,
Yea, till he dream 'tis Cypris, his delight
And help in need, that meets him in the night,
And soft shall be my words to him I hate.
So speak I; but on whom my spell is set
He hears not, sees not, though so near I stand.
[*She becomes invisible where she stands.*
Enter Paris.

Paris.
Ho, Hector! Brother! General of the land!
Sleepest thou still? We need thy waking sight.
Our guards have marked some prowler of the night,
We know not if a mere thief or a spy.
[Athena *becomes visible again, but seems changed and her voice softer*.

Athena.
Have comfort thou! Doth not the Cyprian's eye
Mark all thy peril and keep watch above
Thy battles? How shall I forget the love
I owe thee, and thy faithful offices?
To crown this day and all its victories,

Lo, I have guided here to Troy a strong
Helper, the scion of the Muse of song
And Strymon's flood, the crownèd stream of Thrace.

Paris (standing like one in a dream).
Indeed thy love is steadfast, and thy grace
Bounteous to Troy and me. Thou art the joy
And jewel of my days, which I to Troy
Have brought, and made thee hers. — O Cyprian,
I heard, not clearly,— 'twas some talk that ran
Among the pickets — spies had passed some spot
Close by the camp. The men who saw them not
Talk much, and they who saw, or might have seen,
Can give no sign nor token. It had been
My purpose to find Hector where he lay.

Athena.
Fear nothing. All is well in Troy's array.
Hector is gone to help those Thracians sleep.

Paris.
Thy word doth rule me, Goddess. Yea, so deep
My trust is, that all thought of fear is lost
In comfort, and I turn me to my post.

Athena.
Go. And remember that thy fortunes still
Are watched by me, and they who do my will
Prosper in all their ways. Aye, thou shalt prove
Ere long, if I can care for those I love.
[*Exit* Paris. *She raises her voice.*
Back, back, ye twain! Are ye in love with death?
Laertes' son, thy sword into the sheath!
Our golden Thracian gaspeth in his blood;
The steeds are ours; the foe hath understood
And crowds against you. Haste ye! haste to fly, —
Ere yet the lightning falleth, and ye die!
[Athena *vanishes; a noise of tumult is heard*.

Enter a crowd of Thracians running in confusion, in the midst of them Odysseus *and* Diomede.

Voices (amid the tumult).
Ha! Ha! — At them! At them! After them! Down with them! — Where are they?

Captain.
Who is that fellow? Look! That yonder!
A Man.
  Rascal thieves, the sort that crawl
And vex an army in the dark!

Captain.
  Ho, this way! Follow! This way all!
[*They pursue* Odysseus *and* Diomede; *catch them and bring them back*.
A Man.
  I have them! I have caught them!

Captain (to Odysseus).
Whence comest thou? What art thou? Say; what captain and what company?

Odysseus (indignantly).
’Tis not for thee to know. This day thou diest for thy knavery!

Captain.
Stop! Give the watchword quick, before I have thy body on my pike.

Odysseus (in a tone of authority).
Halt every man and have no fear!

Captain.
  Come, gather round. Be quick to strike.

Odysseus (to Captain).
’Twas thou that killed King Rhesus!

Captain.
No: ’tis I that kill the man that killed . . .
[*Flies at* Odysseus, *but other men hold him back.*

Odysseus.
Hold back all!

Voices.
No more holding back!

Odysseus (as they attack him).
What, strike an ally in the field?

Captain.
Then give the watchword!

Odysseus.
Phoebus.

Captain.
Right. Ho, every man hold back his spear! —
Then know’st thou where the men are gone?

Odysseus.
We saw them running, somewhere here.
[*He makes off into the darkness.* Diomede *follows, and some Thracians*.

Captain.
Off every one upon their track!
A Man.
Or should we rouse the army?

Captain.
No;
To stir the allies in the night and make more panic!
Let us go.
[*The Thracians go off in pursuit. Meantime the original Guards who form*

the Chorus have hastened back. The two Greeks are presently seen crossing at the back in a different direction.

Chorus.
Who was the man that passed?
Who, that, so madly bold.
Even as I held him fast,
Laughed, and I loosed my hold?
Where shall I find him now?
What shall I deem of him,
To steal thro' the guards a-row,
Quaking not, eye nor limb,
On thro' the starlight dim?
Is he of Thessaly,
Born by the Locrian sea,
Or harvester of some starved island's corn?
What man hath seen his face?
What was his name or race,
What the high God by whom his sires have sworn?
Divers Guards *(talking)*.
This night must be Odysseus' work, or whose? —
Odysseus? Aye, to judge by ancient use. —
Odysseus surely! — That is thy belief? —
What else? It seems he hath no fear
Of such as we! — Whom praise ye there?
Whose prowess? Say! — Odysseus. — Nay,
Praise not the secret stabbing of a thief!

Chorus.
He came once, of old,
Up thro' the city throng,
Foam on his lips, a-cold,
Huddled in rags that hung
Covering just the sword
Hid in his mantle's pleat;
His face grimed and scored,
A priest of wandering feet,

Who begged his bread in the street.
Many and evil things
He cast on the brother kings
Like one long hurt, who nurseth anger sore;
Would that a curse, yea, would
The uttermost wrath of God
Had held those feet from walking Ilion's shore!
Divers Guards *(talking)*.
Odysseus or another, 'tis the guard
Will weep for this. Aye, Hector will be hard. —
What will he say? — He will suspect. — Suspect?
What evil? What should make you fear? —
'Twas we that left a passage clear. —
A passage? — Yea, for these men's way,
Who came by night into the lines unchecked.
[*A sound of moaning outside in the darkness, which has been heard during the last few lines, now grows into articulate words.*

Voice.
Woe, woe!
The burden of the wrath of fate!

Guards.
Ha, listen! Wait.
Crouch on the ground; it may be yet
Our man is drawing to the net.

Voice.
Woe, woe!
The burden of the hills of Thrace!

Leader.
An ally? None of Hellene race.

Voice.
Woe, woe!
Yea, woe to me and woe to thee,

My master! Once to set thine eye
On Ilion the accurst, and die!

Leader (calling aloud).
Ho there! What ally passes? The dim night
Blurreth mine eyes; I cannot see thee right.

Voice.
Ho, some one of the Trojan name!
Where sleeps your king beneath his shield,
Hector? What marshal of the field
Will hear our tale . . . the men who came
And struck us and were gone; and we,
We woke and there was nought to see,
But our own misery.

Leader.
I cannot hear him right; it sounds as if
The Thracians were surprised or in some grief.
[*There enters a wounded man, walking with difficulty; he is the Thracian Charioteer who came with* Rhesus.

Thracian.
The army lost and the king slain,
Stabbed in the dark! Ah, pain! pain!
This deep raw wound . . . Oh, let me die
By thy side, Master, by thy side!
In shame together let us lie
Who came to save, and failed and died.

Leader.
This needs no surmise: ’tis disaster plain
That comes. He speaketh of some ally slain.

Thracian.
Disaster, yea: and with disaster shame,
Which lights Disaster to a twofold flame
Of evil. For to die in soldier’s wise,

Since die we needs must . . . though the man who dies
Hath pain . . . to all his house ’tis praise and pride;
But we, like laggards and like fools we died!
  When Hector’s hand had showed us where to rest
And told the watchword, down we lay, oppressed
With weariness of that long march, and slept
Just as we fell. No further watch was kept,
Our arms not laid beside us; by the horse
No yoke nor harness ordered. Hector’s force
Had victory, so my master heard, and lay
Secure, just waiting for the dawn of day
To attack. So thought we all, and our lines broke
And slept. After a little time I woke,
Thinking about my horses, that the morn
Must see them yoked for war. I found the corn
And gave them plenteously. Then in the deep
Shadow I saw two men who seemed to creep
Close by our line, but swiftly, as I stirred,
Crouched and were seeking to make off unheard.
I shouted then, and bade them keep away:
Two thieves, I thought, from the great host that lay
Round us. They never answered, and, for me,
I said no more but turned and presently
Was sleeping. In my sleep there came a dream.
I seemed to see the horses — mine own team
I had trained long since and drove at Rhesus’ side —
But wolves were on their backs, wolves, couched astride,
Who drove and scourged; I saw the horses rear
And stagger with wide nostrils, stiff with fear,
And, starting up to drive the beasts away,
I woke. — A terror of great darkness lay
About me, but I lifted up my head
And listened. There was moaning, like the dead
That moan at night, and over me there flowed,
So soft, so warm — it was my master’s blood,
Who writhed beside me, dying! With a bound
I sprang up, empty-handed, groping round

For spear or sword, when, lo, a young strong man
Was close to me and slashed, and the sword ran
Deep through my flank. I felt its passage well,
So deep, so wide, so spreading . . . then I fell.
And they, they got the bridles in their hand
And fled. . . . Ah! Ah! This pain. I cannot stand.
[*The Guards catch him as he reels, and lay him on the ground.*
I know, I saw, thus much. But why or how
Those dead men went to death I cannot know,
Nor by whose work. But this I say; God send
'Tis not foul wrong wrought on us by a friend.

Leader.
Good charioteer of that ill-fortuned king,
Suspect us not. 'Tis Greeks have done this thing.
But yonder Hector comes. He hath been shown
The foul deed, and thy sorrows are his own.
Enter Hector *in wrath, with a band of Guards*.

Hector.
Ye workers of amazement! Have your eyes
No sight? Ye watch and let these Argive spies
Pass — and our friends are butchered in their sleep —
And then pass back unwounded, laughing deep
Amid the galleys at the news they bring
Of Trojan sluggards and the fool their king?
Great God, ye never baulked them as they came,
Nor smote them as they went!
[*His eye falls on the* Captain.
Who bears the blame
Of this but thou? Thou wast the watcher set
To guard this host till morn. I tell thee yet
For this deed — I have sworn by Zeus our Lord! —
The scourge of torment or the headsman's sword
Awaits thee. Else, be Hector in your thought
Writ down a babbler and a man of nought.

Leader (grovelling before Hector).
Woe, woe! It was for thee, only for thee,
I must have gone, O Help and Majesty,
That time with message that the fires were burning.
Mine eye was keen; I swear by Simoïs river,
It never drooped nor slumbered, never, never,
From eve till morning!
My master, verily, I am innocent utterly,
Build not such wrath against me, Lord, nor harden
Thy heart; let Time be judge; and if in deed
Or word I have offended, let me bleed!
Bury me here alive! I ask no pardon.
[Hector *is standing over him ready to strike when the* Charioteer *speaks*.

Thracian.
Why threaten them? Art thou a Greek to blind
My barbarous wit so nimbly, in a wind
Of words? This work was thine. And no man's head
Is asked by us, the wounded and the dead,
Save thine. It needs more play, and better feigned,
To hide from me that thou hast slain thy friend
By craft, to steal his horses. — That is why
He stabs his friends. He prays them earnestly,
Prays them to come; they came and they are dead.
A cleaner man was Paris, when he fled
With his host's wife. He was no murderer.
Profess not thou that any Greek was there
To fall on us. What Greek could pass the screen
Of Trojan posts in front of us, unseen?
Thyself was stationed there, and all thy men.
What man of yours was slain or wounded when
Your Greek spies came? Not one; 'tis we, behind,
Are wounded, and some worse than wounded, blind
Forever to the sunlight. When we seek
Our vengeance, we shall go not to the Greek.
What stranger in that darkness could have trod
Straight to where Rhesus lay — unless some God

Pointed his path? They knew not, whispered not,
Rhesus had ever come. . . . 'Tis all a plot.

Hector (steadied and courteous again).
Good allies I have had since first the Greek
Set foot in Troy, and never heard them speak
Complaint of Hector. Thou wilt be the first.
I have not, by God's mercy, such a thirst
For horses as to murder for their sake.
[*He turns to his own men.*
Odysseus! Yet again Odysseus! Take
All the Greek armies, is there one but he
Could have devised, or dared, this devilry?
I fear him; yea, fear in mine own despite,
Lest Dolon may have crossed him in the night
And perished; 'tis so long he cometh not.

Thracian.
I know not who Odysseus is, nor what.
I know it was no Greek that wounded us.

Hector.
To think thus pleasures thee? Well, have it thus.

Thracian.
Home, home! To die at home and rest my head!

Hector.
Nay, die not, friend. We have enough of dead.

Thracian.
How can I live? Lost, and my master slain.

Hector.
My house will shelter thee and heal thy pain.

Thracian.
Thy house? Will murderers' nursing give me peace?

Hector.
Still the same tale! This man will never cease.

Thracian.
My curse rest — not on Hector, but on those
Who stabbed us, as thou say'st. — Ah, Justice knows!

Hector.
There, lift him. — Bear him to my house. Take pains,
If care can do it, that the man complains
No more of Troy. — Ye others, bear withal
To Priam and the Elders of the Wall
My charge, that, where the cart-road from the plain
Branches, they make due burial for our slain.
[*One party of Guards lifts carefully the wounded* Thracian *and goes off bearing him: another departs with the message to Troy*.

Chorus.
Back from the heights of happiness,
Back, back, to labour and distress
Some god that is not ours doth lead
Troy and her sons; He sows the seed,
Who knows the reaping?
[*In the air at the back there appears a Vision of the* Muse *holding the body of her dead son* Rhesus.
Ah! Ah!
My king, what cometh? There appears
Some Spirit, like a mist of tears;
And in her arms a man lieth,
So young, so wearied unto death;
To see such vision presageth
Wrath and great weeping.
[*The Guards hide their heads in their mantles.*

Muse.
Nay, look your fill, ye Trojans. It is I,
The many-sistered Muse, of worship high
In wise men's hearts, who come to mourn mine own

Most pitifully loved, most injured, son,
For whose shed blood Odysseus yet shall pay
Vengeance, who crawled and stabbed him where he lay.
  With a dirge of the Thracian mountains,
 I mourn for thee, O my son.
For a mother's weeping, for a galley's launching, for
 the way to Troy;
A sad going, and watched by spirits of evil.
His mother chid him to stay, but he rose and went.
His father besought him to stay, but he went in
 anger.
 Ah, woe is me for thee, thou dear face,
  My belovèd and my son!

Leader.
Goddess, if tears for such as thee may run
In our low eyes, I weep for thy dead son.

Muse.
  I say to thee: Curse Odysseus,
 And cursèd be Diomede!
For they made me childless, and forlorn for ever, of
 the flower of sons.
Yea, curse Helen, who left the houses of Hellas.
She knew her lover, she feared not the ships and sea.
She called thee, called thee, to die for the sake of Paris,
  Belovèd, and a thousand cities
 She made empty of good men.
O conquered Thamyris, is this thy bane
Returned from death to pierce my heart again?
Thy pride it was, and bitter challenge cast
'Gainst all the Muses, did my flesh abase
To bearing of this Child, what time I passed
Through the deep stream and looked on Strymon's face,
And felt his great arms clasp me, when to old
Pangaion and the earth of hoarded gold
We Sisters came with lutes and psalteries,

Provoked to meet in bitter strife of song
That mountain wizard, and made dark the eyes
Of Thamyris, who wrought sweet music wrong.
I bore thee, Child; and then, in shame before
My sisterhood, my dear virginity,
I stood again upon thy Father's shore
And cast thee to the deeps of him; and he
Received and to no mortal nursing gave
His child, but to the Maidens of the Wave.
And well they nursed thee, and a king thou wast
And first of Thrace in war; yea, far and near
Through thine own hills thy bloody chariot passed,
Thy battered helm flashed, and I had no fear;
Only to Troy I charged thee not to go:
I knew the fated end: but Hector's cry,
Borne overseas by embassies of woe,
Called thee to battle for thy friends and die.
And thou, Athena — nothing was the deed
Odysseus wrought this night nor Diomede —
'Tis thine, all thine; dream not thy cruel hand
Is hid from me! Yet ever on thy land
The Muse hath smiled; we gave it praise above
All cities, yea, fulfilled it with our love.
The light of thy great Mysteries was shed
By Orpheus, very cousin of this dead
Whom thou hast slain; and thine high citizen
Musaeus, wisest of the tribes of men,
We and Apollo guided all his way:
For which long love behold the gift ye pay!
I wreathe him in my arms; I wail his wrong
Alone, and ask no other mourner's song.
[*She weeps over* Rhesus.

Leader.
Hector, thou hearest. We were guiltless here,
And falsely spake that Thracian charioteer.

Hector.
Always I knew it. Had we any need
Of seers to tell this was Odysseus' deed?
  For me, what could I else, when I beheld
The hosts of Argos camped upon this field,
What but with prayers and heralds bid my friend
Come forth and fight for Ilion ere the end?
He owed me that. — Yet, now my friend is slain,
His sorrow is my sorrow. On this plain
I will uplift a wondrous sepulchre,
And burn about it gifts beyond compare
Of robes and frankincense. To Troy's relief
He came in love and parteth in great grief.

Muse.
My son shall not be laid in any grave
Of darkness; thus much guerdon will I crave
Of Death's eternal bride, the heavenly-born
Maid of Demeter, Life of fruits and corn,
To set this one soul free. She owes me yet,
For Orpheus widowed, an abiding debt.
  To me he still must be — that know I well —
As one in death, who sees not. Where I dwell
He must not come, nor see his mother's face.
Alone for ever, in a caverned place
Of silver-veinèd earth, hid from men's sight,
A Man yet Spirit, he shall live in light:
As under far Pangaion Orpheus lies,
Priest of great light and worshipped of the wise.
  Howbeit an easier anguish even to me
Falls than to Thetis in her azure sea;
For her son too shall die; and sorrowing,
First on the hills our band for thee shall sing,
Then for Achilles by the weeping wave.
Pallas could murder thee, but shall not save
Thy foe; too swift Apollo's bolt shall fly.
  O fleshly loves of sad mortality,

O bitter motherhood of these that die,
She that hath wisdom will endure her doom,
The days of emptiness, the fruitless womb;
Not love, not bear love's children to the tomb.
[*The* Vision *rises through the air and vanishes*.

Leader.
The dead man sleepeth in his mother's care;
But we who battle still — behold, the glare
Of dawn that rises. Doth thy purpose hold,
Hector, our arms are ready as of old.

Hector.
March on; and bid the allies with all speed
Be armed, bind fast the yoke upon the steed,
Then wait with torches burning, till we sound
The Tuscan trump. — This day we shall confound,
God tells me, their Greek phalanx, break their high
Rampart and fire the galleys where they lie.
[*Pointing to the dawn.*
Yon first red arrow of the Sun, that brings
The dawn to Troy, hath freedom on his wings.
During the following lines Hector *goes to his tent to get his shield, and as he enters sees* Dolon's *bloody wolf-skin hanging. He takes it, looks at it, and throws it down without a word. Then he puts on his helmet, takes his shield and spear, and follows the Guards as they march off.*

Chorus.
The Chief hath spoken: let his will
Be law, ye Trojans. — Raise the cry
To Arms! To Arms! and down the line
Of allies pass the battle-sign.
The God of Ilion liveth still;
And men may conquer ere they die.
[*Exeunt.*

CYCLOPS

Translated by Edward P. Coleridge

A comical burlesque on the Polyphemus and Odysseus story narrated in Book Nine of Homer's *Odyssey*, *Cyclops* is the only complete satyr play that has survived from antiquity. Satyr plays were a form of tragicomedy, featuring choruses of satyrs and events of mock drunkenness, brazen sexuality, pranks and general merriment. Satyric drama was one of the three varieties of Athenian drama, the other two being tragedy and comedy. In the Athenian Dionysia, each playwright customarily entered four plays into the competition: three tragedies and one satyr play to be performed either at the end of the festival or between the second and third tragedies of a trilogy, as comic relief to break the oppression of hours of gloomy tragedy. Satyr plays were usually very short, being half the duration of a tragedy.

In *Cyclops* Euripides portrays Odysseus as having lost his way on the voyage home from the Trojan War. He and his weary crew land their boats in Sicily at Mount Aetna, which is inhabited by the fabled one-eyed monsters, the Cyclopes. On the island, the men come upon the Satyrs and their father Silenus, who have been separated from their god Dionysus and enslaved by a Cyclops. These characters are not contained in Homer's version of the myth, providing much of the play's humour due to their cowardly and drunken behaviour.

When Odysseus arrives he meets Silenus and offers to trade wine for food. Being a servant of Dionysus, Silenus cannot resist obtaining the wine despite the fact that the food is not his to trade. The Cyclops soon arrives and Silenus is quick to accuse Odysseus of stealing the food, swearing to many gods. After a heated argument, the Cyclops brings Odysseus and his crew inside his cave and eats some of them. Odysseus manages to slip out and is stunned by what he has witnessed. He then devises his now legendary scheme to make the Cyclops drunk and burn out his eye with a giant spear, winning their freedom.

An actor playing the role of Papposilenus in a satyr play, c. 100 AD

Odysseus and his men blinding the Cyclops Polyphemus, as depicted on a proto-attic amphora, c. 650 BC

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CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

SILENUS, old servant of the CYCLOPS
CHORUS OF SATYRS
ODYSSEUS
THE CYCLOPS
Companions of ODYSSEUS

CYCLOPS

(SCENE:-Before the great cave of the CYCLOPS at the foot of Mount Aetna. SILENUS enters. He has a rake with him, with which he cleans up the ground in front of the cave as he soliloquizes.)

Silenus O BROMIUS, unnumbered are the toils I bear because of thee, no less now than when I was young and hale; first, when thou wert driven mad by Hera and didst leave the mountain nymphs, thy nurses; next, when in battle with earth-born spearmen I stood beside thee on the right as squire, and slew Enceladus, smiting him full in the middle of his targe with my spear. Come, though, let me see; must I confess 'twas all a dream? No, by Zeus! since I really showed his spoils to the Bacchic god. And now am I enduring to the full a toil still worse than those. For when Hera sent forth a race of Tyrrhene pirates against thee, that thou mightest be smuggled far away, I, as soon as the news reached me, sailed in quest of thee with my children; and, taking the helm myself, I stood on the end of the stern and steered our trim craft; and my sons, sitting at the oars, made the grey billows froth and foam as they sought thee, my liege. But just as we had come nigh Malea in our course, an east wind blew upon the ship and drove us hither to the rock of Aetna, where in lonely caverns dwell the one-eyed children of ocean's god, the murdering Cyclopes. Captured by one of them we are slaves in his house; Polyphemus they call him whom we serve; and instead of Bacchic revelry we are herding a godless Cyclops's flocks; and so it is my children, striplings as they are, tend the young thereof on the edge of the downs; while my appointed task is to stay here and fill the troughs and sweep out the cave, or wait upon the ungodly Cyclops at his impious feasts. His orders now compel obedience; I have to scrape out his house with the rake you see, so as to receive the Cyclops, my absent master, and his sheep in clean caverns.

But already I see my children driving their browsing flocks towards me.

What means this? is the beat of feet in the Sicinnis dance the same to you now as when ye attended the Bacchic god in his revelries and made your way with dainty steps to the music of lyres to the halls of Althaea?

(The CHORUS OF SATYRS enters, driving a flock of goats and sheep. Servants follow them.)

Chorus (singing) Offspring of well-bred sires and dams, pray whither wilt thou be gone from me to the rocks? Hast thou not here a gentle breeze, and grass to browse, and water from the eddying stream set near the cave in troughs? and are not thy young ones bleating for thee? Pst! pst! wilt thou not browse here, here on the dewy slope? Ho! ho ere long will I cast a stone at thee. Away, away! O horned one, to the fold-keeper of the Cyclops, the country-ranging shepherd.

Loosen thy bursting udder; welcome to thy teats the kids, whom thou leavest in the lambkins' pens. Those little bleating kids, asleep the livelong day, miss thee; wilt then leave at last the rich grass pastures on the peaks of Aetna and enter the fold? . . .

Here we have no Bromian god; no dances here, or Bacchantes thyrsus-bearing; no roll of drums, or drops of sparkling wine by gurgling founts; nor is it now with Nymphs in Nysa I sing a song of Bacchus, Bacchus! to the queen of love, in quest of whom I once sped on with Bacchantes, white of foot. Dear friend, dear Bacchic god, whither art roaming alone, waving thy auburn locks, while I, thy minister, do service to the one-eyed Cyclops, a slave and wanderer I, clad in this wretched goat-skin dress, severed from thy love?

Silenus Hush, children! and bid our servants fold the flocks in the rock-roofed cavern.

Leader of the chorus (to Servants) Away! *(To SILENUS)* But prithee, why such haste, father?

Silenus I see the hull of a ship from Hellas at the shore, and men, that wield the oar, on their way to this cave with some chieftain. About their necks they carry empty vessels and pitchers for water; they are in want of food. Luckless strangers! who can they be? They know not what manner of man our master Polyphemus is, to have set foot here in his cheerless abode and come to the jaws of the cannibal Cyclops in an evil hour. But hold ye your peace, that we may inquire whence they come to the peak of Sicilian Aetna.

(ODYSSEUS and his companions enter. They carry baskets for provisions and water jars.)

Odysseus Pray tell us, sirs, of some river-spring whence we might draw a draught to slake our thirst, or of someone willing to sell victuals to mariners in need.

Why, what is this? We seem to have chanced upon a city of the Bromian god; here by the caves I see a group of Satyrs. To the eldest first I bid "All hail!"

Silenus All hail, sir! tell me who thou art, and name thy country.

Odysseus Odysseus of Ithaca, king of the Cephallenians' land.

Silenus I know him for a prating knave, one of Sisyphus' shrewd offspring.

Odysseus I am the man; abuse me not.

Silenus Whence hast thou sailed hither to Sicily?

Odysseus From Ilium and the toils of Troy.

Silenus How was that? didst thou not know the passage to thy native land?

Odysseus Tempestuous winds drove me hither against my will.

Silenus God wot! thou art in the same plight as I am.

Odysseus Why, wert thou too drifted hither against thy will?

Silenus I was, as I pursued the pirates who carried Bromius off.

Odysseus What land is this and who are its inhabitants?

Silenus This is mount Aetna, the highest point in Sicily.

Odysseus But where are the city-walls and ramparts?

Silenus There are none; the headlands, sir, are void of men.

Odysseus Who then possess the land? the race of wild creatures?

Silenus The Cyclopes, who have caves, not roofed houses.

Odysseus Obedient unto whom? or is the power in the people's hands?

Silenus They are rovers; no man obeys another in anything.

Odysseus Do they sow Demeter's grain, or on what do they live?

Silenus On milk and cheese and flesh of sheep.

Odysseus Have they the drink of Bromius, the juice of the vine?

Silenus No indeed! and thus it is a joyless land they dwell in.

Odysseus Are they hospitable and reverent towards strangers?

Silenus Strangers, they say, supply the daintiest meat.

Odysseus What, do they delight in killing men and eating them?

Silenus No one has ever arrived here without being butchered.

Odysseus Where is the Cyclops himself? inside his dwelling?

Silenus He is gone hunting wild beasts with hounds on Aetna.

Odysseus Dost know then what to do, that we may be gone from the land?

Silenus Not I, Odysseus; but I would do anything for thee.

Odysseus Sell us food, of which we are in need.

Silenus There is nothing but flesh, as I said.

Odysseus Well, even that is a pleasant preventive of hunger.

Silenus And there is cheese curdled with fig-juice, and the milk of kine.

Odysseus Bring them out; a man should see his purchases.

Silenus But tell me, how much gold wilt thou give me in exchange?

Odysseus No gold bring I, but Dionysus' drink.

Silenus (joyfully) Most welcome words! I have long been wanting that.

Odysseus Yes, it was Maron, the god's son, who gave me a draught.

Silenus What! Maron whom once I dandled in these arms?

Odysseus The son of the Bacchic god, that thou mayst learn more certainly.

Silenus Is it inside the ship, or hast thou it with thee?

Odysseus This, as thou seest, is the skin that holds it, old sir.

Silenus Why, that would not give me so much as a mouthful.

Odysseus This, and twice as much again as will run from the skin.

Silenus Fair the rill thou speakest of, delicious to me.

Odysseus Shall I let thee taste the wine unmixed, to start with?

Silenus A reasonable offer; for of a truth a taste invites the purchase.

Odysseus Well, I haul about a cup as well as the skin.

Silenus Come, let it gurgle in, that I may revive my memory by a pull at it.

Odysseus (pouring) There then!

Silenus (smelling it) Ye gods! what a delicious scent it has!

Odysseus What! didst thou see it?

Silenus No, i’ faith, but I smell it.

Odysseus Taste it then, that thy approval may not stop at words.

Silenus (taking a drink) Zounds! Bacchus is inviting me to dance; ha! ha!

Odysseus Did it not gurgle finely down thy throttle?

Silenus Aye that it did, to the ends of my fingers.

Odysseus Well, we will give thee money besides.

Silenus Only undo the skin, and never mind the money.

Odysseus Bring out the cheeses then and lambs.

Silenus I will do so, with small thought of any master. For let me have a single cup of that and I would turn madman, giving in exchange for it the flocks of every Cyclops and then throwing myself into the sea from the Leucadian rock, once I have been well drunk and smoothed out my wrinkled brow. For if a man rejoice not in his drinking, he is mad; for in drinking it’s possible for this to stand up straight, and then to fondle breasts, and to caress well tended locks, and there is dancing withal, and oblivion of woe. Shall not I then purchase so rare a drink, bidding the senseless Cyclops and his central eye go hang?

(SILENUS goes into the cave.)

Leader Hearken, Odysseus, let us hold some converse with thee.

Odysseus Well, do so; ours is a meeting of friends.

Leader Did you take Troy and capture the famous Helen?

Odysseus Aye, and we destroyed the whole family of Priam.

Leader After capturing your blooming prize, were all of you in turn her lovers? for she likes variety in husbands; the traitress! the sight of a man with embroidered breeches on his legs and a golden chain about his neck so

fluttered her, that she left Menelaus, her excellent little husband. Would there had never been a race of women born into the world at all, unless it were for me alone!

Silenus (reappearing with food) Lo! I bring you fat food from the flocks, king Odysseus, the young of bleating sheep and cheeses of curdled milk without stint. Carry them away with you and begone from the cave at once, after giving me a drink of merry grape-juice in exchange.

Leader Alack! yonder comes the Cyclops; what shall we do?

Odysseus Then truly are we lost, old sir! whither must we fly?

Silenus Inside this rock, for there ye may conceal yourselves.

Odysseus Dangerous advice of thine, to run into the net!

Silenus No danger; there are ways of escape in plenty in the rock.

Odysseus No, never that; for surely Troy will groan and loudly too, if we flee from a single man, when I have oft withstood with my shield a countless host of Phrygians. Nay, if die we must, we will die a noble death; or, if we live, we will maintain our old renown at least with credit.

(The CYCLOPS enters as SILENUS goes into the cave. The CYCLOPS, not noticing ODYSSEUS and his companions, addresses the CHORUS in anger.)

Cyclops A light here! hold it up! what is this? what means this idleness, your Bacchic revelry? Here have we no Dionysus, nor clash of brass, nor roll of drums. Pray, how is it with my newly-born lambs in the caves? are they at the teat, running close to the side of their dams? Is the full amount of milk for cheeses milked out in baskets of rushes? How now? what say you? One of ye will soon be shedding tears from the weight of my club; look up, not down.

Leader There! my head is bent back till I see Zeus himself; I behold both the stars and Orion.

Cyclops Is my breakfast quite ready?

Leader 'Tis laid; be thy throat only ready.

Cyclops Are the bowls too full of milk?

Leader Aye, so that thou canst swill off a whole hogshead, so it please thee.

Cyclops Sheep's milk or cows' milk or a mixture of both?

Leader Whichever thou wilt; don't swallow me, that's all.

Cyclops Not I; for you would start kicking in the pit of my stomach and kill me by your antics. *(Catching sight of ODYSSEUS and his followers)* Ha! what is this crowd I see near the folds? Some pirates or robbers have put in here. *(SILENUS comes out of the cave. He has made himself appear as though he had just suffered a terrible beating.)* Yes, I really see the lambs from my caves tied up there with twisted osiers, cheese-presses scattered about, and old Silenus with his bald pate all swollen with blows.

Silenus Oh! oh! poor wretch that I am, pounded to a fever.

Cyclops By whom? who has been pounding thy head, old sirrah?

Silenus These are the culprits, Cyclops, all because I refused to let them plunder thee.

Cyclops Did they not know I was a god and sprung from gods?

Silenus That was what I told them, but they persisted in plundering thy goods, and, in spite of my efforts, they actually began to eat the cheese and carry off the lambs; and they said they would tie thee in a three-cubit pillory and tear out thy bowels by force at thy navel, and flay thy back thoroughly with the scourge; and then, after binding thee, fling thy carcase down among the benches of their ship to sell to someone for heaving up stones, or else throw thee into a mill.

Cyclops Oh, indeed! Be off then and sharpen my cleavers at once; heap high the faggots and light them; for they shall be slain forthwith and fill this

maw of mine, what time I pick my feast hot from the coals, waiting not for carvers, and fish up the rest from the cauldron boiled and sodden; for I have had my fill of mountain-fare and sated myself with banquets of lions and stags, but 'tis long I have been without human flesh.

Silenus Truly, master, a change like this is all the sweeter after everyday fare; for just of late there have been no fresh arrivals of strangers at these caves.

Odysseus Hear the strangers too in turn, Cyclops. We had come near the cave from our ship, wishing to procure provisions by purchase, when this fellow sold us the lambs and handed them over for a stoup of wine to drink himself, a voluntary act on both sides, there was no violence employed at all. No, there is not a particle of truth in the story he tells; now that he has been caught selling thy property behind thy back.

Silenus I? Perdition catch thee!

Odysseus If I am lying, yes.

Silenus (in agitation) O Cyclops, by thy sire Poseidon, by mighty Triton and Nereus, by Calypso and the daughters of Nereus, by the sacred billows and all the race of fishes! I swear to thee, most noble sir, dear little Cyclops, master mine, it is not I who sell thy goods to strangers, else may these children, dearly as I love them, come to an evil end.

Leader Keep that for thyself; with my own eyes I saw thee sell the goods to the strangers; and if I lie, perdition catch my sire! but injure not the strangers.

Cyclops Ye lie; for my part I put more faith in him than Rhadamanthus, declaring him more just. But I have some questions to ask. Whence sailed ye, strangers? of what country are you? what city was it nursed your childhood?

Odysseus We are Ithacans by birth, and have been driven from our course by the winds of the sea on our way from Ilium, after sacking its citadel.

Cyclops Are ye the men who visited on Ilium, that bordereth on Scamander's wave, the rape of Helen, worst of women?

Odysseus We are; that was the fearful labour we endured.

Cyclops A sorry expedition yours, to have sailed to the land of Phrygia for the sake of one woman

Odysseus It was a god's doing; blame not any son of man. But thee do we implore, most noble son of Ocean's god, speaking as free-born men; be not so cruel as to slay thy friends on their coming to thy cave, nor regard us as food for thy jaws, an impious meal; for we preserved thy sire, O king, in possession of his temple-seats deep in the nooks of Hellas; and the sacred port of Taenarus and Malea's furthest coves remain unharmed; and Sunium's rock, the silver-veined, sacred to Zeus-born Athena, still is safe, and Geraestus, the harbour of refuge; and we did not permit Phrygians to put such an intolerable reproach on Hellas. Now in these things thou too hast a share, for thou dwellest in a corner of the land of Hellas beneath Aetna's fire-streaming rock; and although thou turn from arguments, still it is a custom amongst mortal men to receive shipwrecked sailors as their suppliants and show them hospitality and help them with raiment; not that these should fill thy jaws and belly, their limbs transfixed with spits for piercing ox-flesh. The land of Priam hath emptied Hellas quite enough, drinking the blood of many whom the spear laid low, with the ruin it has brought on widowed wives, on aged childless dames, and hoary-headed sires; and if thou roast and consume the remnant,-a meal thou wilt rue,-why, where shall one turn? Nay, be persuaded by me, Cyclops; forego thy ravenous greed and choose piety rather than wickedness; for on many a man ere now unrighteous gains have brought down retribution.

Silenus I will give thee a word of advice! as for his flesh, leave not a morsel of it, and if thou eat his tongue, Cyclops, thou wilt become a monstrous clever talker.

Cyclops Wealth, manikin, is the god for the wise; all else is mere vaunting and fine words. Plague take the headlands by the sea, on which my father seats himself! Why hast thou put forward these arguments? I shudder not at Zeus's thunder, nor know I wherein Zeus is a mightier god than I, stranger;

what is more, I reck not of him; my reasons hear. When he pours down the rain from above, here in this rock in quarters snug, feasting on roast calf's flesh or some wild game and moistening well my up-turned paunch with deep draughts from a tub of milk, I rival the thunder-claps of Zeus with my artillery; and when the north wind blows from Thrace and sheddeth snow, I wrap my carcase in the hides of beasts and light a fire, and what care I for snow? The earth perforce, whether she like it or not, produces grass and fattens my flocks, which I sacrifice to no one save myself and this belly, the greatest of deities; but to the gods, not I! For surely to eat and drink one's fill from day to day and give oneself no grief at all, this is the king of gods for your wise man, but lawgivers go hang, chequering, as they do, the life of man! And so I will not cease from indulging myself by devouring thee; and thou shalt receive this stranger's gift, that I may be free of blame,-fire and my father's element yonder, and a cauldron to hold thy flesh and boil it nicely in collops. So in with you, that ye may feast me well, standing round the altar to honour the cavern's god.

(The CYCLOPS goes into his cave, driving ODYSSEUS' men before him.)

Odysseus Alas! escaped from the troubles of Troy and the sea, my barque now strands upon the whim and forbidding heart of this savage. O Pallas, mistress mine, goddess-daughter of Zeus, help me, help me now; for I am come to toils and depths of peril worse than all at Ilium; and thou, O Zeus, the stranger's god, who hast thy dwelling 'mid the radiant stars, behold these things; for, if thou regard them not, in vain art thou esteemed the great god Zeus, though but a thing of naught.

(He follows the CYCLOPS reluctantly. SILENUS also goes in.)

Chorus (singing) Ope wide the portal of thy gaping throat, Cyclops; for strangers' limbs, both boiled and grilled, are ready from off the coals for thee to gnaw and tear and mince up small, reclining in thy shaggy goat-skin coat.

Relinquish not thy meal for me; keep that boat for thyself alone. Avaunt this cave! avaunt the burnt-offerings, which the godless Cyclops offers on Aetna's altars, exulting in meals on strangers' flesh!

Oh! the ruthless monster! to sacrifice his guests at his own hearth, the suppliants of his halls, cleaving and tearing and serving up to his loathsome teeth a feast of human flesh, hot from the coals.

Odysseus (reappearing with a look of horror) O Zeus! what can I say after the hideous sights I have seen inside the cave, things past belief, resembling more the tales men tell than aught they do?

Leader of the chorus What news, Odysseus? has the Cyclops, most godless monster, been feasting on thy dear comrades?

Odysseus Aye, he singled out a pair, on whom the flesh was fattest and in best condition, and took them up in his hand to weigh.

Leader How went it with you then, poor wretch?

Odysseus When we had entered yonder rocky abode, he lighted first a fire, throwing logs of towering oak upon his spacious hearth, enough for three wagons to carry as their load; next, close by the blazing flame, he placed his couch of pine-boughs laid upon the floor, and filled a bowl of some ten firkins, pouring white milk thereinto, after he had milked his kine; and by his side he put a can of ivy-wood, whose breadth was three cubits and its depth four maybe; next he set his brazen pot a-boiling on the fire, spits too he set beside him, fashioned of the branches of thorn, their points hardened in the fire and the rest of them trimmed with the hatchet, and the blood-bowls of Aetna for the axe's edge. Now when that hell-cook, god-detested, had everything quite ready, he caught up a pair of my companions and proceeded deliberately to cut the throat of one of them over the yawning brazen pot; but the other he clutched by the tendon of his heel, and, striking him against a sharp point of rocky stone, dashed out his brains; then, after hacking the fleshy parts with glutton cleaver, he set to grilling them, but the limbs he threw into his cauldron to seethe. And I, poor wretch, drew near with streaming eyes and waited on the Cyclops; but the others kept cowering like frightened birds in crannies of the rock, and the blood forsook their skin. Anon, when he had gorged himself upon my comrades' flesh and had fallen on his back, breathing heavily, there came a sudden inspiration to me. I filled a cup of this Maronian wine and offered him a draught, saying, "Cyclops, son of Ocean's god, see here what heavenly drink the grapes of

Hellas yield, glad gift of Dionysus." He, glutted with his shameless meal, took and drained it at one draught, and, lifting up his hand, he thanked me thus "Dearest to me of all my guests! fair the drink thou givest me to crown so fair a feast." Now when I saw his delight, I gave him another cup, knowing the wine would make him rue it, and he would soon be paying the penalty. Then he set to singing; but I kept filling bumper after bumper and heating him with drink. So there he is singing discordantly amid the weeping of my fellow-sailors, and the cave re-echoes; but I have made my way out quietly and would fain save thee and myself, if thou wilt. Tell me then, is it your wish, or is it not, to fly from this unsocial wretch and take up your abode with Naiad nymphs in the halls of the Bacchic god? Thy father within approves this scheme; but there! he is powerless, getting all he can out of his liquor; his wings are snared by the cup as if he had flown against bird-lime, and he is fuddled; but thou art young and lusty; so save thyself with my help and regain thy old friend Dionysus, so little like the Cyclops.

Leader Best of friends, would we might see that day, escaping the godless Cyclops!

Odysseus Hear then how I will requite this vile monster and rescue you from thraldom.

Leader Tell me how; no note of Asiatic lyre would sound more sweetly in our ears than news of the Cyclops' death.

Odysseus Delighted with this liquor of the Bacchic god, he fain would go a-reveling with his brethren.

Leader I understand; thy purpose is to seize and slay him in the thickets when alone, or push him down a precipice.

Odysseus Not at all; my plan is fraught with subtlety.

Leader What then? Truly we have long heard of thy cleverness.

Odysseus I mean to keep him from this revel, saying he must not give this drink to his brethren but keep it for himself alone and lead a happy life. Then when he falls asleep, o'ermastered by the Bacchic god, I will put a

point with this sword of mine to an olive-branch I saw lying in the cave, and will set it on fire; and when I see it well alight, I will lift the heated brand, and, thrusting it full in the Cyclops' eye, melt out his sight with its blaze; and, as when a man in fitting the timbers of a ship makes his auger spin to and fro with a double strap, so will I make the brand revolve in the eye, that gives the Cyclops light and will scorch up the pupil thereof.

Leader Ho! ho! how glad I feel! wild with joy at the contrivance!

Odysseus That done, I will embark thee and those thou lovest with old Silenus in the deep hold of my black ship, my ship with double banks of oars, and carry you away from this land.

Leader Well, can I too lay hold of the blinding brand, as though the god's libation had been poured? for I would fain have a share in this offering of blood.

Odysseus Indeed thou must, for the brand is large, and thou must help hold it.

Leader How lightly would I lift the load of e'en a hundred wains, if that will help us to grub out the eye of the doomed Cyclops, like a wasp's nest.

Odysseus Hush! for now thou knowest my plot in full, and when I bid you, obey the author of it; for I am not the man to desert my friends inside the cave and save myself alone. And yet I might escape; I am clear of the cavern's depths already; but no! to desert the friends with whom I journeyed hither and only save myself is not a righteous course.

(He re-enters the cave.)

First semi-chorus *(singing)* Come, who will be the first and who the next to him upon the list to grip the handle of the brand, and, thrusting it into the Cyclops' eye, gouge out the light thereof?

Second semi-chorus *(singing)* Hush! hush! Behold the drunkard leaves his rocky home, trolling loud some hideous lay, a clumsy tuneless clown,

whom tears await. Come, let us give this boor a lesson in revelry. Ere long will he be blind at any rate.

First semi-chorus *(singing)* Happy he who plays the Bacchanal amid the precious streams distilled from grapes, stretched at full length for a revel, his arm around the friend he loves, and some fair dainty damsel on his couch, his hair perfumed with nard and glossy, the while he calls, "Oh! who will ope the door for me?"

(The CYCLOPS enters. He is obviously drunk.)

Cyclops (singing) Ha! ha! full of wine and merry with a feast's good cheer am I, my hold freighted like a merchant-ship up to my belly's very top. This turf graciously invites me to seek my brother Cyclopes for revel in the spring-tide. Come, stranger, bring the wine-skin hither and hand it over to me.

Second semi-chorus *(singing)* Forth from the house its fair lord comes, casting his fair glance round him. We have someone to befriend us. A hostile brand is awaiting thee, no tender bride in dewy grot. No single colour will those garlands have, that soon shall cling so close about thy brow.

Odysseus (returning with the wine-skin. He is followed by SILENUS, who is also drunk.)

Hearken, Cyclops; for I am well versed in the ways of Bacchus, whom I have given thee to drink.

Cyclops And who is Bacchus? some reputed god?

Odysseus The greatest god men know to cheer their life.

Cyclops I like his after-taste at any rate.

Odysseus This is the kind of god he is; he harmeth no man.

Cyclops But how does a god like being housed in a wine-skin?

Odysseus Put him where one may, he is content there.

Cyclops It is not right that gods should be clad in leather.

Odysseus What of that, provided he please thee? does the leather hurt thee?

Cyclops I hate the wine-skin, but the liquor we have here I love.

Odysseus Stay, then, Cyclops; drink and be merry.

Cyclops Must I not give my brethren a share in this liquor?

Odysseus No, keep it thyself and thou wilt appear of more honour.

Cyclops Give it my friends and I shall appear of more use.

Odysseus Revelling is apt to end in blows, abuse, and strife.

Cyclops I may be drunk, but no man will lay hands on me for all that.

Odysseus Better stay at home, my friend, after a carouse.

Cyclops Who loves not revelling then is but a simpleton.

Odysseus But whoso stays at home, when drunk, is wise.

Cyclops What shall we do, Silenus? art minded to stay?

Silenus That I am; for what need have we of others to share our drink, Cyclops?

Cyclops Well, truly the turf is soft as down with its fresh flowering plants.

Silenus (seating himself) Aye, and 'tis pleasant drinking in the warm sunshine. Come, let me see thee stretch thy carcase on the ground.

Cyclops (sitting down) There then Why art thou putting the mixing-bowl behind me?

Silenus That no one passing by may upset it.

Cyclops Nay, but thy purpose is to drink upon the sly; set it between us. *(To ODYSSEUS)* Now tell me, stranger, by what name to call thee.

(SILENUS is drinking steadily and stealthily.)

Odysseus Noman. What boon shall I receive of thee to earn my thanks?

Cyclops I will feast on thee last, after all thy comrades.

Odysseus Fair indeed the honour thou bestowest on thy guest, sir Cyclops!

Cyclops (turning suddenly to SILENUS) Ho, sirrah! what art thou about? taking a stealthy pull at the wine?

Silenus No, but it kissed me for my good looks.

Cyclops Thou shalt smart, if thou kiss the wine when it kisses not thee.

Silenus Oh! but it did, for it says it is in love with my handsome face.

Cyclops (holding out his cup) Pour in; only give me my cup full.

Silenus H'm! how is it mixed? just let me make sure.

(Takes another pull.)

Cyclops Perdition! give it me at once.

Silenus Oh, no! I really cannot, till I see thee with a crown on, and have another taste myself.

Cyclops My cup-bearer is a cheat.

Silenus No really, but the wine is so luscious. Thou must wipe thy lips, though, to get a draught.

Cyclops There! my lips and beard are clean now.

Silenus Bend thine elbow gracefully, and then quaff thy cup, as thou seest me do, and as now thou seest me not. *(Burying his face in his cup)*

Cyclops Aha! what next?

Silenus I drunk it off at a draught with much pleasure.

Cyclops Stranger, take the skin thyself and be my cup-bearer.

Odysseus Well, at any rate the grape is no stranger to my hand.

Cyclops Come, pour it in.

Odysseus In it goes! keep silence, that is all.

Cyclops A difficult task when a man is deep in his cups.

Odysseus Here, take and drink it off; leave none. Thou must be silent and only give in when the liquor does.

Cyclops God wot! it is a clever stock that bears the grape.

Odysseus Aye, and if thou but swallow plenty of it after a plentiful meal, moistening thy belly till its thirst is gone, it will throw thee into slumber; but if thou leave aught behind, the Bacchic god will parch thee for it.

Cyclops Ha! ha! what a trouble it was getting out! This is pleasure unalloyed; earth and sky seem whirling round together; I see the throne of Zeus and all the godhead's majesty. Kiss thee! no! There are the Graces trying to tempt me. I shall rest well enough with my Ganymede here; yea, by the Graces, right fairly; for I like lads better than the wenches.

Silenus What! Cyclops, am I Ganymede, Zeus's minion?

Cyclops (attempting to carry him into the cave) To be sure, Ganymede whom I am carrying off from the halls of Dardanus.

Silenus I am undone, my children; outrageous treatment waits me.

Leader of the chorus Dost find fault with thy lover? dost scorn him in his cups?

Silenus Woe is me! most bitter shall I find the wine ere long. *(SILENUS is dragged into the cave by the CYCLOPS.)*

Odysseus Up now, children of Dionysus, sons of a noble sire, soon will yon creature in the cave, relaxed in slumber as ye see him, spew from his shameless maw the meat. Already the brand inside his lair is vomiting cloud of smoke; and the only reason we prepared it was to burn the Cyclops' eye; so mind thou quit thee like a man.

Leader I will have a spirit as of rock or adamant; but go inside, before my father suffers any shameful treatment; for here thou hast things ready.

Odysseus O Hephaestus, lord of Aetna, rid thyself for once and all of a troublesome neighbour by burning his bright eye out. Come, Sleep, as well, offspring of sable Night, come with all thy power on the monster god-detested; and never after Troy's most glorious toils destroy Odysseus and his crew by the hands of one who recketh naught of God or man; else must we reckon Chance a goddess, and Heaven's will inferior to hers.

(ODYSSEUS re-enters the cave.)

Chorus (singing) Tightly the pincers shall grip the neck of him who feasts upon his guests; for soon will he lose the light of his eye by fire; already the brand, a tree's huge limb, lurks amid the embers charred. Oh! come ye then and work his doom, pluck out the maddened Cyclops' eye, that he may rue his drinking. And I too fain would leave the Cyclops' lonely land and see king Bromius, ivy-crowned, the god I sorely miss. Ah! shall I ever come to that?

Odysseus (leaving the cave cautiously) Silence, ye cattle! I adjure you; close your lips; make not a sound! I'll not let a man of you so much as breathe or wink or clear his throat, that yon pest awake not, until the sight in the Cyclops' eye has passed through the fiery ordeal.

Leader of the chorus Silent we stand with bated breath.

Odysseus In then, and mind your fingers grip the brand, for it is splendidly red-hot.

Leader Thyself ordain who first must seize the blazing bar and burn the Cyclops' eye out, that we may share alike whate'er betides.

First semi-chorus Standing where I am before the door, I am too far off to thrust the fire into his eye.

Second semi-chorus I have just gone lame.

First semi-chorus Why, then, thou art in the same plight as I; for somehow or other I sprained my ankle, standing still.

Odysseus Sprained thy ankle, standing still?

Second semi-chorus Yes, and my eyes are full of dust or ashes from somewhere or other.

Odysseus These are sorry fellows, worthless as allies.

Leader Because I feel for my back and spine, and express no wish to have my teeth knocked out, I am a coward, am I? Well, but I know a spell of Orpheus, a most excellent one, to make the brand enter his skull of its own accord, and set alight the one-eyed son of Earth.

Odysseus Long since I knew thou wert by nature such an one, and now I know it better; I must employ my own friends; but, though thou bring no active aid, cheer us on at any rate, that I may find my friends emboldened by thy encouragement.

(ODYSSEUS goes back into the cave.)

Leader That will I do; the Carian shall run the risk for us; and as far as encouragement goes, let the Cyclops smoulder.

Chorus (singing) What ho! my gallants, thrust away, make haste and burn his eyebrow off, the monster's guest-devouring. Oh! singe and scorch the

shepherd of Aetna; twirl the brand and drag it round and be careful lest in his agony he treat thee to some wantonness.

Cyclops (bellowing in the cave) Oh! oh! my once bright eye is burnt to cinders now.

Leader of the chorus Sweet indeed the triumph-song; pray sing it to us, Cyclops.

Cyclops (from within) Oh! oh! once more; what outrage on me and what ruin! But never shall ye escape this rocky cave unpunished, ye worthless creatures; for I will stand in the entrance of the cleft and fit my hands into it thus.

(Staggering to the entrance)

Leader Why dost thou cry out, Cyclops?

Cyclops I am undone.

Leader Thou art indeed a sorry sight.

Cyclops Aye, and a sad one, too.

Leader Didst fall among the coals in a drunken fit?

Cyclops Noman has undone me.

Leader Then there is no one hurting thee after all.

Cyclops Noman is blinding me.

Leader Then thou art not blind.

Cyclops As blind as thou, forsooth.

Leader How, pray, could no man have made thee blind?

Cyclops Thou mockest me; but where is this Noman?

Leader Nowhere, Cyclops.

Cyclops It was the stranger, vile wretch! who proved my ruin, that thou mayst understand rightly, by swilling me with the liquor he gave me.

Leader Ah! wine is a terrible foe, hard to wrestle with.

Cyclops Tell me, I adjure thee, have they escaped or are they still within?

(During the following lines, ODYSSEUS and his men slip by the CYCLOPS, despite his efforts to stop them.)

Leader Here they are ranged in silence, taking the rock to screen them.

Cyclops On which side?

Leader On thy right.

Cyclops Where?

Leader Close against the rock. Hast caught them?

Cyclops Trouble on trouble! I have run my skull against the rock and cracked it.

Leader Aye, and they are escaping thee.

Cyclops This way, was it not? 'Twas this way thou saidst.

Leader No, not this way.

Cyclops Which then?

Leader They are getting around thee on the left.

Cyclops Alas! I am being mocked; ye jeer me in my evil plight.

Leader They are no longer there; but facing thee that stranger stands.

Cyclops Master of villainy, where, oh! where art thou?

Odysseus Some way from thee I am keeping careful guard over the person of Odysseus.

Cyclops What, a new name? hast changed thine?

Odysseus Yes, Odysseus, the name my father gave me. But thou wert doomed to pay for thy unholy feast; for I should have seen Troy burned to but sorry purpose, unless I had avenged on thee the slaughter of my comrades.

Cyclops Woe is me! 'tis an old oracle coming true; yes, it said I should have my eye put out by thee on thy way home from Troy; but it likewise foretold that thou wouldst surely pay for this, tossing on the sea for many a day.

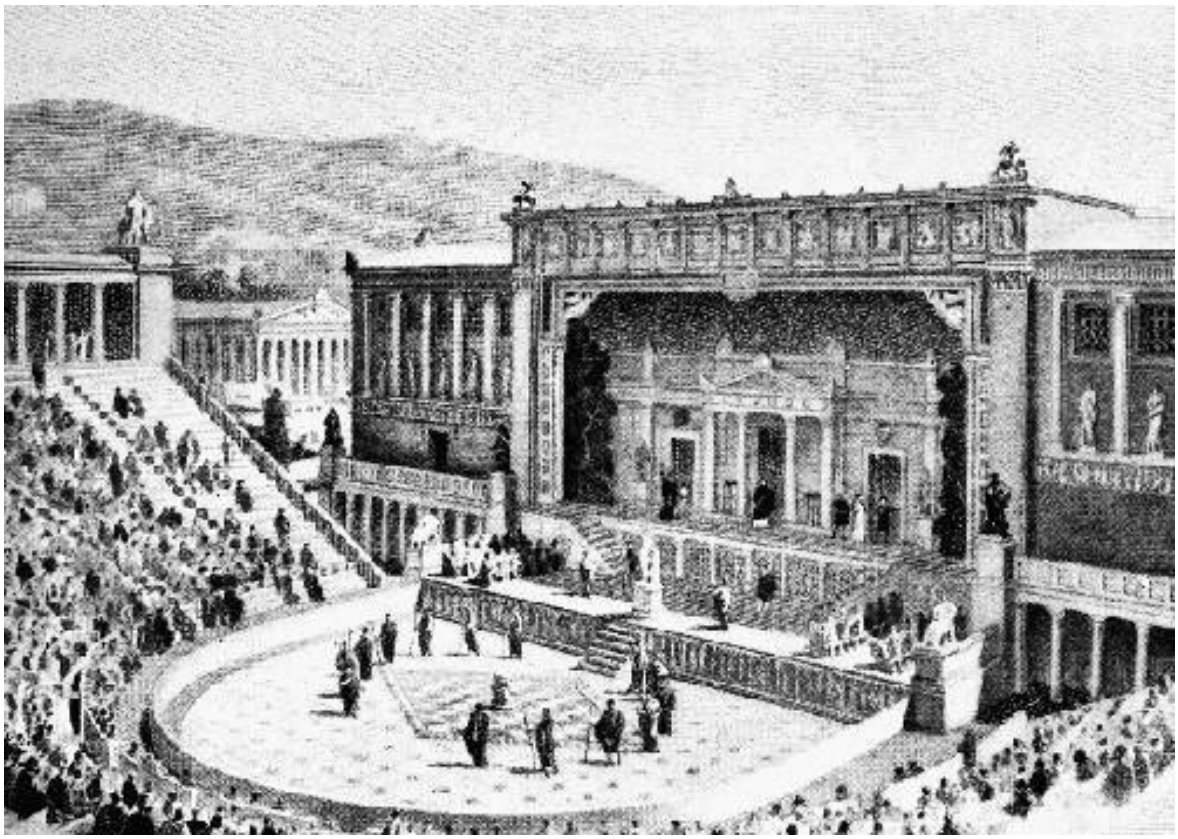
Odysseus Go hang! E'en as I say, so have I done. And now will I get me to the beach and start my hollow ship across the sea of Sicily to the land of my fathers.

Cyclops Thou shalt not; I will break a boulder off this rock and crush thee, crew and all, beneath my throw. Blind though I be, I will climb the hill, mounting through yonder tunnel.

Leader As for us, henceforth will we be the servants of Bacchus, sharing the voyage of this hero Odysseus.

The Greek Texts

The Theatre of Dionysus in Athens, where Euripides' plays were first performed



A modern reconstruction of how the theatre may have appeared in Euripides' time

LIST OF GREEK TEXTS

In this section of the eBook, readers can view the original Greek texts of Euripides' works. You may wish to Bookmark this page for future reference.

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ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

Ὦ δώματ΄ Ἀδμήτει΄, ἐν οἷς ἔτλην ἐγὼ
θῆσσαν τράπεζαν αἰνέσαι θεός περ ὤν.
Ζεὺς γὰρ κατακτὰς παῖδα τὸν ἐμὸν αἴτιος
Ἀσκληπιόν, στέρνοισιν ἐμβαλὼν φλόγα·
οὗ δὴ χολωθεὶς τέκτονας Δίου πυρὸς
κτείνω Κύκλωπας· καί με θητεύειν πατὴρ
θνητῶι παρ΄ ἀνδρὶ τῶνδ΄ ἄποιν΄ ἠνάγκασεν.
Ἐλθὼν δὲ γαῖαν τήνδ΄ ἐβουφόρβουν ξένωι
καὶ τόνδ΄ ἔσωιζον οἶκον ἐς τόδ΄ ἡμέρας.
Ὁσίου γὰρ ἀνδρὸς ὅσιος ὢν ἐτύγχανον
παιδὸς Φέρητος, ὃν θανεῖν ἐρρυσάμην,
Μοίρας δολώσας· ἤινεσαν δέ μοι θεαὶ
Ἄδμητον Ἅιδην τὸν παραυτίκ΄ ἐκφυγεῖν,
ἄλλον διαλλάξαντα τοῖς κάτω νεκρόν.
Πάντας δ΄ ἐλέγξας καὶ διεξελθὼν φίλους,
[πατέρα γεραιάν θ΄ ἥ σφ΄ ἔτικτε μητέρα,]
οὐχ ηὗρε πλὴν γυναικὸς ὅστις ἤθελεν
θανὼν πρὸ κείνου μηκέτ΄ εἰσορᾶν φάος·
ἣν νῦν κατ΄ οἴκους ἐν χεροῖν βαστάζεται
ψυχορραγοῦσαν· τῆιδε γάρ σφ΄ ἐν ἡμέραι
θανεῖν πέπρωται καὶ μεταστῆναι βίου.
Ἐγὼ δέ, μὴ μίασμά μ΄ ἐν δόμοις κίχηι,
λείπω μελάθρων τῶνδε φιλτάτην στέγην.
Ἤδη δὲ τόνδε Θάνατον εἰσορῶ πέλας,
ἱερέα θανόντων, ὅς νιν εἰς Ἅιδου δόμους
μέλλει κατάξειν· συμμέτρως δ΄ ἀφίκετο,
φρουρῶν τόδ΄ ἦμαρ ὧι θανεῖν αὐτὴν χρεών.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

Ἆ ἆ·
τί σὺ πρὸς μελάθροις; τί σὺ τῆιδε πολεῖς,

Φοῖβ΄; ἀδικεῖς αὖ τιμὰς ἐνέρων
ἀφοριζόμενος καὶ καταπαύων;
οὐκ ἤρκεσέ σοι μόρον Ἀδμήτου
διακωλῦσαι, Μοίρας δολίωι
σφήλαντι τέχνηι; νῦν δ΄ ἐπὶ τῆιδ΄ αὖ
χέρα τοξήρη φρουρεῖς ὁπλίσας,
ἢ τόδ΄ ὑπέστη, πόσιν ἐκλύσασ΄
αὐτὴ προθανεῖν Πελίου παῖς;

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

Θάρσει· δίκην τοι καὶ λόγους κεδνοὺς ἔχω.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

Τί δῆτα τόξων ἔργον, εἰ δίκην ἔχεις;

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

Σύνηθες αἰεὶ ταῦτα βαστάζειν ἐμοί.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

Καὶ τοῖσδέ γ΄ οἴκοις ἐκδίκως προσωφελεῖν.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

Φίλου γὰρ ἀνδρὸς συμφοραῖς βαρύνομαι.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

Καὶ νοσφιεῖς με τοῦδε δευτέρου νεκροῦ;

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

Ἀλλ΄ οὐδ΄ ἐκεῖνον πρὸς βίαν σ΄ ἀφειλόμην.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

Πῶς οὖν ὑπὲρ γῆς ἐστι κοὐ κάτω χθονός;

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

Δάμαρτ΄ ἀμείψας, ἣν σὺ νῦν ἥκεις μέτα.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

Κἀπάξομαί γε νερτέραν ὑπὸ χθόνα.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

Λαβὼν ἴθ΄· οὐ γὰρ οἶδ΄ ἂν εἰ πείσαιμί σε.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

Κτείνειν γ΄ ὃν ἂν χρῄι; τοῦτο γὰρ τετάγμεθα.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

Οὔκ, ἀλλὰ τοῖς μέλλουσι θάνατον ἀμβαλεῖν.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

Ἔχω λόγον δὴ καὶ προθυμίαν σέθεν.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

Ἔστ΄ οὖν ὅπως Ἄλκηστις ἐς γῆρας μόλοι;

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

Οὐκ ἔστι· τιμαῖς κἀμὲ τέρπεσθαι δόκει.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

Οὔτοι πλέον γ΄ ἂν ἢ μίαν ψυχὴν λάβοις.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

Νέων φθινόντων μεῖζον ἄρνυμαι γέρας.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

Κἂν γραῦς ὄληται, πλουσίως ταφήσεται.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

Πρὸς τῶν ἐχόντων, Φοῖβε, τὸν νόμον τίθης.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

Πῶς εἶπας; ἀλλ΄ ἦ καὶ σοφὸς λέληθας ὤν;

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

Ὠνοῖντ΄ ἂν οἷς πάρεστι γηραιοὶ θανεῖν.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

Οὔκουν δοκεῖ σοι τήνδε μοι δοῦναι χάριν;

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

Οὐ δῆτ΄· ἐπίστασαι δὲ τοὺς ἐμοὺς τρόπους.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

Ἐχθρούς γε θνητοῖς καὶ θεοῖς στυγουμένους.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

Οὐκ ἂν δύναιο πάντ΄ ἔχειν ἃ μή σε δεῖ.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ

Ἦ μὴν σὺ πείσηι καίπερ ὠμὸς ὢν ἄγαν·
τοῖος Φέρητος εἶσι πρὸς δόμους ἀνὴρ
Εὐρυσθέως πέμψαντος ἵππειον μετὰ

ὄχημα Θρήικης ἐκ τόπων δυσχειμέρων,
ὃς δὴ ξενωθεὶς τοῖσδ΄ ἐν Ἀδμήτου δόμοις
βίαι γυναῖκα τήνδε σ΄ ἐξαιρήσεται.
Κοὔθ΄ ἡ παρ΄ ἡμῶν σοι γενήσεται χάρις
δράσεις θ΄ ὁμοίως ταῦτ΄ ἀπεχθήσηι τ΄ ἐμοί.

ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ

Πόλλ΄ ἂν σὺ λέξας οὐδὲν ἂν πλέον λάβοις·
ἡ δ΄ οὖν γυνὴ κάτεισιν εἰς Ἅιδου δόμους.
Στείχω δ΄ ἐπ΄ αὐτήν, ὡς κατάρξωμαι ξίφει·
ἱερὸς γὰρ οὗτος τῶν κατὰ χθονὸς θεῶν
ὅτου τόδ΄ ἔγχος κρατὸς ἁγνίσηι τρίχα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί ποθ΄ ἡσυχία πρόσθεν μελάθρων;
τί σεσίγηται δόμος Ἀδμήτου;
ἀλλ΄ οὐδὲ φίλων πέλας ἔστ΄ οὐδείς,
ὅστις ἂν εἴποι πότερον φθιμένην
χρὴ βασίλειαν πενθεῖν ἢ ζῶσ΄
ἔτι φῶς λεύσσει Πελίου τόδε παῖς
Ἄλκηστις, ἐμοὶ πᾶσί τ΄ ἀρίστη
δόξασα γυνὴ
πόσιν εἰς αὐτῆς γεγενῆσθαι.
Κλύει τις ἢ στεναγμὸν ἢ
χειρῶν κτύπον κατὰ στέγας
ἢ γόον ὡς πεπραγμένων;
οὐ μὰν οὐδέ τις ἀμφιπόλων
στατίζεται ἀμφὶ πύλας.
Εἰ γὰρ μετακοίμιος ἅτας,
ὦ Παιάν, φανείης.
Οὔ τἂν φθιμένας γ΄ ἐσιώπων.
Οὐ γὰρ δὴ φροῦδός γ΄ ἐξ οἴκων νέκυς ἤδη.
Πόθεν; οὐκ αὐχῶ. Τί σε θαρσύνει;
πῶς ἂν ἔρημον τάφον Ἄδμητος
κεδνῆς ἂν ἔπραξε γυναικός;
πυλῶν πάροιθε δ΄ οὐχ ὁρῶ

πηγαῖον ὡς νομίζεται
χέρνιβ΄ ἐπὶ φθιτῶν πύλαις.
Χαίτα τ΄ οὔτις ἐπὶ προθύροις
τομαῖος, ἃ δὴ νεκύων
πένθει πίτνει, οὐδὲ νεολαία
δουπεῖ χεὶρ γυναικῶν.
Καὶ μὴν τόδε κύριον ἦμαρ
τί τόδ΄ αὐδᾶις;
ὦι χρή σφε μολεῖν κατὰ γαίας.
Ἔθιγες ψυχᾶς, ἔθιγες δὲ φρενῶν.
Χρὴ τῶν ἀγαθῶν διακναιομένων
πενθεῖν ὅστις
χρηστὸς ἀπ΄ ἀρχῆς νενόμισται.
Ἀλλ΄ οὐδὲ ναυκληρίαν
ἔσθ΄ ὅποι τις αἴας
στείλας, ἢ Λυκίαν
εἴτ΄ ἐπὶ τὰς ἀνύδρους
Ἀμμωνιάδας ἕδρας,
δυστάνου παραλύσαι
ψυχάν· μόρος γὰρ ἀπότομος
πλάθει. Θεῶν δ΄ ἐπ΄ ἐσχάραν
οὐκέτ΄ ἔχω τίνα μηλοθύταν πορευθῶ.
Μόνα δ΄ ἄν, εἰ φῶς τόδ΄ ἦν
ὄμμασιν δεδορκὼς
Φοίβου παῖς, προλιποῦσ΄
ἦλθ΄ ἂν ἕδρας σκοτίους
Ἄιδα τε πύλας·
δμαθέντας γὰρ ἀνίστη,
πρὶν αὐτὸν εἶλε διόβολον
πλῆκτρον πυρὸς κεραυνίου.
Νῦν δὲ βίου τίν΄ ἔτ΄ ἐλπίδα προσδέχωμαι;
[πάντα γὰρ ἤδη τετέλεσται βασιλεῦσιν,
πάντων δὲ θεῶν ἐπὶ βωμοῖς
αἱμόρραντοι θυσίαι πλήρεις,
οὐδ΄ ἔστι κακῶν ἄκος οὐδέν.]
Ἀλλ΄ ἥδ΄ ὀπαδῶν ἐκ δόμων τις ἔρχεται
δακρυρροοῦσα· τίνα τύχην ἀκούσομαι;

πενθεῖν μέν, εἴ τι δεσπόταισι τυγχάνει,
συγγνωστόν· εἰ δ΄ ἔτ΄ ἐστὶν ἔμψυχος γυνὴ
εἴτ΄ οὖν ὄλωλεν εἰδέναι βουλοίμεθ΄ ἄν.

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Καὶ ζῶσαν εἰπεῖν καὶ θανοῦσαν ἔστι σοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Καὶ πῶς ἂν αὐτὸς κατθάνοι τε καὶ βλέποι;

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Ἤδη προνωπής ἐστι καὶ ψυχορραγεῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἐλπὶς μὲν οὐκέτ΄ ἐστὶ σώιζεσθαι βίον;

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Πεπρωμένη γὰρ ἡμέρα βιάζεται.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Οὔκουν ἐπ΄ αὐτῆι πράσσεται τὰ πρόσφορα;

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Κόσμος γ΄ ἕτοιμος, ὧι σφε συνθάψει πόσις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ὦ τλῆμον, οἵας οἷος ὢν ἁμαρτάνεις.

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Οὔπω τόδ΄ οἶδε δεσπότης, πρὶν ἂν πάθηι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἴστω νυν εὐκλεής γε κατθανουμένη
γυνή τ΄ ἀρίστη τῶν ὑφ΄ ἡλίωι μακρῶι.

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Πῶς δ΄ οὐκ ἀρίστη; τίς δ΄ ἐναντιώσεται;
τί χρὴ λέγεσθαι τὴν ὑπερβεβλημένην
γυναῖκα; πῶς δ΄ ἂν μᾶλλον ἐνδείξαιτό τις
πόσιν προτιμῶσ΄ ἢ θέλουσ΄ ὑπερθανεῖν;
καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ πᾶσ΄ ἐπίσταται πόλις·
ἃ δ΄ ἐν δόμοις ἔδρασε θαυμάσηι κλύων.
Ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἤισθεθ΄ ἡμέραν τὴν κυρίαν
ἥκουσαν, ὕδασι ποταμίοις λευκὸν χρόα
ἐλούσατ΄, ἐκ δ΄ ἑλοῦσα κεδρίνων δόμων
ἐσθῆτα κόσμον τ΄ εὐπρεπῶς ἠσκήσατο,
καὶ στᾶσα πρόσθεν Ἑστίας κατηύξατο·
Δέσποιν΄, ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔρχομαι κατὰ χθονός,
πανύστατόν σε προσπίτνουσ΄ αἰτήσομαι
τέκν΄ ὀρφανεῦσαι τἀμά· καὶ τῶι μὲν φίλην
σύζευξον ἄλοχον, τῆι δὲ γενναῖον πόσιν·
μηδ΄ ὥσπερ αὐτῶν ἡ τεκοῦσ΄ ἀπόλλυμαι
θανεῖν ἀώρους παῖδας, ἀλλ΄ εὐδαίμονας
ἐν γῆι πατρώιαι τερπνὸν ἐκπλῆσαι βίον.
Πάντας δὲ βωμούς, οἳ κατ΄ Ἀδμήτου δόμους,
προσῆλθε κἀξέστεψε καὶ προσηύξατο,
πτόρθων ἀποσχίζουσα μυρσίνης φόβην,
ἄκλαυτος ἀστένακτος, οὐδὲ τοὐπιὸν
κακὸν μεθίστη χρωτὸς εὐειδῆ φύσιν.
Κἄπειτα θάλαμον ἐσπεσοῦσα καὶ λέχος
ἐνταῦθα δὴ ΄δάκρυσε καὶ λέγει τάδε·
Ὦ λέκτρον, ἔνθα παρθένει΄ ἔλυσ΄ ἐγὼ
κορεύματ΄ ἐκ τοῦδ΄ ἀνδρός, οὗ θνήισκω πάρος,
χαῖρ΄· οὐ γὰρ ἐχθαίρω σ΄· ἀπώλεσας δέ με
μόνον· προδοῦναι γάρ σ΄ ὀκνοῦσα καὶ πόσιν
θνήισκω. Σὲ δ΄ ἄλλη τις γυνὴ κεκτήσεται,

σώφρων μὲν οὐκ ἂν μᾶλλον, εὐτυχὴς δ΄ ἴσως.
Κυνεῖ δὲ προσπίτνουσα, πᾶν δὲ δέμνιον
ὀφθαλμοτέγκτωι δεύεται πλημμυρίδι.
Ἐπεὶ δὲ πολλῶν δακρύων εἶχεν κόρον,
στείχει προνωπὴς ἐκπεσοῦσα δεμνίων,
καὶ πολλὰ θαλάμων ἐξιοῦσ΄ ἐπεστράφη
κἄρριψεν αὐτὴν αὖθις ἐς κοίτην πάλιν.
Παῖδες δὲ πέπλων μητρὸς ἐξηρτημένοι
ἔκλαιον· ἡ δὲ λαμβάνουσ΄ ἐς ἀγκάλας
ἠσπάζετ΄ ἄλλοτ΄ ἄλλον ὡς θανουμένη.
Πάντες δ΄ ἔκλαιον οἰκέται κατὰ στέγας
δέσποιναν οἰκτίροντες· ἡ δὲ δεξιὰν
προύτειν΄ ἑκάστωι κοὔτις ἦν οὕτω κακὸς
ὃν οὐ προσεῖπε καὶ προσερρήθη πάλιν.
Τοιαῦτ΄ ἐν οἴκοις ἐστὶν Ἀδμήτου κακά.
Καὶ κατθανών τἂν ὤιχετ΄, ἐκφυγὼν δ΄ ἔχει
τοσοῦτον ἄλγος, οὔποθ΄ οὗ λελήσεται.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἦ που στενάζει τοισίδ΄ Ἄδμητος κακοῖς,
ἐσθλῆς γυναικὸς εἰ στερηθῆναί σφε χρή;

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Κλαίει γ΄ ἄκοιτιν ἐν χεροῖν φίλην ἔχων
καὶ μὴ προδοῦναι λίσσεται, τἀμήχανα
ζητῶν· φθίνει γὰρ καὶ μαραίνεται νόσωι.
Παρειμένη δέ, χειρὸς ἄθλιον βάρος,
ὅμως δέ, καίπερ σμικρόν, ἐμπνέουσ΄ ἔτι,
βλέψαι πρὸς αὐγὰς βούλεται τὰς ἡλίου
[ὡς οὔποτ΄ αὖθις ἀλλὰ νῦν πανύστατον
ἀκτῖνα κύκλον θ΄ ἡλίου προσόψεται].
Ἀλλ΄ εἶμι καὶ σὴν ἀγγελῶ παρουσίαν·
οὐ γάρ τι πάντες εὖ φρονοῦσι κοιράνοις,
ὥστ΄ ἐν κακοῖσιν εὐμενεῖς παρεστάναι·
σὺ δ΄ εἶ παλαιὸς δεσπόταις ἐμοῖς φίλος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἰὼ Ζεῦ, τίς ἂν πᾶι πόρος κακῶν
γένοιτο καὶ λύσις τύχας
ἃ πάρεστι κοιράνοις;
αἰαῖ·
ἔξεισί τις ἢ τέμω τρίχα
καὶ μέλανα στολμὸν πέπλων
ἀμφιβαλώμεθ΄ ἤδη;
δεινὰ μέν, φίλοι, δεινά γ΄, ἀλλ΄ ὅμως
θεοῖσιν εὐξόμεσθα·
θεῶν γὰρ δύναμις μεγίστα.
Ὦναξ Παιάν,
ἔξευρε μηχανάν τιν΄ Ἀδμήτωι κακῶν.
Πόριζε δὴ πόριζε· καὶ πάρος γὰρ
τοῦδ΄ ἐφεῦρες καὶ νῦν
λυτήριος ἐκ θανάτου γενοῦ,
φόνιον δ΄ ἀπόπαυσον Ἅιδαν.
Παπαῖ
ὦ παῖ Φέρητος, οἷ΄ ἔπρα
ξας δάμαρτος σᾶς στερείς.
Αἰαῖ·
ἄξια καὶ σφαγᾶς τάδε
καὶ πλέον ἢ βρόχωι δέραν
οὐρανίωι πελάσσαι.
Τὰν γὰρ οὐ φίλαν ἀλλὰ φιλτάταν
γυναῖκα κατθανοῦσαν
ἐν ἄματι τῶιδ΄ ἐπόψηι.
Ἰδοὺ ἰδού·
ἥδ΄ ἐκ δόμων δὴ καὶ πόσις πορεύεται.
Βόασον ὦ στέναξον ὦ Φεραία
χθὼν τὰν ἀρίσταν
γυναῖκα μαραινομέναν νόσωι
κατὰ γᾶς χθόνιον παρ΄ Ἅιδαν.
Οὔποτε φήσω γάμον εὐφραίνειν
πλέον ἢ λυπεῖν, τοῖς τε πάροιθεν
τεκμαιρόμενος καὶ τάσδε τύχας

λεύσσων βασιλέως, ὅστις ἀρίστης
ἀπλακὼν ἀλόχου τῆσδ΄ ἀβίωτον
τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον βιοτεύσει.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

Ἅλιε καὶ φάος ἀμέρας
οὐράνιαί τε δῖ 250
ναι νεφέλας δρομαίου.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ὁρᾶι σε κἀμέ, δύο κακῶς πεπραγότας,
οὐδὲν θεοὺς δράσαντας ἀνθ΄ ὅτου θανῆι.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

Γαῖά τε καὶ μελάθρων στέγαι
νυμφίδιοί τε κοῖ 255
ται πατρίας Ἰωλκοῦ.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἔπαιρε σαυτήν, ὦ τάλαινα, μὴ προδῶις·
λίσσου δὲ τοὺς κρατοῦντας οἰκτῖραι θεούς.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

Ὁρῶ δίκωπον ὁρῶ σκάφος ἐν
λίμναι· νεκύων δὲ πορθμεὺς
ἔχων χέρ΄ ἐπὶ κοντῶι Χάρων
μ΄ ἤδη καλεῖ· Τί μέλλεις;
ἐπείγου· σὺ κατείργεις. Τάδε τοί με
σπερχόμενος ταχύνει.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Οἴμοι· πικράν γε τήνδε μοι ναυκληρίαν 265
ἔλεξας. Ὦ δύσδαιμον, οἷα πάσχομεν.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

Ἄγει μ΄ ἄγει τις, ἄγει μέ τις (οὐχ
ὁρᾶις;) νεκύων ἐς αὐλάν,
ὑπ΄ ὀφρύσι κυαναυγέσι
βλέπων πτερωτὸς Ἅιδας.
Τί ῥέξεις; Ἄφες. Οἵαν ὁδὸν ἁ δει
λαιοτάτα προβαίνω.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Οἰκτρὰν φίλοισιν, ἐκ δὲ τῶν μάλιστ΄ ἐμοὶ
καὶ παισίν, οἷς δὴ πένθος ἐν κοινῶι τόδε.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

Μέθετε μέθετέ μ΄ ἤδη·
κλίνατ΄, οὐ σθένω ποσίν.
Πλησίον Ἅιδας, σκοτία
δ΄ ἐπ΄ ὄσσοισι νὺξ ἐφέρπει.
Τέκνα τέκν΄, οὐκέτι δὴ
οὐκέτι μάτηρ σφῶιν ἔστιν.
Χαίροντες, ὦ τέκνα, τόδε φάος ὁρῶιτον.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Οἴμοι· τόδ΄ ἔπος λυπρὸν ἀκούειν
καὶ παντὸς ἐμοὶ θανάτου μεῖζον.
Μὴ πρός σε θεῶν τλῆις με προδοῦναι,
μὴ πρὸς παίδων οὓς ὀρφανιεῖς,
ἀλλ΄ ἄνα, τόλμα.
Σοῦ γὰρ φθιμένης οὐκέτ΄ ἂν εἴην,
ἐν σοὶ δ΄ ἐσμὲν καὶ ζῆν καὶ μή·
σὴν γὰρ φιλίαν σεβόμεσθα.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

Ἄδμηθ΄, ὁρᾶις γὰρ τἀμὰ πράγμαθ΄ ὡς ἔχει,
λέξαι θέλω σοι πρὶν θανεῖν ἃ βούλομαι.
Ἐγώ σε πρεσβεύουσα κἀντὶ τῆς ἐμῆς
ψυχῆς καταστήσασα φῶς τόδ΄ εἰσορᾶν
θνήισκω, παρόν μοι μὴ θανεῖν, ὑπὲρ σέθεν,
ἀλλ΄ ἄνδρα τε σχεῖν Θεσσαλῶν ὃν ἤθελον
καὶ δῶμα ναίειν ὄλβιον τυραννίδι.
Οὐκ ἠθέλησα ζῆν ἀποσπασθεῖσα σοῦ
σὺν παισὶν ὀρφανοῖσιν, οὐδ΄ ἐφεισάμην
ἥβης, ἔχουσ΄ ἐν οἷς ἐτερπόμην ἐγώ.
Καίτοι σ΄ ὁ φύσας χἠ τεκοῦσα προύδοσαν,
καλῶς μὲν αὐτοῖς κατθανεῖν ἦκον βίου,
καλῶς δὲ σῶσαι παῖδα κεὐκλεῶς θανεῖν.
Μόνος γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἦσθα, κοὔτις ἐλπὶς ἦν
σοῦ κατθανόντος ἄλλα φιτύσειν τέκνα.
Κἀγώ τ΄ ἂν ἔζων καὶ σὺ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον,
κοὐκ ἂν μονωθεὶς σῆς δάμαρτος ἔστενες
καὶ παῖδας ὠρφάνευες. Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν
θεῶν τις ἐξέπραξεν ὥσθ΄ οὕτως ἔχειν.
Εἶέν· σύ νύν μοι τῶνδ΄ ἀπόμνησαι χάριν·
αἰτήσομαι γάρ σ΄ ἀξίαν μὲν οὔποτε
(ψυχῆς γὰρ οὐδέν ἐστι τιμιώτερον),
δίκαια δ΄, ὡς φήσεις σύ· τούσδε γὰρ φιλεῖς
οὐχ ἧσσον ἢ ΄γὼ παῖδας, εἴπερ εὖ φρονεῖς.
Τούτους ἀνάσχου δεσπότας ἐμῶν δόμων
καὶ μὴ ΄πιγήμηις τοῖσδε μητρυιὰν τέκνοις,
ἥτις κακίων οὖσ΄ ἐμοῦ γυνὴ φθόνωι
τοῖς σοῖσι κἀμοῖς παισὶ χεῖρα προσβαλεῖ.
Μὴ δῆτα δράσηις ταῦτά γ΄, αἰτοῦμαί σ΄ ἐγώ·
ἐχθρὰ γὰρ ἡ ΄πιοῦσα μητρυιὰ τέκνοις
τοῖς πρόσθ΄, ἐχίδνης οὐδὲν ἠπιωτέρα.
Καὶ παῖς μὲν ἄρσην πατέρ΄ ἔχει πύργον μέγαν
[ὃν καὶ προσεῖπε καὶ προσερρήθη πάλιν]·
σὺ δ΄, ὦ τέκνον μοι, πῶς κορευθήσηι καλῶς;
ποίας τυχοῦσα συζύγου τῶι σῶι πατρί;
μή σοί τιν΄ αἰσχρὰν προσβαλοῦσα κληδόνα
ἥβης ἐν ἀκμῆι σοὺς διαφθείρηι γάμους.

Οὐ γάρ σε μήτηρ οὔτε νυμφεύσει ποτὲ
οὔτ´ ἐν τόκοισι σοῖσι θαρσυνεῖ, τέκνον,
παροῦσ´, ἵν´ οὐδὲν μητρὸς εὐμενέστερον.
Δεῖ γὰρ θανεῖν με· καὶ τόδ´ οὐκ ἐς αὔριον
οὐδ´ ἐς τρίτην μοι μηνὸς ἔρχεται κακόν,
ἀλλ´ αὐτίκ´ ἐν τοῖς οὐκέτ´ οὖσι λέξομαι.
Χαίροντες εὐφραίνοισθε· καὶ σοὶ μέν, πόσι,
γυναῖκ´ ἀρίστην ἔστι κομπάσαι λαβεῖν,
ὑμῖν δέ, παῖδες, μητρὸς ἐκπεφυκέναι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

θάρσει· πρὸ τούτου γὰρ λέγειν οὐχ ἅζομαι·
δράσει τάδ´, εἴπερ μὴ φρενῶν ἁμαρτάνει.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἔσται τάδ´, ἔσται, μὴ τρέσηις· ἐπεί σ´ ἐγὼ
καὶ ζῶσαν εἶχον καὶ θανοῦσ´ ἐμὴ γυνὴ
μόνη κεκλήσηι, κοὔτις ἀντὶ σοῦ ποτε
τόνδ´ ἄνδρα νύμφη Θεσσαλὶς προσφθέγξεται.
Οὐκ ἔστιν οὕτως οὔτε πατρὸς εὐγενοῦς
οὔτ´ εἶδος ἄλλως ἐκπρεπεστάτη γυνή.
Ἅλις δὲ παίδων· τῶνδ´ ὄνησιν εὔχομαι
θεοῖς γενέσθαι· σοῦ γὰρ οὐκ ὠνήμεθα.
Οἴσω δὲ πένθος οὐκ ἐτήσιον τὸ σὸν
ἀλλ´ ἔστ´ ἂν αἰὼν οὐμὸς ἀντέχηι, γύναι,
στυγῶν μὲν ἥ μ´ ἔτικτεν, ἐχθαίρων δ´ ἐμὸν
πατέρα· λόγωι γὰρ ἦσαν οὐκ ἔργωι φίλοι.
Σὺ δ´ ἀντιδοῦσα τῆς ἐμῆς τὰ φίλτατα
ψυχῆς ἔσωσας. Ἆρά μοι στένειν πάρα
τοιᾶσδ´ ἁμαρτάνοντι συζύγου σέθεν;
παύσω δὲ κώμους συμποτῶν θ´ ὁμιλίας
στεφάνους τε μοῦσάν θ´ ἣ κατεῖχ´ ἐμοὺς δόμους.
Οὐ γάρ ποτ´ οὔτ´ ἂν βαρβίτου θίγοιμ´ ἔτι
οὔτ´ ἂν φρέν´ ἐξάραιμι πρὸς Λίβυν λακεῖν
αὐλόν· σὺ γάρ μου τέρψιν ἐξείλου βίου.
Σοφῆι δὲ χειρὶ τεκτόνων δέμας τὸ σὸν

εἰκασθὲν ἐν λέκτροισιν ἐκταθήσεται,
ᾧι προσπεσοῦμαι καὶ περιπτύσσων χέρας
ὄνομα καλῶν σὸν τὴν φίλην ἐν ἀγκάλαις
δόξω γυναῖκα καίπερ οὐκ ἔχων ἔχειν·
ψυχρὰν μέν, οἶμαι, τέρψιν, ἀλλ´ ὅμως βάρος
ψυχῆς ἀπαντλοίην ἄν. Ἐν δ´ ὀνείρασιν
φοιτῶσά μ´ εὐφραίνοις ἄν· ἡδὺ γὰρ φίλους
κἀν νυκτὶ λεύσσειν, ὅντιν´ ἂν παρῆι χρόνον.
Εἰ δ´ Ὀρφέως μοι γλῶσσα καὶ μέλος παρῆν,
ὥστ´ ἢ κόρην Δήμητρος ἢ κείνης πόσιν
ὕμνοισι κηλήσαντά σ´ ἐξ Ἅιδου λαβεῖν,
κατῆλθον ἄν, καί μ´ οὔθ´ ὁ Πλούτωνος κύων
οὔθ´ οὐπὶ κώπηι ψυχοπομπὸς ἂν Χάρων
ἔσχ´ ἄν, πρὶν ἐς φῶς σὸν καταστῆσαι βίον.
Ἀλλ´ οὖν ἐκεῖσε προσδόκα μ´, ὅταν θάνω,
καὶ δῶμ´ ἑτοίμαζ´, ὡς συνοικήσουσά μοι.
Ἐν ταῖσιν αὐταῖς γάρ μ´ ἐπισκήψω κέδροις
σοὶ τούσδε θεῖναι πλευρά τ´ ἐκτεῖναι πέλας
πλευροῖσι τοῖς σοῖς· μηδὲ γὰρ θανών ποτε
σοῦ χωρὶς εἴην τῆς μόνης πιστῆς ἐμοί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Καὶ μὴν ἐγώ σοι πένθος ὡς φίλος φίλωι
λυπρὸν συνοίσω τῆσδε· καὶ γὰρ ἀξία.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

Ὦ παῖδες, αὐτοὶ δὴ τάδ´ εἰσηκούσατε
πατρὸς λέγοντος μὴ γαμεῖν ἄλλην ποτὲ
γυναῖκ´ ἐφ´ ὑμῖν μηδ´ ἀτιμάσειν ἐμέ.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Καὶ νῦν γέ φημι καὶ τελευτήσω τάδε.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

Ἐπὶ τοῖσδε παῖδας χειρὸς ἐξ ἐμῆς δέχου.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Δέχομαι, φίλον γε δῶρον ἐκ φίλης χερός.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

Σύ νυν γενοῦ τοῖσδ΄ ἀντ΄ ἐμοῦ μήτηρ τέκνοις.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Πολλή μ΄ ἀνάγκη, σοῦ γ΄ ἀπεστερημένοις.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

Ὦ τέκν΄, ὅτε ζῆν χρῆν μ΄, ἀπέρχομαι κάτω.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Οἴμοι, τί δράσω δῆτα σοῦ μονούμενος;

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

Χρόνος μαλάξει σ΄· οὐδέν ἐσθ΄ ὁ κατθανών.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἄγου με σὺν σοί, πρὸς θεῶν, ἄγου κάτω.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

Ἀρκοῦμεν ἡμεῖς οἱ προθνήισκοντες σέθεν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ὦ δαῖμον, οἵας συζύγου μ΄ ἀποστερεῖς.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

Καὶ μὴν σκοτεινὸν ὄμμα μου βαρύνεται.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἀπωλόμην ἄρ΄, εἴ με δὴ λείψεις, γύναι.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

Ὡς οὐκέτ΄ οὖσαν οὐδὲν ἂν λέγοις ἐμέ.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ὄρθου πρόσωπον, μὴ λίπηις παῖδας σέθεν.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

Οὐ δῆθ΄ ἑκοῦσά γ΄· ἀλλὰ χαίρετ΄, ὦ τέκνα.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Βλέψον πρὸς αὐτούς, βλέψον.

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

Οὐδέν εἰμ΄ ἔτι.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Τί δρᾶις; Προλείπεις;

ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ

Χαῖρ΄.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἀπωλόμην τάλας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Βέβηκεν, οὐκέτ΄ ἔστιν Ἀδμήτου γυνή.

ΠΑΙΣ

Ἰώ μοι τύχας. μαῖα δὴ κάτω
Βέβακεν, οὐκέτ΄ ἔστιν, ὦ
πάτερ, ὑφ΄ ἁλίωι,
προλιποῦσα δ΄ ἐμὸν βίον ὠρφάνισεν τλάμων.
Ἴδε γὰρ ἴδε βλέφαρον καὶ
παρατόνους χέρας.
Ὑπάκουσον ἄκουσον, ὦ μᾶτερ, ἀντιάζω.
Ἐγώ σ΄ ἐγώ, μᾶτερ,
καλοῦμαι ὁ σὸς ποτὶ σοῖσι πίτ
νων στόμασιν νεοσσός.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Τὴν οὐ κλύουσαν οὐδ΄ ὁρῶσαν· ὥστ΄ ἐγὼ
καὶ σφὼ βαρείαι συμφορᾶι πεπλήγμεθα.

ΠΑΙΣ

Νέος ἐγώ, πάτερ, λείπομαι φίλας
μονόστολός τε ματρός· ὦ
σχέτλια δὴ παθὼν
ἐγὼ ἔργ΄, ἃ σὺ σύγκασί μοι συνέτλας κούρα.
Ὦ πάτερ,
ἀνόνατ΄ ἀνόνατ΄ ἐνύμφευσας οὐδὲ γήρως
ἔβας τέλος σὺν τᾶιδ΄·
ἔφθιτο γὰρ πάρος· οἰχομένας δὲ σοῦ,
μᾶτερ, ὄλωλεν οἶκος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἄδμητ΄, ἀνάγκη τάσδε συμφορὰς φέρειν·
οὐ γάρ τι πρῶτος οὐδὲ λοίσθιος βροτῶν
γυναικὸς ἐσθλῆς ἤμπλακες· γίγνωσκε δὲ
ὡς πᾶσιν ἡμῖν κατθανεῖν ὀφείλεται.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἐπίσταμαί τοι, κοὐκ ἄφνω κακὸν τόδε
προσέπτατ΄· εἰδὼς δ΄ αὔτ΄ ἐτειρόμην πάλαι.
Ἀλλ΄, ἐκφορὰν γὰρ τοῦδε θήσομαι νεκροῦ,
πάρεστε καὶ μένοντες ἀντηχήσατε
παιᾶνα τῶι κάτωθεν ἄσπονδον θεῶι.
Πᾶσιν δὲ Θεσσαλοῖσιν ὧν ἐγὼ κρατῶ
πένθους γυναικὸς τῆσδε κοινοῦσθαι λέγω
κουρᾶι ξυρήκει καὶ μελαμπέπλωι στολῆι·
τέθριππά θ΄ οἳ ζεύγνυσθε καὶ μονάμπυκας
πώλους, σιδήρωι τέμνετ΄ αὐχένων φόβην.
Αὐλῶν δὲ μὴ κατ΄ ἄστυ, μὴ λύρας κτύπος
ἔστω σελήνας δώδεκ΄ ἐκπληρουμένας.
Οὐ γάρ τιν΄ ἄλλον φίλτερον θάψω νεκρὸν
τοῦδ΄ οὐδ΄ ἀμείνον΄ εἰς ἔμ΄· ἀξία δέ μοι
τιμῆς, ἐπεὶ τέθνηκεν ἀντ΄ ἐμοῦ μόνη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ὦ Πελίου θύγατερ,
χαίρουσά μοι εἰν Ἀίδα δόμοισιν
τὸν ἀνάλιον οἶκον οἰκετεύοις.
Ἴστω δ΄ Ἀίδας ὁ μελαγχαί
τας θεὸς ὅς τ΄ ἐπὶ κώπαι
πηδαλίωι τε γέρων
νεκροπομπὸς ἵζει
πολὺ δὴ πολὺ δὴ γυναῖκ΄ ἀρίσταν
λίμναν Ἀχεροντίαν πορεύ
σας ἐλάται δικώπωι.
Πολλά σε μουσοπόλοι
μέλψουσι καθ΄ ἑπτάτονόν τ΄ ὀρείαν
χέλυν ἔν τ΄ ἀλύροις κλέοντες ὕμνοις,
Σπάρται κυκλὰς ἀνίκα Καρνεί
ου περινίσεται ὥρα
μηνός, ἀειρομένας
παννύχου σελάνας,

λιπαραῖσί τ΄ ἐν ὀλβίαις Ἀθάναις.
Τοίαν ἔλιπες θανοῦσα μολ
πὰν μελέων ἀοιδοῖς.
Εἴθ΄ ἐπ΄ ἐμοὶ μὲν εἴη,
δυναίμαν δέ σε πέμψαι
φάος ἐξ Ἀίδα τεράμνων
καὶ Κωκυτοῖο ῥεέθρων
ποταμίαι νερτέραι τε κώπαι.
Σὺ γάρ, ὦ μόνα ὦ φίλα γυναικῶν,
σὺ τὸν αὐτᾶς
ἔτλας ἔτλας πόσιν ἀντὶ σᾶς ἀμεῖψαι
ψυχᾶς ἐξ Ἅιδα. Κούφα σοι
χθὼν ἐπάνωθε πέσοι, γύναι. Εἰ δέ τι
καινὸν ἕλοιτο πόσις λέχος, ἦ μάλ΄ ἂν
ἔμοιγ΄ ἂν εἴη στυγη
θεὶς τέκνοις τε τοῖς σοῖς.
Ματέρος οὐ θελούσας
πρὸ παιδὸς χθονὶ κρύψαι
δέμας οὐδὲ πατρὸς γεραιοῦ
ὃν ἔτεκον δ΄, οὐκ ἔτλαν ῥύεσθαι,
σχετλίω, πολιὰν ἔχοντε χαίταν.
Σὺ δ΄ ἐν ἥβαι
νέαι νέου προθανοῦσα φωτὸς οἴχηι.
Τοιαύτας εἴη μοι κῦρσαι
συνδυάδος φιλίας ἀλόχου· τὸ γὰρ
ἐν βιότωι σπάνιον μέρος· ἦ γὰρ ἂν
ἔμοιγ΄ ἄλυπος δι΄ αἰ
ὤνος ἂν ξυνείη.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ξένοι, Φεραίας τῆσδε κωμῆται χθονός,
Ἄδμητον ἐν δόμοισιν ἆρα κιγχάνω;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἔστ΄ ἐν δόμοισι παῖς Φέρητος, Ἡράκλεις.
ἀλλ΄ εἰπὲ χρεία τίς σε Θεσσαλῶν χθόνα
πέμπει, Φεραῖον ἄστυ προσβῆναι τόδε.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Τιρυνθίωι πράσσω τιν΄ Εὐρυσθεῖ πόνον.

ΧΟΡΟΣΚ

Καὶ ποῖ πορεύηι; τῶι συνέζευξαι πλάνωι;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Θρηικὸς τέτρωρον ἅρμα Διομήδους μέτα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Πῶς οὖν δυνήσηι; μῶν ἄπειρος εἶ ξένου;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ἄπειρος· οὔπω Βιστόνων ἦλθον χθόνα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Οὐκ ἔστιν ἵππων δεσπόσαι σ΄ ἄνευ μάχης.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ἀλλ΄ οὐδ΄ ἀπειπεῖν μὴν πόνους οἷόν τ΄ ἐμοί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Κτανὼν ἄρ΄ ἥξεις ἢ θανὼν αὐτοῦ μενεῖς.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Οὐ τόνδ΄ ἀγῶνα πρῶτον ἂν δράμοιμ΄ ἐγώ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Τί δ΄ ἂν κρατήσας δεσπότην πλέον λάβοις;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Πώλους ἀπάξω κοιράνωι Τιρυνθίωι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Οὐκ εὐμαρὲς χαλινὸν ἐμβαλεῖν γνάθοις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Εἰ μή γε πῦρ πνέουσι μυκτήρων ἄπο.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἀλλ΄ ἄνδρας ἀρταμοῦσι λαιψηραῖς γνάθοις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Θηρῶν ὀρείων χόρτον, οὐχ ἵππων, λέγεις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Φάτνας ἴδοις ἂν αἵμασιν πεφυρμένας.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Τίνος δ΄ ὁ θρέψας παῖς πατρὸς κομπάζεται;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἄρεος, ζαχρύσου Θρηικίας πέλτης ἄναξ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Καὶ τόνδε τοὐμοῦ δαίμονος πόνον λέγεις
(σκληρὸς γὰρ αἰεὶ καὶ πρὸς αἶπος ἔρχεται),

εἰ χρή με παισὶν οἷς Ἄρης ἐγείνατο
μάχην συνάψαι, πρῶτα μὲν Λυκάονι
αὖθις δὲ Κύκνωι, τόνδε δ΄ ἔρχομαι τρίτον
ἀγῶνα πώλοις δεσπότηι τε συμβαλῶν.
Ἀλλ΄ οὔτις ἔστιν ὃς τὸν Ἀλκμήνης γόνον
τρέσαντα χεῖρα πολεμίαν ποτ΄ ὄψεται.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Καὶ μὴν ὅδ΄ αὐτὸς τῆσδε κοίρανος χθονὸς
Ἄδμητος ἔξω δωμάτων πορεύεται.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Χαῖρ΄, ὦ Διὸς παῖ Περσέως τ΄ ἀφ΄ αἵματος.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ἄδμητε, καὶ σὺ χαῖρε, Θεσσαλῶν ἄναξ.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Θέλοιμ΄ ἄν· εὔνουν δ΄ ὄντα σ΄ ἐξεπίσταμαι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Τί χρῆμα κουρᾶι τῆιδε πενθίμωι πρέπεις;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Θάπτειν τιν΄ ἐν τῆιδ΄ ἡμέραι μέλλω νεκρόν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ἀπ΄ οὖν τέκνων σῶν πημονὴν εἴργοι θεός.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ζῶσιν κατ΄ οἴκους παῖδες οὓς ἔφυσ΄ ἐγώ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Πατήρ γε μὴν ὡραῖος, εἴπερ οἴχεται.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Κἀκεῖνος ἔστι χὴ τεκοῦσά μ΄, Ἡράκλεις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Οὐ μὴν γυνή γ΄ ὄλωλεν Ἄλκηστις σέθεν;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Διπλοῦς ἐπ΄ αὐτῆι μῦθος ἔστι μοι λέγειν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Πότερα θανούσης εἶπας ἢ ζώσης ἔτι; 535

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἔστιν τε κοὐκέτ΄ ἔστιν, ἀλγύνει δέ με.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Οὐδέν τι μᾶλλον οἶδ΄· ἄσημα γὰρ λέγεις.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Οὐκ οἶσθα μοίρας ἧς τυχεῖν αὐτὴν χρεών;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Οἶδ΄, ἀντὶ σοῦ γε κατθανεῖν ὑφειμένην.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Πῶς οὖν ἔτ΄ ἔστιν, εἴπερ ἤινεσεν τάδε;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ἆ, μὴ πρόκλαι΄ ἄκοιτιν, ἐς τότ΄ ἀμβαλοῦ.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Τέθνηχ΄ ὁ μέλλων κἀνθάδ΄ ὢν οὐκ ἔστ΄ ἔτι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Χωρὶς τό τ΄ εἶναι καὶ τὸ μὴ νομίζεται.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Σὺ τῆιδε κρίνεις, Ἡράκλεις, κείνηι δ΄ ἐγώ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Τί δῆτα κλαίεις; τίς φίλων ὁ κατθανών;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Γυνή· γυναικὸς ἀρτίως μεμνήμεθα.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ὀθνεῖος ἢ σοὶ συγγενὴς γεγῶσά τις;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ὀθνεῖος, ἄλλως δ΄ ἦν ἀναγκαία δόμοις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Πῶς οὖν ἐν οἴκοις σοῖσιν ὤλεσεν βίον;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Πατρὸς θανόντος ἐνθάδ΄ ὠρφανεύετο.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Φεῦ.
εἴθ΄ ηὕρομέν σ΄, Ἄδμητε, μὴ λυπούμενον.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ὡς δὴ τί δράσων τόνδ΄ ὑπορράπτεις λόγον;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ξένων πρὸς ἄλλων ἑστίαν πορεύσομαι.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Οὐκ ἔστιν, ὦναξ· μὴ τοσόνδ΄ ἔλθοι κακόν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Λυπουμένοις ὀχληρός, εἰ μόλοι, ξένος.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Τεθνᾶσιν οἱ θανόντες· ἀλλ΄ ἴθ΄ ἐς δόμους.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Αἰσχρόν γε παρὰ κλαίουσι θοινᾶσθαι ξένους.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Χωρὶς ξενῶνές εἰσιν οἷ σ΄ ἐσάξομεν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Μέθες με καί σοι μυρίαν ἔξω χάριν. 560

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλου σ΄ ἀνδρὸς ἑστίαν μολεῖν.
Ἠγοῦ σὺ τῶιδε δωμάτων ἐξωπίους
ξενῶνας οἴξας τοῖς τ΄ ἐφεστῶσιν φράσον
σίτων παρεῖναι πλῆθος, εὖ δὲ κλήισατε
θύρας μεταύλους· οὐ πρέπει θοινωμένους
κλύειν στεναγμῶν οὐδὲ λυπεῖσθαι ξένους.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Τί δρᾶις; τοσαύτης συμφορᾶς προσκειμένης,
Ἄδμητε, τολμᾶις ξενοδοκεῖν; τί μῶρος εἶ;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

ἀλλ΄ εἰ δόμων σφε καὶ πόλεως ἀπήλασα
ξένον μολόντα, μᾶλλον ἄν μ΄ ἐπήινεσας;
οὐ δῆτ΄, ἐπεί μοι συμφορὰ μὲν οὐδὲν ἂν
μείων ἐγίγνετ΄, ἀξενώτερος δ΄ ἐγώ.
Καὶ πρὸς κακοῖσιν ἄλλο τοῦτ΄ ἂν ἦν κακόν,
δόμους καλεῖσθαι τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἐχθροξένους.
Αὐτὸς δ΄ ἀρίστου τοῦδε τυγχάνω ξένου,
ὅταν ποτ΄ Ἄργους διψίαν ἔλθω χθόνα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Πῶς οὖν ἔκρυπτες τὸν παρόντα δαίμονα,
φίλου μολόντος ἀνδρὸς ὡς αὐτὸς λέγεις;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Οὐκ ἄν ποτ΄ ἠθέλησεν εἰσελθεῖν δόμους,
εἰ τῶν ἐμῶν τι πημάτων ἐγνώρισεν.
Καὶ τῶι μέν, οἶμαι, δρῶν τάδ΄ οὐ φρονεῖν δοκῶ
οὐδ΄ αἰνέσει με· τἀμὰ δ΄ οὐκ ἐπίσταται
μέλαθρ΄ ἀπωθεῖν οὐδ΄ ἀτιμάζειν ξένους.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ὦ πολύξεινος καὶ ἐλευθέρου ἀνδρὸς ἀεί ποτ΄
οἶκος,
σέ τοι καὶ ὁ Πύθιος εὐλύρας Ἀπόλλων
ἠξίωσε ναίειν,
ἔτλα δὲ σοῖσι μηλονόμας
ἐν νομοῖς γενέσθαι,
δοχμιᾶν διὰ κλειτύων
βοσκήμασι σοῖσι συρίζων
ποιμνίτας ὑμεναίους.
Σὺν δ΄ ἐποιμαίνοντο χαρᾶι μελέων βαλιαί τε
λύγκες,
ἔβα δὲ λιποῦσ΄ Ὄθρυος νάπαν λεόντων
ἁ δαφοινὸς ἴλα·
χόρευσε δ΄ ἀμφὶ σὰν κιθάραν,
Φοῖβε, ποικιλόθριξ
νεβρὸς ὑψικόμων πέραν
βαίνουσ΄ ἐλατᾶν σφυρῶι κούφωι,
χαίρουσ΄ εὔφρονι μολπᾶι.
Τοιγὰρ πολυμηλοτάταν
ἑστίαν οἰκεῖ παρὰ καλλίναον
Βοιβίαν λίμναν. Ἀρότοις δὲ γυᾶν
καὶ πεδίων δαπέδοις ὅρον ἀμφὶ μὲν
ἀελίου κνεφαίαν
ἱππόστασιν αἰθέρα τὰν Μολοσ
σῶν τίθεται,
πόντιον δ΄ Αἰγαῖον ἐπ΄ ἀκτὰν
ἁλίμενον Πηλίου κρατύνει.
Καὶ νῦν δόμον ἀμπετάσας
δέξατο ξεῖνον νοτερῶι βλεφάρωι,
τᾶς φίλας κλαίων ἀλόχου νέκυν ἐν
δώμασιν ἀρτιθανῆ· τὸ γὰρ εὐγενὲς
ἐκφέρεται πρὸς αἰδῶ.
Ἐν τοῖς ἀγαθοῖσι δὲ πάντ΄ ἔνε
στιν· σοφίας ἄγαμαι.
Πρὸς δ΄ ἐμᾶι ψυχᾶι θράσος ἦσται
θεοσεβῆ φῶτα κεδνὰ πράξειν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἀνδρῶν Φεραίων εὐμενὴς παρουσία,
νέκυν μὲν ἤδη πάντ΄ ἔχοντα πρόσπολοι
φέρουσιν ἄρδην πρὸς τάφον τε καὶ πυράν·
ὑμεῖς δὲ τὴν θανοῦσαν, ὡς νομίζεται,
προσείπατ΄ ἐξιοῦσαν ὑστάτην ὁδόν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Καὶ μὴν ὁρῶ σὸν πατέρα γηραιῶι ποδὶ
στείχοντ΄, ὀπαδούς τ΄ ἐν χεροῖν δάμαρτι σῆι
κόσμον φέροντας, νερτέρων ἀγάλματα.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

Ἥκω κακοῖσι σοῖσι συγκάμνων, τέκνον·
ἐσθλῆς γάρ, οὐδεὶς ἀντερεῖ, καὶ σώφρονος
γυναικὸς ἡμάρτηκας. Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν
φέρειν ἀνάγκη καίπερ ὄντα δύσφορα.
Δέχου δὲ κόσμον τόνδε καὶ κατὰ χθονὸς
ἴτω. Τὸ ταύτης σῶμα τιμᾶσθαι χρεών,
ἥτις γε τῆς σῆς προύθανε ψυχῆς, τέκνον,
καί μ΄ οὐκ ἄπαιδ΄ ἔθηκεν οὐδ΄ εἴασε σοῦ
στερέντα γήραι πενθίμωι καταφθίνειν,
πάσαις δ΄ ἔθηκεν εὐκλεέστερον βίον
γυναιξίν, ἔργον τλᾶσα γενναῖον τόδε.
Ὦ τόνδε μὲν σώσασ΄, ἀναστήσασα δὲ
ἡμᾶς πίτνοντας, χαῖρε, κἀν Ἅιδου δόμοις
εὖ σοι γένοιτο. Φημὶ τοιούτους γάμους
λύειν βροτοῖσιν, ἢ γαμεῖν οὐκ ἄξιον.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Οὔτ΄ ἦλθες ἐς τόνδ΄ ἐξ ἐμοῦ κληθεὶς τάφον
οὔτ΄ ἐν φίλοισι σὴν παρουσίαν λέγω.
Κόσμον δὲ τὸν σὸν οὔποθ΄ ἥδ΄ ἐνδύσεται·
οὐ γάρ τι τῶν σῶν ἐνδεὴς ταφήσεται.

Τότε ξυναλγεῖν χρῆν σ΄ ὅτ΄ ὠλλύμην ἐγώ·
σὺ δ΄ ἐκποδὼν στὰς καὶ παρεὶς ἄλλωι θανεῖν
νέωι γέρων ὢν τόνδ΄ ἀποιμώξηι νεκρόν;
οὐκ ἦσθ΄ ἄρ΄ ὀρθῶς τοῦδε σώματος πατήρ,
οὐδ΄ ἡ τεκεῖν φάσκουσα καὶ κεκλημένη
μήτηρ μ΄ ἔτικτε, δουλίου δ΄ ἀφ΄ αἵματος
μαστῶι γυναικὸς σῆς ὑπεβλήθην λάθραι.
Ἔδειξας εἰς ἔλεγχον ἐξελθὼν ὃς εἶ,
καί μ΄ οὐ νομίζω παῖδα σὸν πεφυκέναι.
Ἦ τἄρα πάντων διαπρέπεις ἀψυχίαι,
ὃς τηλικόσδ΄ ὢν κἀπὶ τέρμ΄ ἥκων βίου
οὐκ ἠθέλησας οὐδ΄ ἐτόλμησας θανεῖν
τοῦ σοῦ πρὸ παιδός, ἀλλὰ τήνδ΄ εἰάσατε
γυναῖκ΄ ὀθνείαν, ἣν ἐγὼ καὶ μητέρα
καὶ πατέρ΄ ἂν ἐνδίκως ἂν ἡγοίμην μόνην.
Καίτοι καλόν γ΄ ἂν τόνδ΄ ἀγῶν΄ ἠγωνίσω
τοῦ σοῦ πρὸ παιδὸς κατθανών, βραχὺς δέ σοι
πάντως ὁ λοιπὸς ἦν βιώσιμος χρόνος.
[Κἀγώ τ΄ ἂν ἔζων χἤδε τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον,
κοὐκ ἂν μονωθεὶς ἔστενον κακοῖς ἐμοῖς.]
Καὶ μὴν ὅσ΄ ἄνδρα χρὴ παθεῖν εὐδαίμονα
πέπονθας· ἤβησας μὲν ἐν τυραννίδι,
παῖς δ΄ ἦν ἐγώ σοι τῶνδε διάδοχος δόμων,
ὥστ΄ οὐκ ἄτεκνος κατθανὼν ἄλλοις δόμον
λείψειν ἔμελλες ὀρφανὸν διαρπάσαι.
Οὐ μὴν ἐρεῖς γέ μ΄ ὡς ἀτιμάζοντα σὸν
γῆρας θανεῖν προύδωκας, ὅστις αἰδόφρων
πρὸς σ΄ ἦ μάλιστα· κἀντὶ τῶνδέ μοι χάριν
τοιάνδε καὶ σὺ χἠ τεκοῦσ΄ ἠλλαξάτην.
Τοιγὰρ φυτεύων παῖδας οὐκέτ΄ ἂν φθάνοις,
οἳ γηροβοσκήσουσι καὶ θανόντα σε
περιστελοῦσι καὶ προθήσονται νεκρόν.
Οὐ γάρ σ΄ ἔγωγε τῆιδ΄ ἐμῆι θάψω χερί·
τέθνηκα γὰρ δὴ τοὐπὶ σ΄. Εἰ δ΄ ἄλλου τυχὼν
σωτῆρος αὐγὰς εἰσορῶ, κείνου λέγω
καὶ παῖδά μ΄ εἶναι καὶ φίλον γηροτρόφον.
Μάτην ἄρ΄ οἱ γέροντες εὔχονται θανεῖν,

γῆρας ψέγοντες καὶ μακρὸν χρόνον βίου·
ἢν δ΄ ἐγγὺς ἔλθηι θάνατος, οὐδεὶς βούλεται
θνήισκειν, τὸ γῆρας δ΄ οὐκέτ΄ ἔστ΄ αὐτοῖς βαρύ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Παύσασθ΄, ἅλις γὰρ ἡ παροῦσα συμφορά·
ὦ παῖ, πατρὸς δὲ μὴ παροξύνηις φρένας.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

Ὦ παῖ, τίν΄ αὐχεῖς, πότερα Λυδὸν ἢ Φρύγα
κακοῖς ἐλαύνειν ἀργυρώνητον σέθεν;
οὐκ οἶσθα Θεσσαλόν με κἀπὸ Θεσσαλοῦ
πατρὸς γεγῶτα γνησίως ἐλεύθερον;
ἄγαν ὑβρίζεις καὶ νεανίας λόγους
ῥίπτων ἐς ἡμᾶς οὐ βαλὼν οὕτως ἄπει.
Ἐγὼ δέ σ΄ οἴκων δεσπότην ἐγεινάμην
κἄθρεψ΄, ὀφείλω δ΄ οὐχ ὑπερθνήισκειν σέθεν·
οὐ γὰρ πατρῶιον τόνδ΄ ἐδεξάμην νόμον,
παίδων προθνήισκειν πατέρας, οὐδ΄ Ἑλληνικόν.
Σαυτῶι γὰρ εἴτε δυστυχὴς εἴτ΄ εὐτυχὴς
ἔφυς· ἃ δ΄ ἡμῶν χρῆν σε τυγχάνειν ἔχεις.
Πολλῶν μὲν ἄρχεις, πολυπλέθρους δέ σοι γύας
λείψω· πατρὸς γὰρ ταὔτ΄ ἐδεξάμην πάρα.
Τί δῆτά σ΄ ἠδίκηκα; τοῦ σ΄ ἀποστερῶ;
μὴ θνῆισχ΄ ὑπὲρ τοῦδ΄ ἀνδρός, οὐδ΄ ἐγὼ πρὸ σοῦ.
Χαίρεις ὁρῶν φῶς· πατέρα δ΄ οὐ χαίρειν δοκεῖς;
ἦ μὴν πολύν γε τὸν κάτω λογίζομαι
χρόνον, τὸ δὲ ζῆν σμικρὸν ἀλλ΄ ὅμως γλυκύ.
Σὺ γοῦν ἀναιδῶς διεμάχου τὸ μὴ θανεῖν
καὶ ζῆις παρελθὼν τὴν πεπρωμένην τύχην,
ταύτην κατακτάς· εἶτ΄ ἐμὴν ἀψυχίαν
λέγεις, γυναικός, ὦ κάκισθ΄, ἡσσημένος,
ἢ τοῦ καλοῦ σοῦ προύθανεν νεανίου;
σοφῶς δ΄ ἐφηῦρες ὥστε μὴ θανεῖν ποτε,
εἰ τὴν παροῦσαν κατθανεῖν πείσεις ἀεὶ
γυναῖχ΄ ὑπὲρ σοῦ· κἆιτ΄ ὀνειδίζεις φίλοις

τοῖς μὴ θέλουσι δρᾶν τάδ΄, αὐτὸς ὢν κακός;
σίγα· νόμιζε δ΄, εἰ σὺ τὴν σαυτοῦ φιλεῖς
ψυχήν, φιλεῖν ἅπαντας· εἰ δ΄ ἡμᾶς κακῶς
ἐρεῖς, ἀκούσηι πολλὰ κοὐ ψευδῆ κακά.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Πλείω λέλεκται νῦν τε καὶ τὸ πρὶν κακά· 720
παῦσαι δέ, πρέσβυ, παῖδα σὸν κακορροθῶν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Λέγ΄, ὡς ἐμοῦ λέξαντος· εἰ δ΄ ἀλγεῖς κλύων
τἀληθές, οὐ χρῆν σ΄ εἰς ἔμ΄ ἐξαμαρτάνειν.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

Σοῦ δ΄ ἂν προθνήισκων μᾶλλον ἐξημάρτανον.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ταὐτὸν γὰρ ἡβῶντ΄ ἄνδρα καὶ πρέσβυν θανεῖν;

ΦΕΡΗΣ

Ψυχῆι μιᾶι ζῆν, οὐ δυοῖν, ὀφείλομεν. 725

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Καὶ μὴν Διός γε μείζονα ζώνης χρόνον.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

Ἀρᾶι γονεῦσιν οὐδὲν ἔκδικον παθών;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Μακροῦ βίου γὰρ ἠισθόμην ἐρῶντά σε.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

Ἀλλ΄ οὐ σὺ νεκρὸν ἀντὶ σοῦ τόνδ΄ ἐκφέρεις;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Σημεῖα τῆς σῆς γ΄, ὦ κάκιστ΄, ἀψυχίας.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

Οὗτοι πρὸς ἡμῶν γ΄ ὤλετ΄· οὐκ ἐρεῖς τόδε.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Φεῦ·

Εἴθ΄ ἀνδρὸς ἔλθοις τοῦδέ γ΄ ἐς χρείαν ποτέ.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

Μνήστευε πολλάς, ὡς θάνωσι πλείονες.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Σοὶ τοῦτ΄ ὄνειδος· οὐ γὰρ ἤθελες θανεῖν.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

Φίλον τὸ φέγγος τοῦτο τοῦ θεοῦ, φίλον.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Κακὸν τὸ λῆμα κοὐκ ἐν ἀνδράσιν τὸ σόν.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

Οὐκ ἐγγελᾶις γέροντα βαστάζων νεκρόν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Θανῆι γε μέντοι δυσκλεής, ὅταν θάνηις.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

Κακῶς ἀκούειν οὐ μέλει θανόντι μοι.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Φεῦ φεῦ· τὸ γῆρας ὡς ἀναιδείας πλέων.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

Ἥδ΄ οὐκ ἀναιδής· τήνδ΄ ἐφηῦρες ἄφρονα.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἄπελθε κἀμὲ τόνδ΄ ἔα θάψαι νεκρόν.

ΦΕΡΗΣ

Ἄπειμι· θάψεις δ΄ αὐτὸς ὢν αὐτῆς φονεύς,
δίκας δὲ δώσεις σοῖσι κηδεσταῖς ἔτι·
ἦ τἄρ΄ Ἄκαστος οὐκέτ΄ ἔστ΄ ἐν ἀνδράσιν,
εἰ μή σ΄ ἀδελφῆς αἷμα τιμωρήσεται.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἔρρων νυν αὐτὸς χἠ ξυνοικήσασά σοι,
ἄπαιδε παιδὸς ὄντος, ὥσπερ ἄξιοι,
γηράσκετ΄· οὐ γὰρ τῶιδ΄ ἔτ΄ ἐς ταὐτὸν στέγος
νεῖσθ΄· εἰ δ΄ ἀπειπεῖν χρῆν με κηρύκων ὕπο
τὴν σὴν πατρώιαν ἑστίαν, ἀπεῖπον ἄν.
Ἡμεῖς δέ, τοὺν ποσὶν γὰρ οἰστέον κακόν.
Στείχωμεν, ὡς ἂν ἐν πυρᾶι θῶμεν νεκρόν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἰὼ ἰώ. Σχετλία τόλμης,
ὦ γενναία καὶ μέγ΄ ἀρίστη,

χαῖρε· πρόφρων σε χθόνιός θ΄ Ἑρμῆς
Ἄιδης τε δέχοιτ΄. Εἰ δέ τι κἀκεῖ
πλέον ἔστ΄ ἀγαθοῖς, τούτων μετέχουσ΄
Ἄιδου νύμφηι παρεδρεύοις.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

Πολλοὺς μὲν ἤδη κἀπὸ παντοίας χθονὸς
ξένους μολόντας οἶδ΄ ἐς Ἀδμήτου δόμους,
οἷς δεῖπνα προύθηκ΄· ἀλλὰ τοῦδ΄ οὔπω ξένου
κακίον΄ ἐς τήνδ΄ ἑστίαν ἐδεξάμην.
Ὃς πρῶτα μὲν πενθοῦντα δεσπότην ὁρῶν
ἐσῆλθε κἀτόλμησ΄ ἀμείψασθαι πύλας.
Ἔπειτα δ΄ οὔτι σωφρόνως ἐδέξατο
τὰ προστυχόντα ξένια, συμφορὰν μαθών,
ἀλλ΄, εἴ τι μὴ φέροιμεν, ὤτρυνεν φέρειν.
Ποτῆρα δ΄ ἐν χείρεσσι κίσσινον λαβὼν
πίνει μελαίνης μητρὸς εὔζωρον μέθυ,
ἕως ἐθέρμην΄ αὐτὸν ἀμφιβᾶσα φλὸξ
οἴνου. Στέφει δὲ κρᾶτα μυρσίνης κλάδοις,
ἄμουσ΄ ὑλακτῶν· δισσὰ δ΄ ἦν μέλη κλύειν·
ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἤιδε, τῶν ἐν Ἀδμήτου κακῶν
οὐδὲν προτιμῶν, οἰκέται δ΄ ἐκλαίομεν
δέσποιναν, ὄμμα δ΄ οὐκ ἐδείκνυμεν ξένωι
τέγγοντες· Ἄδμητος γὰρ ὧδ΄ ἐφίετο.
Καὶ νῦν ἐγὼ μὲν ἐν δόμοισιν ἑστιῶ
ξένον, πανοῦργον κλῶπα καὶ ληιστήν τινα,
ἡ δ΄ ἐκ δόμων βέβηκεν, οὐδ΄ ἐφεσπόμην
οὐδ΄ ἐξέτεινα χεῖρ΄ ἀποιμώζων ἐμὴν
δέσποιναν, ἣ ΄μοὶ πᾶσί τ΄ οἰκέταισιν ἦν
μήτηρ· κακῶν γὰρ μυρίων ἐρρύετο,
ὀργὰς μαλάσσουσ΄ ἀνδρός. Ἆρα τὸν ξένον
στυγῶ δικαίως, ἐν κακοῖς ἀφιγμένον;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Οὗτος, τί σεμνὸν καὶ πεφροντικὸς βλέπεις;
οὐ χρὴ σκυθρωπὸν τοῖς ξένοις τὸν πρόσπολον

εἶναι, δέχεσθαι δ΄ εὐπροσηγόρωι φρενί.
Σὺ δ΄ ἄνδρ΄ ἑταῖρον δεσπότου παρόνθ΄ ὁρῶν
στυγνῶι προσώπωι καὶ συνωφρυωμένωι
δέχηι, θυραίου πήματος σπουδὴν ἔχων.
Δεῦρ΄ ἔλθ΄, ὅπως ἂν καὶ σοφώτερος γένηι.
Τὰ θνητὰ πράγματ΄ οἶδας ἣν ἔχει φύσιν;
οἶμαι μὲν οὔ· πόθεν γάρ; ἀλλ΄ ἄκουέ μου.
Βροτοῖς ἅπασι κατθανεῖν ὀφείλεται,
κοὐκ ἔστι θνητῶν ὅστις ἐξεπίσταται
τὴν αὔριον μέλλουσαν εἰ βιώσεται·
τὸ τῆς τύχης γὰρ ἀφανὲς οἳ προβήσεται,
κἄστ΄ οὐ διδακτὸν οὐδ΄ ἁλίσκεται τέχνηι.
Ταῦτ΄ οὖν ἀκούσας καὶ μαθὼν ἐμοῦ πάρα
εὔφραινε σαυτόν, πῖνε, τὸν καθ΄ ἡμέραν
βίον λογίζου σόν, τὰ δ΄ ἄλλα τῆς τύχης.
Τίμα δὲ καὶ τὴν πλεῖστον ἡδίστην θεῶν
Κύπριν βροτοῖσιν· εὐμενὴς γὰρ ἡ θεός.
Τὰ δ΄ ἄλλ΄ ἔασον πάντα καὶ πιθοῦ λόγοις
ἐμοῖσιν, εἴπερ ὀρθά σοι δοκῶ λέγειν.
Οἶμαι μέν. Οὔκουν τὴν ἄγαν λύπην ἀφεὶς
πίηι μεθ΄ ἡμῶν [τάσδ΄ ὑπερβαλὼν τύχας,
στεφάνοις πυκασθείς]; καὶ σάφ΄ οἶδ΄ ὀθούνεκα
τοῦ νῦν σκυθρωποῦ καὶ ξυνεστῶτος φρενῶν
μεθορμιεῖ σε πίτυλος ἐμπεσὼν σκύφου.
Ὄντας δὲ θνητοὺς θνητὰ καὶ φρονεῖν χρεών·
ὡς τοῖς γε σεμνοῖς καὶ συνωφρυωμένοις
ἅπασίν ἐστιν, ὥς γ΄ ἐμοὶ χρῆσθαι κριτῆι,
οὐ βίος ἀληθῶς ὁ βίος ἀλλὰ συμφορά.

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Ἐπιστάμεσθα ταῦτα· νῦν δὲ πράσσομεν
οὐχ οἷα κώμου καὶ γέλωτος ἄξια.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Γυνὴ θυραῖος ἡ θανοῦσα· μὴ λίαν
πένθει· δόμων γὰρ ζῶσι τῶνδε δεσπόται.

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Τί ζῶσιν; οὐ κάτοισθα τἀν δόμοις κακά;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Εἰ μή τι σός με δεσπότης ἐψεύσατο.

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Ἄγαν ἐκεῖνός ἐστ΄ ἄγαν φιλόξενος.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Οὐ χρῆν μ΄ ὀθνείου γ΄ οὕνεκ΄ εὖ πάσχειν νεκροῦ;

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Ἦ κάρτα μέντοι καὶ λίαν ὀθνεῖος ἦν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Μῶν ξυμφοράν τιν΄ οὖσαν οὐκ ἔφραζέ μοι;

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Χαίρων ἴθ΄· ἡμῖν δεσποτῶν μέλει κακά.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ὅδ΄ οὐ θυραίων πημάτων ἄρχει λόγος.

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Οὐ γάρ τι κωμάζοντ΄ ἂν ἠχθόμην σ΄ ὁρῶν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ἀλλ΄ ἦ πέπονθα δείν΄ ὑπὸ ξένων ἐμῶν;

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Οὐκ ἦλθες ἐν δέοντι δέξασθαι δόμοις.
[πένθος γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐστι· καὶ κουρὰν βλέπεις
μελαμπέπλους στολμούς τε.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Τίς δ΄ ὁ κατθανών;]

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Μῶν ἢ τέκνων τι φροῦδον ἢ γέρων πατήρ;

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Γυνὴ μὲν οὖν ὄλωλεν Ἀδμήτου, ξένε.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Τί φήις; ἔπειτα δῆτά μ΄ ἐξενίζετε;

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Ἠιδεῖτο γάρ σε τῶνδ΄ ἀπώσασθαι δόμων.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ὦ σχέτλι΄, οἵας ἤμπλακες ξυναόρου.

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Ἀπωλόμεσθα πάντες, οὐ κείνη μόνη.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ἀλλ΄ ἠισθόμην μὲν ὄμμ΄ ἰδὼν δακρυρροοῦν
κουράν τε καὶ πρόσωπον· ἀλλ΄ ἔπειθέ με
λέγων θυραῖον κῆδος ἐς τάφον φέρειν.

Βίαι δὲ θυμοῦ τάσδ΄ ὑπερβαλὼν πύλας
ἔπινον ἀνδρὸς ἐν φιλοξένου δόμοις,
πράσσοντος οὕτω. Κἆιτα κωμάζω κάρα
στεφάνοις πυκασθείς; ἀλλὰ σοῦ τὸ μὴ φράσαι,
κακοῦ τοσούτου δώμασιν προσκειμένου.
Ποῦ καί σφε θάπτει; ποῖ νιν εὑρήσω μολών;

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Ὀρθὴν παρ΄ οἶμον ἣ ΄πὶ Λαρίσαν φέρει
τύμβον κατόψηι ξεστὸν ἐκ προαστίου.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ὦ πολλὰ τλᾶσα καρδία καὶ χεὶρ ἐμή,
νῦν δεῖξον οἷον παῖδά σ΄ ἡ Τιρυνθία
ἐγείνατ΄ Ἠλεκτρύωνος Ἀλκμήνη Διί.
Δεῖ γάρ με σῶσαι τὴν θανοῦσαν ἀρτίως
γυναῖκα κἀς τόνδ΄ αὖθις ἱδρῦσαι δόμον
Ἄλκηστιν Ἀδμήτωι θ΄ ὑπουργῆσαι χάριν.
Ἐλθὼν δ΄ ἄνακτα τὸν μελάμπτερον νεκρῶν
Θάνατον φυλάξω, καί νιν εὑρήσειν δοκῶ
πίνοντα τύμβου πλησίον προσφαγμάτων.
Κἄνπερ λοχαίας αὐτὸν ἐξ ἕδρας συθεὶς
μάρψω, κύκλον γε περιβαλὼν χεροῖν ἐμαῖν,
οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις αὐτὸν ἐξαιρήσεται
μογοῦντα πλευρά, πρὶν γυναῖκ΄ ἐμοὶ μεθῆι.
Ἢν δ΄ οὖν ἁμάρτω τῆσδ΄ ἄγρας καὶ μὴ μόληι
πρὸς αἱματηρὸν πελανόν, εἶμι τῶν κάτω
Κόρης ἄνακτός τ΄ εἰς ἀνηλίους δόμους,
αἰτήσομαί τε καὶ πέποιθ΄ ἄξειν ἄνω
Ἄλκηστιν, ὥστε χερσὶν ἐνθεῖναι ξένου,
ὅς μ΄ ἐς δόμους ἐδέξατ΄ οὐδ΄ ἀπήλασεν,
καίπερ βαρείαι συμφορᾶι πεπληγμένος,
ἔκρυπτε δ΄ ὢν γενναῖος, αἰδεσθεὶς ἐμέ.
Τίς τοῦδε μᾶλλον Θεσσαλῶν φιλόξενος,
τίς Ἑλλάδ΄ οἰκῶν; τοιγὰρ οὐκ ἐρεῖ κακὸν
εὐεργετῆσαι φῶτα γενναῖος γεγώς.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἰώ,
στυγναὶ πρόσοδοι, στυγναὶ δ΄ ὄψεις
χήρων μελάθρων.
Ἰώ μοί μοι, αἰαῖ αἰαῖ.
Ποῖ βῶ; ποῖ στῶ; τί λέγω; τί δὲ μή;
πῶς ἂν ὀλοίμην;
ἦ βαρυδαίμονα μήτηρ μ΄ ἔτεκεν.
Ζηλῶ φθιμένους, κείνων ἔραμαι,
κεῖν΄ ἐπιθυμῶ δώματα ναίειν.
Οὔτε γὰρ αὐγὰς χαίρω προσορῶν
οὔτ΄ ἐπὶ γαίας πόδα πεζεύων·
τοῖον ὄμηρόν μ΄ ἀποσυλήσας
Ἅιδηι Θάνατος παρέδωκεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Πρόβα πρόβα, βᾶθι κεῦθος οἴκων.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Αἰαῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Πέπονθας ἄξι΄ αἰαγμάτων.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἒ ἔ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Δι΄ ὀδύνας ἔβας, σάφ΄ οἶδα.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Φεῦ φεῦ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Τὰν νέρθε δ΄ οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖς ...

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἰώ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Τὸ μήποτ΄ εἰσιδεῖν φιλίας ἀλόχου
πρόσωπόν σ΄ ἔσαντα λυπρόν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἔμνησας ὅ μου φρένας ἥλκωσεν·
τί γὰρ ἀνδρὶ κακὸν μεῖζον ἁμαρτεῖν
πιστῆς ἀλόχου; μήποτε γήμας
ὤφελον οἰκεῖν μετὰ τῆσδε δόμους.
Ζηλῶ δ΄ ἀγάμους ἀτέκνους τε βροτῶν·
μία γὰρ ψυχή, τῆς ὑπεραλγεῖν
μέτριον ἄχθος.
Παίδων δὲ νόσους καὶ νυμφιδίους
εὐνὰς θανάτοις κεραϊζομένας
οὐ τλητὸν ὁρᾶν, ἐξὸν ἀτέκνους
ἀγάμους τ΄ εἶναι διὰ παντός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Στύχα τύχα δυσπάλαιστος ἥκει.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Αἰαῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Πέρας δέ γ΄ οὐδὲν ἀλγέων τίθης.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἔ ἔ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Βαρέα μὲν φέρειν, ὅμως δὲ ...

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Φεῦ φεῦ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Τλᾶθ΄· οὐ σὺ πρῶτος ὤλεσας ...

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἰώ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Γυναῖκα· συμφορὰ δ΄ ἑτέρους ἑτέρα
πιέζει φανεῖσα θνατῶν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ὦ μακρὰ πένθη λῦπαί τε φίλων
τῶν ὑπὸ γαίας.
Τί μ΄ ἐκώλυσας ῥῖψαι τύμβου
τάφρον ἐς κοίλην καὶ μετ΄ ἐκείνης
τῆς μέγ΄ ἀρίστης κεῖσθαι φθίμενον;
Δύο δ΄ ἀντὶ μιᾶς Ἅιδης ψυχὰς
τὰς πιστοτάτας σὺν ἂν ἔσχεν, ὁμοῦ
χθονίαν λίμνην διαβάντε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἐμοί τις ἦν
ἐν γένει, ὧι κόρος ἀξιόθρη
νος ὤλετ΄ ἐν δόμοισιν
μονόπαις· ἀλλ΄ ἔμπας
ἔφερε κακὸν ἅλις, ἄτεκνος ὤν,
πολιὰς ἐπὶ χαίτας
ἤδη προπετὴς ὢν
βιότου τε πόρσω.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ὦ σχῆμα δόμων, πῶς εἰσέλθω,
πῶς δ΄ οἰκήσω, μεταπίπτοντος
δαίμονος; οἴμοι. Πολὺ γὰρ τὸ μέσον·
τότε μὲν πεύκαις σὺν Πηλιάσιν
σύν θ΄ ὑμεναίοις ἔστειχον ἔσω
φιλίας ἀλόχου χέρα βαστάζων,
πολυάχητος δ΄ εἵπετο κῶμος
τήν τε θανοῦσαν κἄμ΄ ὀλβίζων
ὡς εὐπατρίδαι κἀπ΄ ἀμφοτέρων
ὄντες ἀριστέων σύζυγες εἶμεν·
νῦν δ΄ ὑμεναίων γόος ἀντίπαλος
λευκῶν τε πέπλων μέλανες στολμοὶ
πέμπουσί μ΄ ἔσω
λέκτρων κοίτας ἐς ἐρήμους.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Παρ΄ εὐτυχῆ
σοι πότμον ἦλθεν ἀπειροκάκωι
τόδ΄ ἄλγος· ἀλλ΄ ἔσωσας
βίοτον καὶ ψυχάν.
Ἔθανε δάμαρ, ἔλιπε φιλίαν·
τί νέον τόδε; πολλοὺς
ἤδη παρέλυσεν
θάνατος δάμαρτος.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Φίλοι, γυναικὸς δαίμον΄ εὐτυχέστερον
τοὐμοῦ νομίζω, καίπερ οὐ δοκοῦνθ΄ ὅμως.
Τῆς μὲν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἄλγος ἅψεταί ποτε,
πολλῶν δὲ μόχθων εὐκλεὴς ἐπαύσατο.
Ἐγὼ δ΄, ὃν οὐ χρῆν ζῆν, παρεὶς τὸ μόρσιμον
λυπρὸν διάξω βίοτον· ἄρτι μανθάνω.
Πῶς γὰρ δόμων τῶνδ΄ εἰσόδους ἀνέξομαι;
τίν΄ ἂν προσειπών, τοῦ δὲ προσρηθεὶς ὕπο
τερπνῆς τύχοιμ΄ ἂν εἰσόδου; ποῖ τρέψομαι;
ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἔνδον ἐξελᾶι μ΄ ἐρημία,
γυναικὸς εὐνὰς εὖτ΄ ἂν εἰσίδω κενὰς
θρόνους τ΄ ἐν οἷσιν ἷζε καὶ κατὰ στέγας
αὐχμηρὸν οὖδας, τέκνα δ΄ ἀμφὶ γούνασιν
πίπτοντα κλαίηι μητέρ΄, οἱ δὲ δεσπότιν
στένωσιν οἵαν ἐκ δόμων ἀπώλεσαν.
Τὰ μὲν κατ΄ οἴκους τοιάδ΄· ἔξωθεν δέ με
γάμοι τ΄ ἐλῶσι Θεσσαλῶν καὶ ξύλλογοι
γυναικοπληθεῖς· οὐ γὰρ ἐξανέξομαι
λεύσσων δάμαρτος τῆς ἐμῆς ὁμήλικας.
Ἐρεῖ δέ μ΄ ὅστις ἐχθρὸς ὢν κυρεῖ τάδε·
Ἰδοῦ τὸν αἰσχρῶς ζῶνθ΄, ὃς οὐκ ἔτλη θανεῖν
ἀλλ΄ ἣν ἔγημεν ἀντιδοὺς ἀψυχίαι
πέφευγεν Ἅιδην· κἆιτ΄ ἀνὴρ εἶναι δοκεῖ;
στυγεῖ δὲ τοὺς τεκόντας, αὐτὸς οὐ θέλων
θανεῖν. Τοιάνδε πρὸς κακοῖσι κληδόνα
ἔξω. Τί μοι ζῆν δῆτα κύδιον, φίλοι,
κακῶς κλύοντι καὶ κακῶς πεπραγότι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἐγὼ καὶ διὰ μούσας
καὶ μετάρσιος ἦιξα, καὶ
πλείστων ἁψάμενος λόγων
κρεῖσσον οὐδὲν Ἀνάγκας
ηὗρον οὐδέ τι φάρμακον
Θρήισσαις ἐν σανίσιν, τὰς
Ὀρφεία κατέγραψεν

γῆρυς, οὐδ΄ ὅσα Φοῖβος Ἀ
σκληπιάδαις ἔδωκε
φάρμακα πολυπόνοις
ἀντιτεμὼν βροτοῖσιν.
Μόνας δ΄ οὔτ΄ ἐπὶ βωμοὺς
ἐλθεῖν οὔτε βρέτας θεᾶς
ἔστιν, οὐ σφαγίων κλύει.
Μή μοι, πότνια, μείζων
ἔλθοις ἢ τὸ πρὶν ἐν βίωι.
Καὶ γὰρ Ζεὺς ὅτι νεύσηι
σὺν σοὶ τοῦτο τελευτᾶι.
Καὶ τὸν ἐν Χαλύβοις δαμά
ζεις σὺ βίαι σίδαρον,
οὐδέ τις ἀποτόμου
λήματός ἐστιν αἰδώς.
Καί σ΄ ἐν ἀφύκτοισι χερῶν εἶλε θεὰ δεσμοῖς.
Τόλμα δ΄· οὐ γὰρ ἀνάξεις ποτ΄ ἔνερθεν
κλαίων τοὺς φθιμένους ἄνω.
Καὶ θεῶν σκότιοι φθίνου
σι παῖδες ἐν θανάτωι.
Φίλα μὲν ὅτ΄ ἦν μεθ΄ ἡμῶν,
φίλα δὲ θανοῦσ΄ ἔτ΄ ἔσται,
γενναιοτάταν δὲ πασᾶν
ἐζεύξω κλισίαις ἄκοιτιν.
Μηδὲ νεκρῶν ὡς φθιμένων χῶμα νομιζέσθω
τύμβος σᾶς ἀλόχου, θεοῖσι δ΄ ὁμοίως
τιμάσθω, σέβας ἐμπόρων.
Καί τις δοχμίαν κέλευ
θον ἐμβαίνων τόδ΄ ἐρεῖ·
Αὕτα ποτὲ προύθαν΄ ἀνδρός,
νῦν δ΄ ἔστι μάκαιρα δαίμων·
χαῖρ΄, ὦ πότνι΄, εὖ δὲ δοίης.
Τοῖαί νιν προσεροῦσι φῆμαι.
Καὶ μὴν ὅδ΄, ὡς ἔοικεν, Ἀλκμήνης γόνος,
Ἄδμητε, πρὸς σὴν ἑστίαν πορεύεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

φίλον πρὸς ἄνδρα χρὴ λέγειν ἐλευθέρως,
Ἄδμητε, μομφὰς δ΄ οὐχ ὑπὸ σπλάγχνοις ἔχειν
σιγῶντ΄. Ἐγὼ δὲ σοῖς κακοῖσιν ἠξίουν
ἐγγὺς παρεστὼς ἐξετάζεσθαι φίλος·
σὺ δ΄ οὐκ ἔφραζες σῆς προκείμενον νέκυν
γυναικός, ἀλλά μ΄ ἐξένιζες ἐν δόμοις,
ὡς δὴ θυραίου πήματος σπουδὴν ἔχων.
Κἄστεψα κρᾶτα καὶ θεοῖς ἐλειψάμην
σπονδὰς ἐν οἴκοις δυστυχοῦσι τοῖσι σοῖς.
Καὶ μέμφομαι μέν, μέμφομαι, παθὼν τάδε·
οὐ μήν σε λυπεῖν ἐν κακοῖσι βούλομαι.
Ὧν δ΄ οὕνεχ΄ ἥκω δεῦρ΄ ὑποστρέψας πάλιν
λέξω· γυναῖκα τήνδε μοι σῶσον λαβών,
ἕως ἂν ἵππους δεῦρο Θρηικίας ἄγων
ἔλθω, τύραννον Βιστόνων κατακτανών.
Πράξας δ΄ ὃ μὴ τύχοιμι (νοστήσαιμι γάρ)
δίδωμι τήνδε σοῖσι προσπολεῖν δόμοις.
Πολλῶι δὲ μόχθωι χεῖρας ἦλθεν εἰς ἐμάς·
ἀγῶνα γὰρ πάνδημον εὑρίσκω τινὰς
τιθέντας, ἀθληταῖσιν ἄξιον πόνον,
ὅθεν κομίζω τήνδε νικητήρια
λαβών. Τὰ μὲν γὰρ κοῦφα τοῖς νικῶσιν ἦν
ἵππους ἄγεσθαι, τοῖσι δ΄ αὖ τὰ μείζονα
νικῶσι, πυγμὴν καὶ πάλην, βουφόρβια·
γυνὴ δ΄ ἐπ΄ αὐτοῖς εἵπετ΄· ἐντυχόντι δὲ
αἰσχρὸν παρεῖναι κέρδος ἦν τόδ΄ εὐκλεές.
Ἀλλ΄, ὥσπερ εἶπον, σοὶ μέλειν γυναῖκα χρή·
οὐ γὰρ κλοπαίαν ἀλλὰ σὺν πόνωι λαβὼν
ἥκω· χρόνωι δὲ καὶ σύ μ΄ αἰνέσεις ἴσως.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Οὔτοι σ΄ ἀτίζων οὐδ΄ ἐν αἰσχροῖσιν τιθεὶς
ἔκρυψ΄ ἐμῆς γυναικὸς ἀθλίους τύχας.
Ἀλλ΄ ἄλγος ἄλγει τοῦτ΄ ἂν ἦν προσκείμενον,
εἴ του πρὸς ἄλλου δώμαθ΄ ὡρμήθης ξένου·
ἅλις δὲ κλαίειν τοὐμὸν ἦν ἐμοὶ κακόν.

Γυναῖκα δ΄, εἴ πως ἔστιν, αἰτοῦμαί σ΄, ἄναξ,
ἄλλον τιν΄ ὅστις μὴ πέπονθεν οἷ΄ ἐγὼ
σώιζειν ἄνωχθι Θεσσαλῶν· πολλοὶ δέ σοι
ξένοι Φεραίων· μή μ΄ ἀναμνήσηις κακῶν.
Οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην τήνδ΄ ὁρῶν ἐν δώμασιν
ἄδακρυς εἶναι· μὴ νοσοῦντί μοι νόσον
προσθῆις· ἅλις γὰρ συμφορᾶι βαρύνομαι.
Ποῦ καὶ τρέφοιτ΄ ἂν δωμάτων νέα γυνή;
νέα γάρ, ὡς ἐσθῆτι καὶ κόσμωι πρέπει.
Πότερα κατ΄ ἀνδρῶν δῆτ΄ ἐνοικήσει στέγην;
καὶ πῶς ἀκραιφνὴς ἐν νέοις στρωφωμένη
ἔσται; τὸν ἡβῶνθ΄, Ἡράκλεις, οὐ ῥάιδιον
εἴργειν· ἐγὼ δὲ σοῦ προμηθίαν ἔχω.
Ἢ τῆς θανούσης θάλαμον ἐσβήσας τρέφω;
καὶ πῶς ἐπεσφρῶ τήνδε τῶι κείνης λέχει;
διπλῆν φοβοῦμαι μέμψιν, ἔκ τε δημοτῶν,
μή τίς μ΄ ἐλέγξηι τὴν ἐμὴν εὐεργέτιν
προδόντ΄ ἐν ἄλλης δεμνίοις πίτνειν νέας,
καὶ τῆς θανούσης (ἀξία δέ μοι σέβειν)
πολλὴν πρόνοιαν δεῖ μ΄ ἔχειν. Σὺ δ΄, ὦ γύναι,
ἥτις ποτ΄ εἶ σύ, ταὔτ΄ ἔχουσ΄ Ἀλκήστιδι
μορφῆς μέτρ΄ ἴσθι, καὶ προσήϊξαι δέμας.
Οἴμοι. Κόμιζε πρὸς θεῶν ἐξ ὀμμάτων
γυναῖκα τήνδε, μή μ΄ ἕλκηις ἠιρημένον.
Δοκῶ γὰρ αὐτὴν εἰσορῶν γυναῖχ΄ ὁρᾶν
ἐμήν· θολοῖ δὲ καρδίαν, ἐκ δ΄ ὀμμάτων
πηγαὶ κατερρώγασιν. Ὦ τλήμων ἐγώ,
ὡς ἄρτι πένθους τοῦδε γεύομαι πικροῦ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἔχοιμ΄ ἂν εὖ λέγειν τύχην·
χρὴ δ΄, ἥτις ἐστί, καρτερεῖν θεοῦ δόσιν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Εἰ γὰρ τοσαύτην δύναμιν εἶχον ὥστε σὴν
ἐς φῶς πορεῦσαι νερτέρων ἐκ δωμάτων

γυναῖκα καί σοι τήνδε πορσῦναι χάριν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Σάφ΄ οἶδα βούλεσθαί σ΄ ἄν. ἀλλὰ ποῦ τόδε;
οὐκ ἔστι τοὺς θανόντας ἐς φάος μολεῖν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Μή νυν ὑπέρβαλλ΄ ἀλλ΄ ἐναισίμως φέρε.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ῥᾴιον παραινεῖν ἢ παθόντα καρτερεῖν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Τί δ΄ ἂν προκόπτοις, εἰ θέλεις ἀεὶ στένειν;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἔγνωκα καὐτός, ἀλλ΄ ἔρως τις ἐξάγει.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Τὸ γὰρ φιλῆσαι τὸν θανόντ΄ ἄγει δάκρυ.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἀπώλεσέν με κἄτι μᾶλλον ἢ λέγω.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Γυναικὸς ἐσθλῆς ἤμπλακες· τίς ἀντερεῖ;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ὥστ΄ ἄνδρα τόνδε μηκέθ΄ ἥδεσθαι βίωι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Χρόνος μαλάξει, νῦν δ΄ ἔθ΄ ἡβάσκει, κακόν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Χρόνον λέγοις ἄν, εἰ χρόνος τὸ κατθανεῖν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Γυνή σε παύσει καὶ νέοι γάμοι πόθου.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Σίγησον· οἷον εἶπας. οὐκ ἂν ὠιόμην.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Τί δ΄; οὐ γαμεῖς γὰρ ἀλλὰ χηρεύσηι λέχος;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Οὐκ ἔστιν ἥτις τῶιδε συγκλιθήσεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Μῶν τὴν θανοῦσαν ὠφελεῖν τι προσδοκᾶις;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Κείνην ὅπουπερ ἔστι τιμᾶσθαι χρεών.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Αἰνῶ μὲν αἰνῶ· μωρίαν δ΄ ὀφλισκάνεις.

[**ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ**

Ὡς μήποτ΄ ἄνδρα τόνδε νυμφίον καλῶν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ἐπήινεσ΄ ἀλόχωι πιστὸς οὕνεκ΄ εἶ φίλος.]

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Θάνοιμ΄ ἐκείνην καίπερ οὐκ οὖσαν προδούς.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Δέχου νυν εἴσω τήνδε γενναίως δόμων.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Μή, πρός σε τοῦ σπείραντος ἄντομαι Διός.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Καὶ μὴν ἁμαρτήσηι γε μὴ δράσας τάδε.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Καὶ δρῶν γε λύπηι καρδίαν δηχθήσομαι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Πιθοῦ· τάχ΄ ἂν γὰρ ἐς δέον πέσοι χάρις.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Εὖ·
εἴθ΄ ἐξ ἀγῶνος τήνδε μὴ ΄λαβές ποτε.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Νικῶντι μέντοι καὶ σὺ συννικᾶις ἐμοί.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Καλῶς ἔλεξας· ἡ γυνὴ δ΄ ἀπελθέτω.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ἄπεισιν, εἰ χρή· πρῶτα δ΄ εἰ χρεὼν ἄθρει.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Χρή, σοῦ γε μὴ μέλλοντος ὀργαίνειν ἐμοί.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Εἰδώς τι κἀγὼ τήνδ΄ ἔχω προθυμίαν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Νίκα νυν· οὐ μὴν ἀνδάνοντά μοι ποιεῖς.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ἀλλ΄ ἔσθ΄ ὅθ΄ ἡμᾶς αἰνέσεις· πιθοῦ μόνον.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Κομίζετ΄, εἰ χρὴ τήνδε δέξασθαι δόμοις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Οὐκ ἂν μεθείην σοῖς γυναῖκα προσπόλοις.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Σὺ δ΄ αὐτὸς αὐτὴν εἴσαγ΄, εἰ δοκεῖ, δόμους.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ἐς σὰς μὲν οὖν ἔγωγε θήσομαι χέρας.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Οὐκ ἂν θίγοιμι· δῶμα δ΄ εἰσελθεῖν πάρα.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Τῆι σῆι πέποιθα χειρὶ δεξιᾶι μόνηι.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἄναξ, βιάζηι μ΄ οὐ θέλοντα δρᾶν τάδε.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Τόλμα προτεῖναι χεῖρα καὶ θιγεῖν ξένης.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Καὶ δὴ προτείνω, Γοργόν΄ ὡς καρατομῶν.

[**ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ**

Ἔχεις;

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἔχω, ναί.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Σῶιζέ νυν καὶ τὸν Διὸς
φήσεις ποτ΄ εἶναι παῖδα γενναῖον ξένον.]
Βλέψον πρὸς αὐτήν, εἴ τι σῆι δοκεῖ πρέπειν
γυναικί· λύπης δ΄ εὐτυχῶν μεθίστασο.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ὦ θεοί, τί λέξω; θαῦμ΄ ἀνέλπιστον τόδε·
γυναῖκα λεύσσω τὴν ἐμὴν ἐτητύμως,
ἢ κέρτομός μ΄ ἐκ θεοῦ τις ἐκπλήσσει χαρά;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Οὐκ ἔστιν, ἀλλὰ τήνδ΄ ὁρᾶις δάμαρτα σήν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ὅρα δὲ μή τι φάσμα νερτέρων τόδ΄ ἦι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Οὐ ψυχαγωγὸν τόνδ΄ ἐποιήσω ξένον.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἀλλ΄ ἣν ἔθαπτον εἰσορῶ δάμαρτ΄ ἐμήν;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Σάφ΄ ἴσθ΄· ἀπιστεῖν δ΄ οὔ σε θαυμάζω τύχηι.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Θίγω, προσείπω ζῶσαν ὡς δάμαρτ΄ ἐμήν;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Πρόσειπ΄· ἔχεις γὰρ πᾶν ὅσονπερ ἤθελες.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ὦ φιλτάτης γυναικὸς ὄμμα καὶ δέμας,
ἔχω σ΄ ἀέλπτως, οὔποτ΄ ὄψεσθαι δοκῶν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ἔχεις· φθόνος δὲ μὴ γένοιτό τις θεῶν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ὦ τοῦ μεγίστου Ζηνὸς εὐγενὲς τέκνον,
εὐδαιμονοίης καί σ΄ ὁ φιτύσας πατὴρ
σώιζοι· σὺ γὰρ δὴ τἄμ΄ ἀνώρθωσας μόνος.
Πῶς τήνδ΄ ἔπεμψας νέρθεν ἐς φάος τόδε;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Μάχην συνάψας δαιμόνων τῶι κυρίωι.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ποῦ τόνδε Θανάτωι φὴις ἀγῶνα συμβαλεῖν;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Τύμβον παρ΄ αὐτόν¸ ἐκ λόχου μάρψας χεροῖν.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Τί γάρ ποθ΄ ἥδ΄ ἄναυδος ἕστηκεν γυνή;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Οὔπω θέμις σοι τῆσδε προσφωνημάτων
κλύειν¸ πρὶν ἂν θεοῖσι τοῖσι νερτέροις
ἀφαγνίσηται καὶ τρίτον μόλῃι φάος.
Ἀλλ΄ εἴσαγ΄ εἴσω τήνδε· καὶ δίκαιος ὢν
τὸ λοιπόν¸ Ἄδμητ΄¸ εὐσέβει περὶ ξένους.
καὶ χαῖρ΄· ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν προκείμενον πόνον
Σθενέλου τυράννωι παιδὶ πορσυνῶ μολών.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Μεῖνον παρ΄ ἡμῖν καὶ ξυνέστιος γενοῦ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Αὖθις τόδ΄ ἔσται¸ νῦν δ΄ ἐπείγεσθαί με δεῖ.

ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ

Ἀλλ΄ εὐτυχοίης¸ νόστιμον δ΄ ἔλθοις δρόμον.
Ἀστοῖς δὲ πάσηι τ΄ ἐννέπω τετραρχίαι
χοροὺς ἐπ΄ ἐσθλαῖς συμφοραῖσιν ἱστάναι

βωμούς τε κνισᾶν βουθύτοισι προστροπαῖς.
Νῦν γὰρ μεθηρμόσμεσθα βελτίω βίον
τοῦ πρόσθεν· οὐ γὰρ εὐτυχῶν ἀρνήσομαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Πολλαὶ μορφαὶ τῶν δαιμονίων,
πολλὰ δ΄ ἀέλπτως κραίνουσι θεοί·
καὶ τὰ δοκηθέντ΄ οὐκ ἐτελέσθη,
τῶν δ΄ ἀδοκήτων πόρον ηὗρε θεός.
Τοιόνδ΄ ἀπέβη τόδε πρᾶγμα.

MEDEA

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ
Εἴθ΄ ὤφελ΄ Ἀργοῦς μὴ διαπτάσθαι σκάφος
Κόλχων ἐς αἶαν κυανέας Συμπληγάδας,
μηδ΄ ἐν νάπαισι Πηλίου πεσεῖν ποτε
τμηθεῖσα πεύκη, μηδ΄ ἐρετμῶσαι χέρας
ἀνδρῶν ἀρίστων. οἳ τὸ πάγχρυσον δέρας
Πελίᾳ μετῆλθον. οὐ γὰρ ἂν δέσποιν΄ ἐμὴ
Μήδεια πύργους γῆς ἔπλευσ΄ Ἰωλκίας
ἔρωτι θυμὸν ἐκπλαγεῖσ΄ Ἰάσονος·
οὐδ΄ ἂν κτανεῖν πείσασα Πελιάδας κόρας
πατέρα κατῴκει τήνδε γῆν Κορινθίαν
ξὺν ἀνδρὶ καὶ τέκνοισιν, ἀνδάνουσα μὲν
φυγῇ πολιτῶν ὧν ἀφίκετο χθόνα,
αὐτή τε πάντα ξυμφέρουσ΄ Ἰάσονι·
ἥπερ μεγίστη γίγνεται σωτηρία,
ὅταν γυνὴ πρὸς ἄνδρα μὴ διχοστατῇ.
νῦν δ΄ ἐχθρὰ πάντα, καὶ νοσεῖ τὰ φίλτατα.
προδοὺς γὰρ αὐτοῦ τέκνα δεσπότιν τ΄ ἐμὴν
γάμοις Ἰάσων βασιλικοῖς εὐνάζεται,
γήμας Κρέοντος παῖδ΄, ὃς αἰσυμνᾷ χθονός·
Μήδεια δ΄ ἡ δύστηνος ἠτιμασμένη
βοᾷ μὲν ὅρκους, ἀνακαλεῖ δὲ δεξιάς,
πίστιν μεγίστην, καὶ θεοὺς μαρτύρεται
οἵας ἀμοιβῆς ἐξ Ἰάσονος κυρεῖ.
κεῖται δ΄ ἄσιτος, σῶμ΄ ὑφεῖσ΄ ἀλγηδόσι,
τὸν πάντα συντήκουσα δακρύοις χρόνον,
ἐπεὶ πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ᾔσθετ΄ ἠδικημένη,
οὔτ΄ ὄμμ΄ ἐπαίρουσ΄ οὔτ΄ ἀπαλλάσσουσα γῆς
πρόσωπον· ὡς δὲ πέτρος ἢ θαλάσσιος
κλύδων ἀκούει νουθετουμένη φίλων·
ἢν μή ποτε στρέψασα πάλλευκον δέρην
αὐτὴ πρὸς αὑτὴν πατέρ΄ ἀποιμώξῃ φίλον
καὶ γαῖαν οἴκους θ΄, οὓς προδοῦσ΄ ἀφίκετο
μετ΄ ἀνδρὸς ὅς σφε νῦν ἀτιμάσας ἔχει.

ἔγνωκε δ΄ ἡ τάλαινα συμφορᾶς ὕπο
οἷον πατρῴας μὴ ἀπολείπεσθαι χθονός.
στυγεῖ δὲ παῖδας οὐδ΄ ὁρῶσ΄ εὐφραίνεται.
δέδοικα δ΄ αὐτὴν μή τι βουλεύσῃ νέον·
βαρεῖα γὰρ φρήν, οὐδ΄ ἀνέξεται κακῶς
πάσχουσ΄· ἐγᾦδα τήνδε, δειμαίνω τέ νιν
μὴ θηκτὸν ὥσῃ φάσγανον δι΄ ἥπατος,
σιγῇ δόμους εἰσβᾶσ΄, ἵν΄ ἔστρωται λέχος,
ἢ καὶ τύραννον τόν τε γήμαντα κτάνῃ,
κἄπειτα μείζω συμφορὰν λάβῃ τινά.
δεινὴ γάρ· οὔτοι ῥᾳδίως γε συμβαλὼν
ἔχθραν τις αὐτῇ καλλίνικον οἴσεται.
ἀλλ΄ οἵδε παῖδες ἐκ τρόχων πεπαυμένοι
στείχουσι, μητρὸς οὐδὲν ἐννοούμενοι
κακῶν· νέα γὰρ φροντὶς οὐκ ἀλγεῖν φιλεῖ.
ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ
παλαιὸν οἴκων κτῆμα δεσποίνης ἐμῆς,
τί πρὸς πύλαισι τήνδ΄ ἄγουσ΄ ἐρημίαν
ἕστηκας, αὐτὴ θρεομένη σαυτῇ κακά;
πῶς σοῦ μόνη Μήδεια λείπεσθαι θέλει;

Τρ. τέκνων ὀπαδὲ πρέσβυ τῶν Ἰάσονος,
χρηστοῖσι δούλοις ξυμφορὰ τὰ δεσποτῶν
κακῶς πίτνοντα, καὶ φρενῶν ἀνθάπτεται.
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐς τοῦτ΄ ἐκβέβηκ΄ ἀλγηδόνος,
ὥσθ΄ ἵμερός μ΄ ὑπῆλθε γῇ τε κοὐρανῷ
λέξαι μολούσῃ δεῦρο δεσποίνης τύχας.

Πα. οὔπω γὰρ ἡ τάλαινα παύεται γόων;

Τρ. ζηλῶ σ΄· ἐν ἀρχῇ πῆμα κοὐδέπω μεσοῖ.

Πα. ὦ μῶρος — εἰ χρὴ δεσπότας εἰπεῖν τόδε·
ὡς οὐδὲν οἶδε τῶν νεωτέρων κακῶν.

Τρ. τί δ΄ ἔστιν, ὦ γεραιέ; μὴ φθόνει φράσαι.

Πα. οὐδέν· μετέγνων καὶ τὰ πρόσθ΄ εἰρημένα.

Τρ. μή, πρὸς γενείου, κρύπτε σύνδουλον σέθεν·
σιγὴν γάρ, εἰ χρή, τῶνδε θήσομαι πέρι.

Πα. ἤκουσά του λέγοντος, οὐ δοκῶν κλύειν,
πεσσοὺς προσελθών, ἔνθα δὴ παλαίτατοι
θάσσουσι, σεμνὸν ἀμφὶ Πειρήνης ὕδωρ,
ὡς τούσδε παῖδας γῆς ἐλᾶν Κορινθίας
σὺν μητρὶ μέλλοι τῆσδε κοίρανος χθονὸς
Κρέων. ὁ μέντοι μῦθος εἰ σαφὴς ὅδε
οὐκ οἶδα· βουλοίμην δ΄ ἂν οὐκ εἶναι τόδε.

Τρ. καὶ ταῦτ΄ Ἰάσων παῖδας ἐξανέξεται
πάσχοντας, εἰ καὶ μητρὶ διαφορὰν ἔχει;

Πα. παλαιὰ καινῶν λείπεται κηδευμάτων,
κοὐκ ἔστ΄ ἐκεῖνος τοῖσδε δώμασιν φίλος.

Τρ. ἀπωλόμεσθ΄ ἄρ΄, εἰ κακὸν προσοίσομεν
νέον παλαιῷ, πρὶν τόδ΄ ἐξηντληκέναι.

Πα. ἀτὰρ σύ γ΄ — οὐ γὰρ καιρὸς εἰδέναι τόδε
δέσποιναν — ἡσύχαζε καὶ σίγα λόγον.

Τρ. ὦ τέκν΄, ἀκούεθ΄ οἷος εἰς ὑμᾶς πατήρ;
ὄλοιτο μὲν μή· δεσπότης γάρ ἐστ΄ ἐμός·
ἀτὰρ κακός γ΄ ὢν ἐς φίλους ἁλίσκεται.

Πα. τίς δ΄ οὐχὶ θνητῶν; ἄρτι γιγνώσκεις τόδε,
ὡς πᾶς τις αὑτὸν τοῦ πέλας μᾶλλον φιλεῖ,
οἳ μὲν δικαίως, οἳ δὲ καὶ κέρδους χάριν,
εἰ τούσδε γ΄ εὐνῆς οὕνεκ΄ οὐ στέργει πατήρ.

Τρ. ἴτ΄ — εὖ γὰρ ἔσται — δωμάτων ἔσω, τέκνα.
σὺ δ΄ ὡς μάλιστα τούσδ΄ ἐρημώσας ἔχε
καὶ μὴ πέλαζε μητρὶ δυσθυμουμένῃ.
ἤδη γὰρ εἶδον ὄμμα νιν ταυρουμένην
τοῖσδ΄, ὥς τι δρασείουσαν· οὐδὲ παύσεται

χόλου, σάφ΄ οἶδα, πρὶν κατασκῆψαί τινα . . .
ἐχθρούς γε μέντοι, μὴ φίλους, δράσειέ τι.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ <ἔνδοθεν>
ἰώ,
δύστανος ἐγὼ μελέα τε πόνων,
ἰώ μοί μοι, πῶς ἂν ὀλοίμαν;

Τρ. τόδ΄ ἐκεῖνο, φίλοι παῖδες· μήτηρ
κινεῖ κραδίαν, κινεῖ δὲ χόλον.
σπεύσατε θᾶσσον δώματος εἴσω
καὶ μὴ πελάσητ΄ ὄμματος ἐγγύς,
μηδὲ προσέλθητ΄, ἀλλὰ φυλάσσεσθ΄
ἄγριον ἦθος στυγεράν τε φύσιν
φρενὸς αὐθάδους. —
ἴτε νῦν, χωρεῖθ΄ ὡς τάχος εἴσω. —
δῆλον δ΄ ἀρχῆς ἐξαιρόμενον
νέφος οἰμωγῆς ὡς τάχ΄ ἀνάψει
μείζονι θυμῷ· τί ποτ΄ ἐργάσεται
μεγαλόσπλαγχνος δυσκατάπαυστος
ψυχὴ δηχθεῖσα κακοῖσιν;

Μη. αἰαῖ,
ἔπαθον τλάμων ἔπαθον μεγάλων
ἄξι΄ ὀδυρμῶν· ὦ κατάρατοι
παῖδες ὄλοισθε στυγερᾶς ματρὸς
σὺν πατρί, καὶ πᾶς δόμος ἔρροι.

Τρ. ἰώ μοί μοι, ἰὼ τλήμων.
τί δέ σοι παῖδες πατρὸς ἀμπλακίας
μετέχουσι; τί τούσδ΄ ἔχθεις; οἴμοι,
τέκνα, μή τι πάθηθ΄ ὡς ὑπεραλγῶ.
δεινὰ τυράννων λήματα καί πως
ὀλίγ΄ ἀρχόμενοι, πολλὰ κρατοῦντες
χαλεπῶς ὀργὰς μεταβάλλουσιν.
τὸ γὰρ εἰθίσθαι ζῆν ἐπ΄ ἴσοισιν
κρεῖσσον· ἐμοὶ γοῦν ἐν μὴ μεγάλοις
ὀχυρῶς γ΄ εἴη καταγηράσκειν.

τῶν γὰρ μετρίων πρῶτα μὲν εἰπεῖν
τοὔνομα νικᾷ, χρῆσθαί τε μακρῷ
λῷστα βροτοῖσιν· τὰ δ΄ ὑπερβάλλοντ΄
οὐδένα καιρὸν δύναται θνητοῖς·
μείζους δ΄ ἄτας, ὅταν ὀργισθῇ
δαίμων οἴκοις, ἀπέδωκεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἔκλυον φωνάν, ἔκλυον δὲ βοὰν
τᾶς δυστάνου Κολχίδος, οὐδέ πω
ἤπιος· ἀλλ΄ ὦ γηραιά,
λέξον· ἐπ΄ ἀμφιπύλου γὰρ ἔσω μελάθρου βοὰν
ἔκλυον· οὐδὲ συνήδομαι, ὦ γύναι, ἄλγεσιν
δώματος· ἐπεί μοι φίλον κέκρανται.

Τρ. οὐκ εἰσὶ δόμοι· φροῦδα τάδ΄ ἤδη.
τὸν μὲν γὰρ ἔχει λέκτρα τυράννων,
ἃ δ΄ ἐν θαλάμοις τάκει βιοτὰν
δέσποινα, φίλων οὐδενὸς οὐδὲν
παραθαλπομένα φρένα μύθοις.

Μη. αἰαῖ· ὦ Ζεῦ καὶ Γᾶ καὶ Φῶς·
διά μου κεφαλᾶς φλὸξ οὐρανία
βαίη· τί δέ μοι ζῆν ἔτι κέρδος;
φεῦ φεῦ· θανάτῳ καταλυσαίμαν
βιοτὰν στυγερὰν προλιποῦσα.

Χο.
ἄιες· ὦ Ζεῦ καὶ γᾶ καὶ φῶς· [στρ.
ἀχὰν οἵαν ἁ δύστανος
μέλπει νύμφα;
— τίς σοί ποτε τᾶς ἀπλάτου
κοίτας ἔρος, ὦ ματαία;
σπεύσει θανάτου τελευτά·
μηδὲν τόδε λίσσου.
— εἰ δὲ σὸς πόσις
καινὰ λέχη σεβίζει,
κείνῳ τόδε· μὴ χαράσσου·

— Ζεύς σοι τάδε συνδικήσει. μὴ λίαν
τάκου δυρομένα σὸν εὐνάταν.

Μη. ὦ μεγάλα Θέμι καὶ πότνι΄ Ἄρτεμι
λεύσσεθ΄ ἃ πάσχω, μεγάλοις ὅρκοις
ἐνδησαμένα τὸν κατάρατον
πόσιν; ὅν ποτ΄ ἐγὼ νύμφαν τ΄ ἐσίδοιμ΄
αὐτοῖς μελάθροις διακναιομένους,
οἵ΄ ἐμὲ πρόσθεν τολμῶσ΄ ἀδικεῖν.
ὦ πάτερ, ὦ πόλις, ὧν ἀπενάσθην
αἰσχρῶς τὸν ἐμὸν κτείνασα κάσιν.

Τρ. κλύεθ΄ οἷα λέγει κἀπιβοᾶται
Θέμιν εὐκταίαν Ζῆνά θ΄, ὃς ὅρκων
θνητοῖς ταμίας νενόμισται;
οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπως ἔν τινι μικρῷ
δέσποινα χόλον καταπαύσει.

Χο.
πῶς ἂν ἐς ὄψιν τὰν ἀμετέραν [ἀντ.
ἔλθοι μύθων τ΄ αὐδαθέντων
δέξαιτ΄ ὀμφάν;
— εἴ πως βαρύθυμον ὀργὰν
καὶ λῆμα φρενῶν μεθείη,
μήτοι τό γ΄ ἐμὸν πρόθυμον
φίλοισιν ἀπέστω.
— ἀλλὰ βᾶσά νιν
δεῦρο πόρευσον οἴκων
ἔξω· φίλα καὶ τάδ΄ αὔδα.
— σπεῦσον πρίν τι κακῶσαι τοὺς εἴσω·
πένθος γὰρ μεγάλως τόδ΄ ὁρμᾶται.

Τρ. δράσω τάδ΄· ἀτὰρ φόβος εἰ πείσω
δέσποιναν ἐμήν·
μόχθου δὲ χάριν τήνδ΄ ἐπιδώσω.
καίτοι τοκάδος δέργμα λεαίνης
ἀποταυροῦται δμωσίν, ὅταν τις
μῦθον προφέρων πέλας ὁρμηθῇ.

σκαιοὺς δὲ λέγων κοὐδέν τι σοφοὺς
τοὺς πρόσθε βροτοὺς οὐκ ἂν ἁμάρτοις,
οἵτινες ὕμνους ἐπὶ μὲν θαλίαις
ἐπί τ΄ εἰλαπίναις καὶ παρὰ δείπνοις
ηὕροντο βίου τερπνὰς ἀκοάς·
στυγίους δὲ βροτῶν οὐδεὶς λύπας
ηὕρετο μούσῃ καὶ πολυχόρδοις
ᾠδαῖς παύειν, ἐξ ὧν θάνατοι
δειναί τε τύχαι σφάλλουσι δόμους.
καίτοι τάδε μὲν κέρδος ἀκεῖσθαι
μολπαῖσι βροτούς· ἵνα δ΄ εὔδειπνοι
δαῖτες, τί μάτην τείνουσι βοήν;
τὸ παρὸν γὰρ ἔχει τέρψιν ἀφ΄ αὑτοῦ
δαιτὸς πλήρωμα βροτοῖσιν.

Χο. ἰαχὰν ἄιον πολύστονον γόων,
λιγυρὰ δ΄ ἄχεα μογερὰ βοᾷ
τὸν ἐν λέχει προδόταν κακόνυμφον·
θεοκλυτεῖ δ΄ ἄδικα παθοῦσα
τὰν Ζηνὸς ὁρκίαν Θέμιν,
ἅ νιν ἔβασεν
Ἑλλάδ΄ ἐς ἀντίπορον
δι΄ ἅλα νύχιον ἐφ΄ ἁλμυρὰν
πόντου κλῇδ΄ ἀπέραντον.

ΜΗΔΕΙΑ
Κορίνθιαι γυναῖκες, ἐξῆλθον δόμων,
μή μοί τι μέμφησθ΄· οἶδα γὰρ πολλοὺς βροτῶν
σεμνοὺς γεγῶτας, τοὺς μὲν ὀμμάτων ἄπο,
τοὺς δ΄ ἐν θυραίοις· οἱ δ΄ ἀφ΄ ἡσύχου ποδὸς
δύσκλειαν ἐκτήσαντο καὶ ῥᾳθυμίαν.
δίκη γὰρ οὐκ ἔνεστ΄ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς βροτῶν,
ὅστις πρὶν ἀνδρὸς σπλάγχνον ἐκμαθεῖν σαφῶς
στυγεῖ δεδορκώς, οὐδὲν ἠδικημένος. . . .
χρὴ δὲ ξένον μὲν κάρτα προσχωρεῖν πόλει . .
οὐδ΄ ἀστὸν ᾔνεσ΄ ὅστις αὐθάδης γεγὼς
πικρὸς πολίταις ἐστὶν ἀμαθίας ὕπο.

ἐμοὶ δ΄ ἄελπτον πρᾶγμα προσπεσὸν τόδε
ψυχὴν διέφθαρκ΄· οἴχομαι δὲ καὶ βίου
χάριν μεθεῖσα κατθανεῖν χρῄζω, φίλαι.
ἐν ᾧ γὰρ ἦν μοι πάντα γιγνώσκειν καλῶς,
κάκιστος ἀνδρῶν ἐκβέβηχ΄ οὐμὸς πόσις.
πάντων δ΄ ὅσ΄ ἔστ΄ ἔμψυχα καὶ γνώμην ἔχει
γυναῖκές ἐσμεν ἀθλιώτατον φυτόν·
ἃς πρῶτα μὲν δεῖ χρημάτων ὑπερβολῇ
πόσιν πρίασθαι, δεσπότην τε σώματος
λαβεῖν· κακοῦ γὰρ τοῦτ΄ ἔτ΄ ἄλγιον κακόν.
κἀν τῷδ΄ ἀγὼν μέγιστος, ἢ κακὸν λαβεῖν
ἢ χρηστόν. οὐ γὰρ εὐκλεεῖς ἀπαλλαγαὶ
γυναιξίν, οὐδ΄ οἷόν τ΄ ἀνήνασθαι πόσιν.
ἐς καινὰ δ΄ ἦθη καὶ νόμους ἀφιγμένην
δεῖ μάντιν εἶναι, μὴ μαθοῦσαν οἴκοθεν,
ὅτῳ μάλιστα χρήσεται ξυνευνέτῃ.
κἂν μὲν τάδ΄ ἡμῖν ἐκπονουμέναισιν εὖ
πόσις ξυνοικῇ μὴ βίᾳ φέρων ζυγόν,
ζηλωτὸς αἰών· εἰ δὲ μή, θανεῖν χρεών.
ἀνὴρ δ΄, ὅταν τοῖς ἔνδον ἄχθηται ξυνών,
ἔξω μολὼν ἔπαυσε καρδίαν ἄσης·
[ἢ πρὸς φίλον τιν΄ ἢ πρὸς ἥλικα τραπείς·]
ἡμῖν δ΄ ἀνάγκη πρὸς μίαν ψυχὴν βλέπειν.
λέγουσι δ΄ ἡμᾶς ὡς ἀκίνδυνον βίον
ζῶμεν κατ΄ οἴκους, οἳ δὲ μάρνανται δορί·
κακῶς φρονοῦντες· ὡς τρὶς ἂν παρ΄ ἀσπίδα
στῆναι θέλοιμ΄ ἂν μᾶλλον ἢ τεκεῖν ἅπαξ.
ἀλλ΄ οὐ γὰρ αὐτὸς πρὸς σὲ κἄμ΄ ἥκει λόγος·
σοὶ μὲν πόλις θ΄ ἥδ΄ ἐστὶ καὶ πατρὸς δόμοι
βίου τ΄ ὄνησις καὶ φίλων συνουσία,
ἐγὼ δ΄ ἔρημος ἄπολις οὖσ΄ ὑβρίζομαι
πρὸς ἀνδρός, ἐκ γῆς βαρβάρου λελῃσμένη,
οὐ μητέρ΄, οὐκ ἀδελφόν, οὐχὶ συγγενῆ
μεθορμίσασθαι τῆσδ΄ ἔχουσα συμφορᾶς.
τοσοῦτον οὖν σου τυγχάνειν βουλήσομαι,
ἤν μοι πόρος τις μηχανή τ΄ ἐξευρεθῇ
πόσιν δίκην τῶνδ΄ ἀντιτείσασθαι κακῶν,

[τὸν δόντα τ΄ αὐτῷ θυγατέρ΄ ἥ τ΄ ἐγήματο]
σιγᾶν. γυνὴ γὰρ τἄλλα μὲν φόβου πλέα
κακή τ΄ ἐς ἀλκὴν καὶ σίδηρον εἰσορᾶν·
ὅταν δ΄ ἐς εὐνὴν ἠδικημένη κυρῇ,
οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλη φρὴν μιαιφονωτέρα.

Χο. δράσω τάδ΄· ἐνδίκως γὰρ ἐκτείσῃ πόσιν,
Μήδεια. πενθεῖν δ΄ οὔ σε θαυμάζω τύχας.
ὁρῶ δὲ καὶ Κρέοντα, τῆσδ΄ ἄνακτα γῆς,
στείχοντα, καινῶν ἄγγελον βουλευμάτων.

ΚΡΕΩΝ
σὲ τὴν σκυθρωπὸν καὶ πόσει θυμουμένην,
Μήδειαν, εἶπον τῆσδε γῆς ἔξω περᾶν
φυγάδα, λαβοῦσαν δισσὰ σὺν σαυτῇ τέκνα·
καὶ μή τι μέλλειν· ὡς ἐγὼ βραβεὺς λόγου
τοῦδ΄ εἰμί, κοὐκ ἄπειμι πρὸς δόμους πάλιν,
πρὶν ἄν σε γαίας τερμόνων ἔξω βάλω.

Μη. αἰαῖ· πανώλης ἡ τάλαιν΄ ἀπόλλυμαι.
ἐχθροὶ γὰρ ἐξιᾶσι πάντα δὴ κάλων,
κοὐκ ἔστιν ἄτης εὐπρόσοιστος ἔκβασις.
ἐρήσομαι δὲ καὶ κακῶς πάσχουσ΄ ὅμως·
τίνος μ΄ ἔκατι γῆς ἀποστέλλεις, Κρέον;

Κρ. δέδοικά σ΄ — οὐδὲν δεῖ παραμπίσχειν λόγους —
μή μοί τι δράσῃς παῖδ΄ ἀνήκεστον κακόν.
συμβάλλεται δὲ πολλὰ τοῦδε δείματος·
σοφὴ πέφυκας καὶ κακῶν πολλῶν ἴδρις,
λυπῇ δὲ λέκτρων ἀνδρὸς ἐστερημένη.
κλύω δ΄ ἀπειλεῖν σ΄, ὡς ἀπαγγέλλουσί μοι,
τὸν δόντα καὶ γήμαντα καὶ γαμουμένην
δράσειν τι. ταῦτ΄ οὖν πρὶν παθεῖν φυλάξομαι.
κρεῖσσον δέ μοι νῦν πρός σ΄ ἀπεχθέσθαι, γύναι,
ἢ μαλθακισθέντ΄ ὕστερον μέγα στένειν.

Μη. φεῦ φεῦ.
οὐ νῦν με πρῶτον, ἀλλὰ πολλάκις, Κρέον,

ἔβλαψε δόξα μεγάλα τ΄ εἴργασται κακά.
χρὴ δ΄ οὔποθ΄ ὅστις ἀρτίφρων πέφυκ΄ ἀνὴρ
παῖδας περισσῶς ἐκδιδάσκεσθαι σοφούς·
χωρὶς γὰρ ἄλλης ἧς ἔχουσιν ἀργίας
φθόνον πρὸς ἀστῶν ἀλφάνουσι δυσμενῆ.
σκαιοῖσι μὲν γὰρ καινὰ προσφέρων σοφὰ
δόξεις ἀχρεῖος κοὐ σοφὸς πεφυκέναι·
τῶν δ΄ αὖ δοκούντων εἰδέναι τι ποικίλον
κρείσσων νομισθεὶς ἐν πόλει λυπρὸς φανῇ.
ἐγὼ δὲ καὐτὴ τῆσδε κοινωνῶ τύχης.
σοφὴ γὰρ οὖσα, τοῖς μέν εἰμ΄ ἐπίφθονος,
τοῖς δ΄ ἡσυχαία, τοῖς δὲ θατέρου τρόπου,
τοῖς δ΄ αὖ προσάντης· εἰμὶ δ΄ οὐκ ἄγαν σοφή.
σὺ δ΄ οὖν φοβῇ με· μὴ τί πλημμελὲς πάθῃς;
οὐχ ὧδ΄ ἔχει μοιμὴ τρέσῃς ἡμᾶς, Κρέον
ὥστ΄ ἐς τυράννους ἄνδρας ἐξαμαρτάνειν.
σὺ γὰρ τί μ΄ ἠδίκηκας; ἐξέδου κόρην
ὅτῳ σε θυμὸς ἦγεν. ἀλλ΄ ἐμὸν πόσιν
μισῶ· σὺ δ΄, οἶμαι, σωφρονῶν ἔδρας τάδε.
καὶ νῦν τὸ μὲν σὸν οὐ φθονῶ καλῶς ἔχειν·
νυμφεύετ΄, εὖ πράσσοιτε· τήνδε δὲ χθόνα
ἐᾶτέ μ΄ οἰκεῖν. καὶ γὰρ ἠδικημένοι
σιγησόμεσθα, κρεισσόνων νικώμενοι.

Κρ. λέγεις ἀκοῦσαι μαλθάκ΄, ἀλλ΄ ἔσω φρενῶν
ὀρρωδία μοι μή τι βουλεύσῃς κακόν,
τόσῳ δέ γ΄ ἧσσον ἢ πάρος πέποιθά σοι·
γυνὴ γὰρ ὀξύθυμος, ὡς δ΄ αὔτως ἀνήρ,
ῥᾴων φυλάσσειν ἢ σιωπηλὸς σοφός.
ἀλλ΄ ἔξιθ΄ ὡς τάχιστα, μὴ λόγους λέγε·
ὡς ταῦτ΄ ἄραρε, κοὐκ ἔχεις τέχνην ὅπως
μενεῖς παρ΄ ἡμῖν οὖσα δυσμενὴς ἐμοί.

Μη. μή, πρός σε γονάτων τῆς τε νεογάμου κόρης.

Κρ. λόγους ἀναλοῖς· οὐ γὰρ ἂν πείσαις ποτέ.

Μη. ἀλλ΄ ἐξελᾷς με κοὐδὲν αἰδέσῃ λιτάς;

Κρ. φιλῶ γὰρ οὐ σὲ μᾶλλον ἢ δόμους ἐμούς.

Μη. ὦ πατρίς, ὥς σου κάρτα νῦν μνείαν ἔχω.

Κρ. πλὴν γὰρ τέκνων ἔμοιγε φίλτατον πολύ.

Μη. φεῦ φεῦ, βροτοῖς ἔρωτες ὡς κακὸν μέγα.

Κρ. ὅπως ἄν, οἶμαι, καὶ παραστῶσιν τύχαι.

Μη. Ζεῦ, μὴ λάθοι σε τῶνδ΄ ὃς αἴτιος κακῶν.

Κρ. ἕρπ΄, ὦ ματαία, καί μ΄ ἀπάλλαξον πόνων.

Μη. πονοῦμεν ἡμεῖς κοὐ πόνων κεχρήμεθα.

Κρ. τάχ΄ ἐξ ὀπαδῶν χειρὸς ὠσθήσῃ βίᾳ.

Μη. μὴ δῆτα τοῦτό γ΄, ἀλλά σ΄ αἰτοῦμαι, Κρέον . .

Κρ. ὄχλον παρέξεις, ὡς ἔοικας, ὦ γύναι.

Μη. φευξούμεθ΄· οὐ τοῦθ΄ ἱκέτευσα σοῦ τυχεῖν.

Κρ. τί δαὶ βιάζῃ κοὐκ ἀπαλλάσσῃ χερός;

Μη. μίαν με μεῖναι τήνδ΄ ἔασον ἡμέραν
καὶ ξυμπερᾶναι φροντίδ΄ ᾗ φευξούμεθα,
παισίν τ΄ ἀφορμὴν τοῖς ἐμοῖς, ἐπεὶ πατὴρ
οὐδὲν προτιμᾷ μηχανήσασθαι τέκνοις.
οἴκτιρε δ΄ αὐτούς· καὶ σύ τοι παίδων πατὴρ
πέφυκας· εἰκὸς δ΄ ἐστὶν εὔνοιάν σ΄ ἔχειν.
τοὐμοῦ γὰρ οὔ μοι φροντίς, εἰ φευξούμεθα,
κείνους δὲ κλαίω συμφορᾷ κεχρημένους.

Κρ. ἥκιστα τοὐμὸν λῆμ΄ ἔφυ τυραννικόν,
αἰδούμενος δὲ πολλὰ δὴ διέφθορα·
καὶ νῦν ὁρῶ μὲν ἐξαμαρτάνων, γύναι,
ὅμως δὲ τεύξῃ τοῦδε· προυννέπω δέ σοι,

εἴ σ΄ ἡ ΄πιοῦσα λαμπὰς ὄψεται θεοῦ
καὶ παῖδας ἐντὸς τῆσδε τερμόνων χθονός,
θανῇ· λέλεκται μῦθος ἀψευδὴς ὅδε.
νῦν δ΄, εἰ μένειν δεῖ, μίμν΄ ἐφ΄ ἡμέραν μίαν·
οὐ γάρ τι δράσεις δεινὸν ὧν φόβος μ΄ ἔχει.

Χο. [δύστανε γύναι,]
φεῦ φεῦ, μελέα τῶν σῶν ἀχέων.
ποῖ ποτε τρέψῃ; τίνα πρὸς ξενίαν;
ἦ δόμον ἢ χθόνα σωτῆρα κακῶν
ἐξευρήσεις;
ὡς εἰς ἄπορόν σε κλύδωνα θεός,
Μήδεια, κακῶν ἐπόρευσε.

Μη. κακῶς πέπρακται πανταχῇ· τίς ἀντερεῖ;
ἀλλ΄ οὔτι ταύτῃ ταῦτα, μὴ δοκεῖτέ πω.
ἔτ΄ εἴσ΄ ἀγῶνες τοῖς νεωστὶ νυμφίοις
καὶ τοῖσι κηδεύσασιν οὐ σμικροὶ πόνοι.
δοκεῖς γὰρ ἄν με τόνδε θωπεῦσαί ποτε,
εἰ μή τι κερδαίνουσαν ἢ τεχνωμένην;
οὐδ΄ ἂν προσεῖπον οὐδ΄ ἂν ἡψάμην χεροῖν.
ὃ δ΄ ἐς τοσοῦτον μωρίας ἀφίκετο,
ὥστ΄ ἐξὸν αὐτῷ τἄμ΄ ἐλεῖν βουλεύματα
γῆς ἐκβαλόντι, τήνδ΄ ἀφῆκεν ἡμέραν
μεῖναί μ΄, ἐν ᾗ τρεῖς τῶν ἐμῶν ἐχθρῶν νεκροὺς
θήσω, πατέρα τε καὶ κόρην πόσιν τ΄ ἐμόν.
πολλὰς δ΄ ἔχουσα θανασίμους αὐτοῖς ὁδούς,
οὐκ οἶδ΄ ὁποίᾳ πρῶτον ἐγχειρῶ, φίλαι·
πότερον ὑφάψω δῶμα νυμφικὸν πυρί,
ἢ θηκτὸν ὥσω φάσγανον δι΄ ἥπατος,
σιγῇ δόμους ἐσβᾶσ΄, ἵν΄ ἔστρωται λέχος.
ἀλλ΄ ἕν τί μοι πρόσαντες· εἰ ληφθήσομαι
δόμους ὑπεσβαίνουσα καὶ τεχνωμένη,
θανοῦσα θήσω τοῖς ἐμοῖς ἐχθροῖς γέλων.
κράτιστα τὴν εὐθεῖαν, ᾗ πεφύκαμεν
σοφαὶ μάλιστα, φαρμάκοις αὐτοὺς ἑλεῖν.
εἶέν·

καὶ δὴ τεθνᾶσι· τίς με δέξεται πόλις;
τίς γῆν ἄσυλον καὶ δόμους ἐχεγγύους
ξένος παρασχὼν ῥύσεταί τοὐμὸν δέμας;
οὐκ ἔστι. μείνασ΄ οὖν ἔτι σμικρὸν χρόνον,
ἢν μέν τις ἡμῖν πύργος ἀσφαλὴς φανῇ,
δόλῳ μέτειμι τόνδε καὶ σιγῇ φόνον·
ἢν δ΄ ἐξελαύνῃ ξυμφορά μ΄ ἀμήχανος,
αὐτὴ ξίφος λαβοῦσα, κεἰ μέλλω θανεῖν,
κτενῶ σφε, τόλμης δ΄ εἶμι πρὸς τὸ καρτερόν.
οὐ γὰρ μὰ τὴν δέσποιναν ἣν ἐγὼ σέβω
μάλιστα πάντων καὶ ξυνεργὸν εἰλόμην,
Ἑκάτην, μυχοῖς ναίουσαν ἑστίας ἐμῆς,
χαίρων τις αὐτῶν τοὐμὸν ἀλγυνεῖ κέαρ.
πικροὺς δ΄ ἐγώ σφιν καὶ λυγροὺς θήσω γάμους,
πικρὸν δὲ κῆδος καὶ φυγὰς ἐμὰς χθονός.
ἀλλ΄ εἶα· φείδου μηδὲν ὧν ἐπίστασαι,
Μήδεια, βουλεύουσα καὶ τεχνωμένη·
ἕρπ΄ ἐς τὸ δεινόν· νῦν ἀγὼν εὐψυχίας.
ὁρᾷς ἃ πάσχεις· οὐ γέλωτα δεῖ σ΄ ὀφλεῖν
τοῖς Σισυφείοις τοῖς τ΄ Ἰάσονος γάμοις,
γεγῶσαν ἐσθλοῦ πατρὸς Ἡλίου τ΄ ἄπο.
ἐπίστασαι δέ· πρὸς δὲ καὶ πεφύκαμεν
γυναῖκες, ἐς μὲν ἔσθλ΄ ἀμηχανώταται,
κακῶν δὲ πάντων τέκτονες σοφώταται.

Χο. ἄνω ποταμῶν ἱερῶν χωροῦσι παγαί, [στρ.
καὶ δίκα καὶ πάντα πάλιν στρέφεται.
ἀνδράσι μὲν δόλιαι βουλαί, θεῶν δ΄
οὐκέτι πίστις ἄραρε·
τὰν δ΄ ἐμὰν εὔκλειαν ἔχειν βιοτὰν στρέψουσι φᾶμαι·
ἔρχεται τιμὰ γυναικείῳ γένει·
οὐκέτι δυσκέλαδος φάμα γυναῖκας ἕξει.

μοῦσαι δὲ παλαιγενέων λήξουσ΄ ἀοιδῶν [ἀντ.
τὰν ἐμὰν ὑμνεῦσαι ἀπιστοσύναν.
οὐ γὰρ ἐν ἁμετέρᾳ γνώμᾳ λύρας
ὤπασε θέσπιν ἀοιδὰν

Φοῖβος, ἀγήτωρ μελέων· ἐπεὶ ἀντάχησ΄ ἂν ὕμνον
ἀρσένων γέννᾳ. μακρὸς δ΄ αἰὼν ἔχει
πολλὰ μὲν ἀμετέραν ἀνδρῶν τε μοῖραν εἰπεῖν.

σὺ δ΄ ἐκ μὲν οἴκων πατρίων ἔπλευσας [στρ.
μαινομένᾳ κραδίᾳ, διδύμους ὁρίσασα πόντου
πέτρας· ἐπὶ δὲ ξένᾳ
ναίεις χθονί, τᾶς ἀνάνδρου
κοίτας ὀλέσασα λέκτρον,
τάλαινα, φυγὰς δὲ χώρας
ἄτιμος ἐλαύνῃ.

βέβακε δ΄ ὅρκων χάρις, οὐδ΄ ἔτ΄ αἰδὼς [ἀντ.
Ἑλλάδι τᾷ μεγάλᾳ μένει, αἰθερία δ΄ ἀνέπτα.
σοὶ δ΄ οὔτε πατρὸς δόμοι,
δύστανε, μεθορμίσασθαι
μόχθων πάρα, τῶν τε λέκτρων
ἄλλα βασίλεια κρείσσων
δόμοισιν ἐπέστα.

ΙΑΣΩΝ
οὐ νῦν κατεῖδον πρῶτον ἀλλὰ πολλάκις
τραχεῖαν ὀργὴν ὡς ἀμήχανον κακόν.
σοὶ γὰρ παρὸν γῆν τήνδε καὶ δόμους ἔχειν
κούφως φερούσῃ κρεισσόνων βουλεύματα,
λόγων ματαίων οὕνεκ΄ ἐκπεσῇ χθονός.
κἀμοὶ μὲν οὐδὲν πρᾶγμα· μὴ παύσῃ ποτὲ
λέγουσ΄ Ἰάσον΄ ὡς κάκιστός ἐστ΄ ἀνήρ·
ἃ δ΄ ἐς τυράννους ἐστί σοι λελεγμένα,
πᾶν κέρδος ἡγοῦ ζημιουμένη φυγῇ.
κἀγὼ μὲν αἰεὶ βασιλέων θυμουμένων
ὀργὰς ἀφῄρουν καί σ΄ ἐβουλόμην μένειν·
σὺ δ΄ οὐκ ἀνίεις μωρίας, λέγουσ΄ ἀεὶ
κακῶς τυράννους· τοιγὰρ ἐκπεσῇ χθονός.
ὅμως δὲ κἀκ τῶνδ΄ οὐκ ἀπειρηκὼς φίλοις
ἥκω, τὸ σὸν δὲ προσκοπούμενος, γύναι,
ὡς μήτ΄ ἀχρήμων σὺν τέκνοισιν ἐκπέσῃς

μήτ΄ ἐνδεής του· πόλλ΄ ἐφέλκεται φυγὴ
κακὰ ξὺν αὐτῇ. καὶ γὰρ εἰ σύ με στυγεῖς,
οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην σοὶ κακῶς φρονεῖν ποτε.

Μη. ὦ παγκάκιστε, τοῦτο γάρ σ΄ εἰπεῖν ἔχω,
γλώσσῃ μέγιστον εἰς ἀνανδρίαν κακόν·
ἦλθες πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ἦλθες ἔχθιστος γεγώς;
[θεοῖς τε κἀμοὶ παντί τ΄ ἀνθρώπων γένει;]
οὗτοι θράσος τόδ΄ ἐστὶν οὐδ΄ εὐτολμία,
φίλους κακῶς δράσαντ΄ ἐναντίον βλέπειν,
ἀλλ΄ ἡ μεγίστη τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις νόσων
πασῶν, ἀναίδει΄· εὖ δ΄ ἐποίησας μολών·
ἐγώ τε γὰρ λέξασα κουφισθήσομαι
ψυχὴν κακῶς σε καὶ σὺ λυπήσῃ κλύων.
ἐκ τῶν δὲ πρώτων πρῶτον ἄρξομαι λέγειν.
ἔσῳσά σ΄, ὡς ἴσασιν Ἑλλήνων ὅσοι
ταὐτὸν συνεισέβησαν Ἀργῷον σκάφος,
πεμφθέντα ταύρων πυρπνόων ἐπιστάτην
ζεύγλῃσι καὶ σπεροῦντα θανάσιμον γύην·
δράκοντά θ΄, ὃς πάγχρυσον ἀμπέχων δέρας
σπείραις ἔσῳζε πολυπλόκοις ἄυπνος ὤν,
κτείνασ΄ ἀνέσχον σοὶ φάος σωτήριον.
αὐτὴ δὲ πατέρα καὶ δόμους προδοῦσ΄ ἐμοὺς
τὴν Πηλιῶτιν εἰς Ἰωλκὸν ἱκόμην
σὺν σοί, πρόθυμος μᾶλλον ἢ σοφωτέρα·
Πελίαν τ΄ ἀπέκτειν΄, ὥσπερ ἄλγιστον θανεῖν,
παίδων ὑπ΄ αὐτοῦ, πάντα τ΄ ἐξεῖλον δόμον.
καὶ ταῦθ΄ ὑφ΄ ἡμῶν, ὦ κάκιστ΄ ἀνδρῶν, παθὼν
προύδωκας ἡμᾶς, καινὰ δ΄ ἐκτήσω λέχη —
παίδων γεγώτων· εἰ γὰρ ἦσθ΄ ἄπαις ἔτι,
συγγνώστ΄ ἂν ἦν σοι τοῦδ΄ ἐρασθῆναι λέχους.
ὅρκων δὲ φρούδη πίστις, οὐδ΄ ἔχω μαθεῖν
ἢ θεοὺς νομίζεις τοὺς τότ΄ οὐκ ἄρχειν ἔτι,
ἢ καινὰ κεῖσθαι θέσμι΄ ἀνθρώποις τὰ νῦν,
ἐπεὶ σύνοισθά γ΄ εἰς ἔμ΄ οὐκ εὔορκος ὤν.
φεῦ δεξιὰ χείρ, ἧς σὺ πόλλ΄ ἐλαμβάνου,
καὶ τῶνδε γονάτων, ὡς μάτην κεχρῴσμεθα

κακοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρός, ἐλπίδων δ΄ ἡμάρτομεν.
ἄγ΄· ὡς φίλῳ γὰρ ὄντι σοι κοινώσομαι
— δοκοῦσα μὲν τί πρός γε σοῦ πράξειν καλῶς;
ὅμως δ΄· ἐρωτηθεὶς γὰρ αἰσχίων φανῇ —
νῦν ποῖ τράπωμαι; πότερα πρὸς πατρὸς δόμους,
οὓς σοὶ προδοῦσα καὶ πάτραν ἀφικόμην;
ἢ πρὸς ταλαίνας Πελιάδας; καλῶς γ΄ ἂν οὖν
δέξαιντό μ΄ οἴκοις ὧν πατέρα κατέκτανον.
ἔχει γὰρ οὕτω· τοῖς μὲν οἴκοθεν φίλοις
ἐχθρὰ καθέστηχ΄, οὓς δέ μ΄ οὐκ ἐχρῆν κακῶς
δρᾶν, σοὶ χάριν φέρουσα πολεμίους ἔχω.
τοιγάρ με πολλαῖς μακαρίαν Ἑλληνίδων
ἔθηκας ἀντὶ τῶνδε· θαυμαστὸν δέ σε
ἔχω πόσιν καὶ πιστὸν ἡ τάλαιν΄ ἐγώ,
εἰ φεύξομαί γε γαῖαν ἐκβεβλημένη,
φίλων ἔρημος, σὺν τέκνοις μόνη μόνοις —
καλόν γ΄ ὄνειδος τῷ νεωστὶ νυμφίῳ,
πτωχοὺς ἀλᾶσθαι παῖδας ἥ τ΄ ἔσῳσά σε.
ὦ Ζεῦ, τί δὴ χρυσοῦ μὲν ὃς κίβδηλος ἦ
τεκμήρι΄ ἀνθρώποισιν ὥπασας σαφῆ,
ἀνδρῶν δ΄ ὅτῳ χρὴ τὸν κακὸν διειδέναι,
οὐδεὶς χαρακτὴρ ἐμπέφυκε σώματι;

Χο. δεινή τις ὀργὴ καὶ δυσίατος πέλει,
ὅταν φίλοι φίλοισι συμβάλωσ΄ ἔριν.

Ια. δεῖ μ΄, ὡς ἔοικε, μὴ κακὸν φῦναι λέγειν,
ἀλλ΄ ὥστε ναὸς κεδνὸν οἰακοστρόφον
ἄκροισι λαίφους κρασπέδοις ὑπεκδραμεῖν
τὴν σὴν στόμαργον, ὦ γύναι, γλωσσαλγίαν.
ἐγὼ δ΄, ἐπειδὴ καὶ λίαν πυργοῖς χάριν,
Κύπριν νομίζω τῆς ἐμῆς ναυκληρίας
σώτειραν εἶναι θεῶν τε κἀνθρώπων μόνην.
σοὶ δ΄ ἔστι μὲν νοῦς λεπτός — ἀλλ΄ ἐπίφθονος
λόγος διελθεῖν, ὡς Ἔρως σ΄ ἠνάγκασε
τόξοις ἀφύκτοις τοὐμὸν ἐκσῶσαι δέμας.
ἀλλ΄ οὐκ ἀκριβῶς αὐτὸ θήσομαι λίαν·

ὅπῃ γὰρ οὖν ὤνησας, οὐ κακῶς ἔχει.
μείζω γε μέντοι τῆς ἐμῆς σωτηρίας
εἴληφας ἢ δέδωκας, ὡς ἐγὼ φράσω.
πρῶτον μὲν Ἑλλάδ΄ ἀντὶ βαρβάρου χθονὸς
γαῖαν κατοικεῖς καὶ δίκην ἐπίστασαι
νόμοις τε χρῆσθαι μὴ πρὸς ἰσχύος χάριν·
πάντες δέ σ΄ ᾔσθοντ΄ οὖσαν Ἕλληνες σοφὴν
καὶ δόξαν ἔσχες· εἰ δὲ γῆς ἐπ΄ ἐσχάτοις
ὅροισιν ᾤκεις, οὐκ ἂν ἦν λόγος σέθεν.
εἴη δ΄ ἔμοιγε μήτε χρυσὸς ἐν δόμοις
μήτ΄ Ὀρφέως κάλλιον ὑμνῆσαι μέλος,
εἰ μὴ ΄πίσημος ἡ τύχη γένοιτό μοι.
τοσαῦτα μέν σοι τῶν ἐμῶν πόνων πέρι
ἔλεξ΄· ἅμιλλαν γὰρ σὺ προύθηκας λόγων.
ἃ δ΄ ἐς γάμους μοι βασιλικοὺς ὠνείδισας,
ἐν τῷδε δείξω πρῶτα μὲν σοφὸς γεγώς,
ἔπειτα σώφρων, εἶτα σοὶ μέγας φίλος
καὶ παισὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖσιν — ἀλλ΄ ἔχ΄ ἥσυχος.
ἐπεὶ μετέστην δεῦρ΄ Ἰωλκίας χθονὸς
πολλὰς ἐφέλκων συμφορὰς ἀμηχάνους,
τί τοῦδ΄ ἂν εὕρημ΄ ἧὗρον εὐτυχέστερον
ἢ παῖδα γῆμαι βασιλέως φυγὰς γεγώς;
οὐχ, ᾗ σὺ κνίζῃ, σὸν μὲν ἐχθαίρων λέχος,
καινῆς δὲ νύμφης ἱμέρῳ πεπληγμένος,
οὐδ΄ εἰς ἅμιλλαν πολύτεκνον σπουδὴν ἔχων·
ἅλις γὰρ οἱ γεγῶτες οὐδὲ μέμφομαι·
ἀλλ΄ ὡς, τὸ μὲν μέγιστον, οἰκοῖμεν καλῶς
καὶ μὴ σπανιζοίμεσθα, γιγνώσκων ὅτι
πένητα φεύγει πᾶς τις ἐκποδὼν φίλος,
παῖδας δὲ θρέψαιμ΄ ἀξίως δόμων ἐμῶν
σπείρας τ΄ ἀδελφοὺς τοῖσιν ἐκ σέθεν τέκνοις
ἐς ταὐτὸ θείην, καὶ ξυναρτήσας γένος
εὐδαιμονοῖμεν. σοί τε γὰρ παίδων τί δεῖ;
ἐμοί τε λύει τοῖσι μέλλουσιν τέκνοις
τὰ ζῶντ΄ ὀνῆσαι. μῶν βεβούλευμαι κακῶς;
οὐδ΄ ἂν σὺ φαίης, εἴ σε μὴ κνίζοι λέχος.
ἀλλ΄ ἐς τοσοῦτον ἥκεθ΄ ὥστ΄ ὀρθουμένης

εὐνῆς γυναῖκες πάντ΄ ἔχειν νομίζετε,
ἢν δ΄ αὖ γένηται ξυμφορά τις ἐς λέχος,
τὰ λῷστα καὶ κάλλιστα πολεμιώτατα
τίθεσθε. χρῆν γὰρ ἄλλοθέν ποθεν βροτοὺς
παῖδας τεκνοῦσθαι, θῆλυ δ΄ οὐκ εἶναι γένος·
χοὕτως ἂν οὐκ ἦν οὐδὲν ἀνθρώποις κακόν.

Χο. Ἰᾶσον, εὖ μὲν τούσδ΄ ἐκόσμησας λόγους·
ὅμως δ΄ ἔμοιγε, κεἰ παρὰ γνώμην ἐρῶ,
δοκεῖς προδοὺς σὴν ἄλοχον οὐ δίκαια δρᾶν.

Μη. ἦ πολλὰ πολλοῖς εἰμι διάφορος βροτῶν.
ἐμοὶ γὰρ ὅστις ἄδικος ὢν σοφὸς λέγειν
πέφυκε, πλείστην ζημίαν ὀφλισκάνει·
γλώσσῃ γὰρ αὐχῶν τἄδικ΄ εὖ περιστελεῖν,
τολμᾷ πανουργεῖν· ἔστι δ΄ οὐκ ἄγαν σοφός.
ὡς καὶ σὺ μή νυν εἰς ἔμ΄ εὐσχήμων γένῃ
λέγειν τε δεινός. ἓν γὰρ ἐκτενεῖ σ΄ ἔπος·
χρῆν σ΄, εἴπερ ἦσθα μὴ κακός, πείσαντά με
γαμεῖν γάμον τόνδ΄, ἀλλὰ μὴ σιγῇ φίλων.

Ια. καλῶς γ΄ ἄν, οἶμαι, τῷδ΄ ὑπηρέτεις λόγῳ,
εἴ σοι γάμον κατεῖπον, ἥτις οὐδὲ νῦν
τολμᾷς μεθεῖναι καρδίας μέγαν χόλον.

Μη. οὐ τοῦτό σ΄ εἶχεν, ἀλλὰ βάρβαρον λέχος
πρὸς γῆρας οὐκ εὔδοξον ἐξέβαινέ σοι.

Ια. εὖ νῦν τόδ΄ ἴσθι, μὴ γυναικὸς οὕνεκα
γῆμαί με λέκτρα βασιλέων ἃ νῦν ἔχω,
ἀλλ΄, ὥσπερ εἶπον καὶ πάρος, σῶσαι θέλων
σέ, καὶ τέκνοισι τοῖς ἐμοῖς ὁμοσπόρους
φῦσαι τυράννους παῖδας, ἔρυμα δώμασι.

Μη. μή μοι γένοιτο λυπρὸς εὐδαίμων βίος
μηδ΄ ὄλβος ὅστις τὴν ἐμὴν κνίζοι φρένα.

Ια. οἶσθ΄ ὡς μέτευξαι, καὶ σοφωτέρα φανῇ;
τὰ χρηστὰ μή σοι λυπρὰ φαίνεσθαι ποτέ,
μηδ΄ εὐτυχοῦσα δυστυχὴς εἶναι δοκεῖν.

Μη. ὕβριζ΄, ἐπειδὴ σοὶ μὲν ἔστ΄ ἀποστροφή,
ἐγὼ δ΄ ἔρημος τήνδε φευξοῦμαι χθόνα.

Ια. αὐτὴ τάδ΄ εἵλου· μηδέν΄ ἄλλον αἰτιῶ.

Μη. τί δρῶσα; μῶν γαμοῦσα καὶ προδοῦσά σε;

Ια. ἀρὰς τυράννοις ἀνοσίους ἀρωμένη.

Μη. καὶ σοῖς ἀραία γ΄ οὖσα τυγχάνω δόμοις.

Ια. ὡς οὐ κρινοῦμαι τῶνδέ σοι τὰ πλείονα.
ἀλλ΄, εἴ τι βούλῃ παισὶν ἢ σαυτῆς φυγῇ
προσωφέλημα χρημάτων ἐμῶν λαβεῖν,
λέγ΄· ὡς ἕτοιμος ἀφθόνῳ δοῦναι χερὶ
ξένοις τε πέμπειν σύμβολ΄, οἳ δράσουσί σ΄ εὖ.
καὶ ταῦτα μὴ θέλουσα μωρανεῖς, γύναι·
λήξασα δ΄ ὀργῆς κερδανεῖς ἀμείνονα.

Μη. οὔτ΄ ἂν ξένοισι τοῖσι σοῖς χρησαίμεθ΄ ἄν,
οὔτ΄ ἄν τι δεξαίμεσθα, μηδ΄ ἡμῖν δίδου·
κακοῦ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς δῶρ΄ ὄνησιν οὐκ ἔχει.

Ια. ἀλλ΄ οὖν ἐγὼ μὲν δαίμονας μαρτύρομαι,
ὡς πάνθ΄ ὑπουργεῖν σοί τε καὶ τέκνοις θέλω·
σοὶ δ΄ οὐκ ἀρέσκει τἀγάθ΄, ἀλλ΄ αὐθαδίᾳ
φίλους ἀπωθῇ· τοιγὰρ ἀλγυνῇ πλέον.

Μη. χώρει· πόθῳ γὰρ τῆς νεοδμήτου κόρης
αἰρῇ χρονίζων δωμάτων ἐξώπιος.
νύμφευ΄· ἴσως γάρ — σὺν θεῷ δ΄ εἰρήσεται —
γαμεῖς τοιοῦτον ὥστε σ΄ ἀρνεῖσθαι γάμον.

Χο. ἔρωτες ὑπὲρ μὲν ἄγαν [στρ.
ἐλθόντες οὐκ εὐδοξίαν
οὐδ΄ ἀρετὰν παρέδωκαν
ἀνδράσιν· εἰ δ΄ ἅλις ἔλθοι
Κύπρις, οὐκ ἄλλα θεὸς εὔχαρις οὕτως.
μήποτ΄, ὦ δέσποιν΄, ἐπ΄ ἐμοὶ χρυσέων τόξων ἐφείης
ἱμέρῳ χρίσασ΄ ἄφυκτον οἰστόν.

στέργοι δέ με σωφροσύνα, [ἀντ.
δώρημα κάλλιστον θεῶν·
μηδέ ποτ΄ ἀμφιλόγους ὀρ
γὰς ἀκόρεστά τε νείκη
θυμὸν ἐκπλήξασ΄ ἑτέροις ἐπὶ λέκτροις
προσβάλοι δεινὰ Κύπρις,
ἀπτολέμους δ΄ εὐνὰς σεβίζουσ΄
ὀξύφρων κρίνοι λέχη γυναικῶν.

ὦ πατρίς, ὦ δώματα, μὴ [στρ.
δῆτ΄ ἄπολις γενοίμαν
τὸν ἀμηχανίας ἔχουσα
δυσπέρατον αἰῶν΄,
οἰκτροτάτων ἀχέων.
θανάτῳ θανάτῳ πάρος δαμείην
ἀμέραν τάνδ΄ ἐξανύσασα· μό
χθων δ΄ οὐκ ἄλλος ὕπερθεν ἢ
γᾶς πατρίας στέρεσθαι.

εἴδομεν, οὐκ ἐξ ἑτέρων [ἀντ.
μῦθον ἔχω φράσασθαι·
σὲ γὰρ οὐ πόλις, οὐ φίλων τις
ᾤκτισεν παθοῦσαν
δεινότατον παθέων.
ἀχάριστος ὄλοιθ΄, ὅτῳ πάρεστιν
μὴ φίλους τιμᾶν καθαρᾶν ἀνοί-
ξαντα κλῆδα φρενῶν· ἐμοὶ
μὲν φίλος οὔποτ΄ ἔσται.

ΑΙΓΕΥΣ
Μήδεια, χαῖρε· τοῦδε γὰρ προοίμιον
κάλλιον οὐδεὶς οἶδε προσφωνεῖν φίλους.

Μη. ὦ χαῖρε καὶ σύ, παῖ σοφοῦ Πανδίονος,
Αἰγεῦ. πόθεν γῆς τῆσδ΄ ἐπιστρωφᾷ πέδον;

Αι. Φοίβου παλαιὸν ἐκλιπὼν χρηστήριον.

Μη. τί δ΄ ὀμφαλὸν γῆς θεσπιῳδὸν ἐστάλης;

Αι. παίδων ἐρευνῶν σπέρμ΄ ὅπως γένοιτό μοι.

Μη. πρὸς θεῶν — ἄπαις γὰρ δεῦρ΄ ἀεὶ τείνεις βίον;

Αι. ἄπαιδές ἐσμεν δαίμονός τινος τύχῃ.

Μη. δάμαρτος οὔσης, ἢ λέχους ἄπειρος ὤν;

Αι. οὐκ ἐσμὲν εὐνῆς ἄζυγες γαμηλίου.

Μη. τί δῆτα Φοῖβος εἶπέ σοι παίδων πέρι;

Αι. σοφώτερ΄ ἢ κατ΄ ἄνδρα συμβαλεῖν ἔπη.

Μη. θέμις μὲν ἡμᾶς χρησμὸν εἰδέναι θεοῦ;

Αι. μάλιστ΄, ἐπεί τοι καὶ σοφῆς δεῖται φρενός.

Μη. τί δῆτ΄ ἔχρησε; λέξον, εἰ θέμις κλύειν.

Αι. ἀσκοῦ με τὸν προύχοντα μὴ λῦσαι πόδα —

Μη. πρὶν ἂν τί δράσῃς ἢ τίν΄ ἐξίκῃ χθόνα;

Αι. πρὶν ἂν πατρῴαν αὖθις ἑστίαν μόλω.

Μη. σὺ δ΄ ὡς τί χρῄζων τήνδε ναυστολεῖς χθόνα;

Αι. Πιτθεύς τις ἔστι, γῆς ἄναξ Τροζηνίας. . . .

Μη. παῖς, ὡς λέγουσι, Πέλοπος, εὐσεβέστατος.

Αι. τούτῳ θεοῦ μάντευμα κοινῶσαι θέλω.

Μη. σοφὸς γὰρ ἀνὴρ καὶ τρίβων τὰ τοιάδε.

Αι. κἀμοί γε πάντων φίλτατος δορυξένων.

Μη. ἀλλ΄ εὐτυχοίης καὶ τύχοις ὅσων ἐρᾷς.

Αι. τί γὰρ σὸν ὄμμα χρώς τε συντέτηχ΄ ὅδε;

Μη. Αἰγεῦ, κάκιστός ἐστί μοι πάντων πόσις. 690

Αι. τί φῄς; σαφῶς μοι σὰς φράσον δυσθυμίας.

Μη. ἀδικεῖ μ΄ Ἰάσων οὐδὲν ἐξ ἐμοῦ παθών.

Αι. τί χρῆμα δράσας; φράζε μοι σαφέστερον.

Μη. γυναῖκ΄ ἐφ΄ ἡμῖν δεσπότιν δόμων ἔχει.

Αι. οὔ που τετόλμηκ΄ ἔργον αἴσχιστον τόδε;

Μη. σάφ΄ ἴσθ΄· ἄτιμοι δ΄ ἐσμὲν οἱ πρὸ τοῦ φίλοι.

Αι. πότερον ἐρασθεὶς ἢ σὸν ἐχθαίρων λέχος;

Μη. μέγαν γ΄ ἔρωτα πιστὸς οὐκ ἔφυ φίλοις.

Αι. ἴτω νυν, εἴπερ, ὡς λέγεις, ἐστὶν κακός.

Μη. ἀνδρῶν τυράννων κῆδος ἠράσθη λαβεῖν. 700

Αι. δίδωσι δ΄ αὐτῷ τίς; πέραινέ μοι λόγον.

Μη. Κρέων, ὃς ἄρχει τῆσδε γῆς Κορινθίας.

Αι. συγγνωστὰ μέν τἄρ΄ ἦν σε λυπεῖσθαι, γύναι.

Μη. ὄλωλα· καὶ πρός γ΄ ἐξελαύνομαι χθονός.

Αι. πρὸς τοῦ; τόδ΄ ἄλλο καινὸν αὖ λέγεις κακόν.

Μη. Κρέων μ΄ ἐλαύνει φυγάδα γῆς Κορινθίας.

Αι. ἐᾷ δ΄ Ἰάσων; οὐδὲ ταῦτ΄ ἐπῄνεσα.

Μη. λόγῳ μὲν οὐχί, καρτερεῖν δὲ βούλεται.
ἀλλ΄ ἄντομαί σε τῆσδε πρὸς γενειάδος
γονάτων τε τῶν σῶν ἱκεσία τε γίγνομαι,
οἴκτιρον οἴκτιρόν με τὴν δυσδαίμονα
καὶ μή μ΄ ἔρημον ἐκπεσοῦσαν εἰσίδῃς,
δέξαι δὲ χώρᾳ καὶ δόμοις ἐφέστιον.
οὕτως ἔρως σοὶ πρὸς θεῶν τελεσφόρος
γένοιτο παίδων, καὐτὸς ὄλβιος θάνοις.
εὕρημα δ΄ οὐκ οἶσθ΄ οἷον ηὕρηκας τόδε·
παύσω δέ σ΄ ὄντ΄ ἄπαιδα καὶ παίδων γονὰς
σπεῖραί σε θήσω· τοιάδ΄ οἶδα φάρμακα.

Αι. πολλῶν ἕκατι τήνδε σοι δοῦναι χάριν,
γύναι, πρόθυμός εἰμι, πρῶτα μὲν θεῶν,
ἔπειτα παίδων ὧν ἐπαγγέλλῃ γονάς·
ἐς τοῦτο γὰρ δὴ φροῦδός εἰμι πᾶς ἐγώ.
οὕτω δ΄ ἔχει μοι· σοῦ μὲν ἐλθούσης χθόνα,
πειράσομαί σου προξενεῖν δίκαιος ὤν.
τόσον γε μέντοι σοι προσημαίνω, γύναι·
ἐκ τῆσδε μὲν γῆς οὔ σ΄ ἄγειν βουλήσομαι,
αὐτὴ δ΄ ἐάνπερ εἰς ἐμοὺς ἔλθῃς δόμους,
μενεῖς ἄσυλος κοὔ σε μὴ μεθῶ τινι.
ἐκ τῆσδε δ΄ αὐτὴ γῆς ἀπαλλάσσου πόδα·
ἀναίτιος γὰρ καὶ ξένοις εἶναι θέλω.

Μη. ἔσται τάδ΄· ἀλλὰ πίστις εἰ γένοιτό μοι
τούτων, ἔχοιμ΄ ἂν πάντα πρὸς σέθεν καλῶς.

Αι. μῶν οὐ πέποιθας; ἢ τί σοι τὸ δυσχερές;

Μη. πέποιθα· Πελίου δ΄ ἐχθρός ἐστί μοι δόμος
Κρέων τε. τούτοις δ΄ ὁρκίοισι μὲν ζυγεὶς
ἄγουσιν οὐ μεθεῖ΄ ἂν ἐκ γαίας ἐμέ·
λόγοις δὲ συμβὰς καὶ θεῶν ἀνώμοτος
φίλος γένοι΄ ἂν τἀπικηρυκεύματα· —
οὐκ ἂν πίθοιο· τἀμὰ μὲν γὰρ ἀσθενῆ,
τοῖς δ΄ ὄλβος ἐστὶ καὶ δόμος τυραννικός.

Αι. πολλὴν ἔλεξας ἐν λόγοις προμηθίαν·
ἀλλ΄, εἰ δοκεῖ σοι, δρᾶν τάδ΄ οὐκ ἀφίσταμαι.
ἐμοί τε γὰρ τάδ΄ ἐστὶν ἀσφαλέστατα,
σκῆψίν τιν΄ ἐχθροῖς σοῖς ἔχοντα δεικνύναι,
τὸ σόν τ΄ ἄραρε μᾶλλον· ἐξηγοῦ θεούς.

Μη. ὄμνυ πέδον Γῆς, πατέρα θ΄ Ἥλιον πατρὸς
τοὐμοῦ, θεῶν τε συντιθεὶς ἅπαν γένος.

Αι. τί χρῆμα δράσειν ἢ τί μὴ δράσειν; λέγε.

Μη. μήτ΄ αὐτὸς ἐκ γῆς σῆς ἔμ΄ ἐκβαλεῖν ποτε,
μήτ΄ ἄλλος ἤν τις τῶν ἐμῶν ἐχθρῶν ἄγειν
χρῄζῃ, μεθήσειν ζῶν ἑκουσίῳ τρόπῳ.

Αι. ὄμνυμι Γαῖαν Ἡλίου θ΄ ἁγνὸν σέβας
θεούς τε πάντας ἐμμενεῖν ἅ σου κλύω.

Μη. ἀρκεῖ· τί δ΄ ὅρκῳ τῷδε μὴ ΄μμένων πάθοις;

Αι. ἃ τοῖσι δυσσεβοῦσι γίγνεται βροτῶν.

Μη. χαίρων πορεύου· πάντα γὰρ καλῶς ἔχει.
κἀγὼ πόλιν σὴν ὡς τάχιστ΄ ἀφίξομαι,
πράξασ΄ ἃ μέλλω καὶ τυχοῦσ΄ ἃ βούλομαι.

Χο. ἀλλά σ΄ ὁ Μαίας πομπαῖος ἄναξ
πελάσειε δόμοις, ὧν τ΄ ἐπίνοιαν

σπεύδεις κατέχων πράξειας, ἐπεὶ
γενναῖος ἀνήρ,
Αἰγεῦ, παρ΄ ἐμοὶ δεδόκησαι.

Μη. ὦ Ζεῦ Δίκη τε Ζηνὸς Ἡλίου τε φῶς,
νῦν καλλίνικοι τῶν ἐμῶν ἐχθρῶν, φίλαι,
γενησόμεσθα κεἰς ὁδὸν βεβήκαμεν·
νῦν [δ΄] ἐλπὶς ἐχθροὺς τοὺς ἐμοὺς τείσειν δίκην.
οὗτος γὰρ ἀνὴρ ᾗ μάλιστ΄ ἐκάμνομεν
λιμὴν πέφανται τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων·
ἐκ τοῦδ΄ ἀναψόμεσθα πρυμνήτην κάλων,
μολόντες ἄστυ καὶ πόλισμα Παλλάδος.
ἤδη δὲ πάντα τἀμά σοι βουλεύματα
λέξω· δέχου δὲ μὴ πρὸς ἡδονὴν λόγους.
πέμψασ΄ ἐμῶν τιν΄ οἰκετῶν Ἰάσονα
ἐς ὄψιν ἐλθεῖν τὴν ἐμὴν αἰτήσομαι·
μολόντι δ΄ αὐτῷ μαλθακοὺς λέξω λόγους,
ὡς καὶ δοκεῖ μοι ταὐτά, καὶ καλῶς ἔχειν
γάμους τυράννων οὓς προδοὺς ἡμᾶς ἔχει·
καὶ ξύμφορ΄ εἶναι καὶ καλῶς ἐγνωσμένα.
παῖδας δὲ μεῖναι τοὺς ἐμοὺς αἰτήσομαι,
οὐχ ὡς λιποῦσ΄ ἂν πολεμίας ἐπὶ χθονὸς
ἐχθροῖσι παῖδας τοὺς ἐμοὺς καθυβρίσαι,
ἀλλ΄ ὡς δόλοισι παῖδα βασιλέως κτάνω.
πέμψω γὰρ αὐτοὺς δῶρ΄ ἔχοντας ἐν χεροῖν,
νύμφῃ φέροντας, τήνδε μὴ φυγεῖν χθόνα,
λεπτόν τε πέπλον καὶ πλόκον χρυσήλατον·
κἄνπερ λαβοῦσα κόσμον ἀμφιθῇ χροΐ,
κακῶς ὀλεῖται πᾶς θ΄ ὃς ἂν θίγῃ κόρης·
τοιοῖσδε χρίσω φαρμάκοις δωρήματα.
ἐνταῦθα μέντοι τόνδ΄ ἀπαλλάσσω λόγον·
ᾠμωξα δ΄ οἷον ἔργον ἔστ΄ ἐργαστέον
τοὐντεῦθεν ἡμῖν· τέκνα γὰρ κατακτενῶ
τἄμ΄· οὔτις ἔστιν ὅστις ἐξαιρήσεται·
δόμον τε πάντα συγχέασ΄ Ἰάσονος
ἔξειμι γαίας, φιλτάτων παίδων φόνον
φεύγουσα καὶ τλᾶσ΄ ἔργον ἀνοσιώτατον.

οὐ γὰρ γελᾶσθαι τλητὸν ἐξ ἐχθρῶν, φίλαι.
ἴτω· τί μοι ζῆν κέρδος; οὔτε μοι πατρὶς
οὔτ´ οἶκος ἔστιν οὔτ´ ἀποστροφὴ κακῶν.
ἡμάρτανον τόθ´ ἡνίκ´ ἐξελίμπανον
δόμους πατρῴους, ἀνδρὸς Ἕλληνος λόγοις
πεισθεῖσ´, ὃς ἡμῖν σὺν θεῷ τείσει δίκην.
οὔτ´ ἐξ ἐμοῦ γὰρ παῖδας ὄψεταί ποτε
ζῶντας τὸ λοιπὸν οὔτε τῆς νεοζύγου
νύμφης τεκνώσει παῖδ´, ἐπεὶ κακῶς κακὴν
θανεῖν σφ´ ἀνάγκη τοῖς ἐμοῖσι φαρμάκοις.
μηδείς με φαύλην κἀσθενῆ νομιζέτω
μηδ´ ἡσυχαίαν, ἀλλὰ θατέρου τρόπου,
βαρεῖαν ἐχθροῖς καὶ φίλοισιν εὐμενῆ·
τῶν γὰρ τοιούτων εὐκλεέστατος βίος.

Χο. ἐπείπερ ἡμῖν τόνδ´ ἐκοίνωσας λόγον,
σέ τ´ ὠφελεῖν θέλουσα, καὶ νόμοις βροτῶν
ξυλλαμβάνουσα, δρᾶν σ´ ἀπεννέπω τάδε.

Μη. οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλως· σοὶ δὲ συγγνώμη λέγειν
τάδ´ ἐστί, μὴ πάσχουσαν, ὡς ἐγώ, κακῶς.

Χο. ἀλλὰ κτανεῖν σὸν σπέρμα τολμήσεις, γύναι;

Μη. οὕτω γὰρ ἂν μάλιστα δηχθείη πόσις.

Χο. σὺ δ´ ἂν γένοιό γ´ ἀθλιωτάτη γυνή.

Μη. ἴτω· περισσοὶ πάντες οὐν μέσῳ λόγοι.
ἀλλ´ εἶα χώρει καὶ κόμιζ´ Ἰάσονα·
ἐς πάντα γὰρ δὴ σοὶ τὰ πιστὰ χρώμεθα.
λέξῃς δὲ μηδὲν τῶν ἐμοὶ δεδογμένων,
εἴπερ φρονεῖς εὖ δεσπόταις γυνή τ´ ἔφυς.

Χο. Ἐρεχθεΐδαι τὸ παλαιὸν ὄλβιοι [στρ.
καὶ θεῶν παῖδες μακάρων, ἱερᾶς
χώρας ἀπορθήτου τ´ ἄπο, φερβόμενοι
κλεινοτάταν σοφίαν, αἰεὶ διὰ λαμπροτάτου

βαίνοντες ἁβρῶς αἰθέρος, ἔνθα ποθ΄ ἁγνὰς
ἐννέα Πιερίδας Μούσας λέγουσι
ξανθὰν Ἁρμονίαν φυτεῦσαι·

τοῦ καλλινάου τ΄ ἐπὶ Κηφισοῦ ῥοαῖς [ἀντ.
τὰν Κύπριν κλῄζουσιν ἀφυσσαμέναν
χώραν καταπνεῦσαι μετρίας ἀνέμων
ἡδυπνόους αὔρας· αἰεὶ δ΄ ἐπιβαλλομέναν
χαίταισιν εὐώδη ῥοδέων πλόκον ἀνθέων
τᾷ Σοφίᾳ παρέδρους πέμπειν Ἔρωτας,
παντοίας ἀρετᾶς ξυνεργούς.

πῶς οὖν ἱερῶν ποταμῶν [στρ.
ἢ πόλις; ἦ φίλων
πόμπιμός σε χώρα
τὰν παιδολέτειραν ἔξει,
τὰν οὐχ ὁσίαν μετ΄ ἄλλων;
σκέψαι τεκέων πλαγάν,
σκέψαι φόνον οἷον αἴρῃ.
μή, πρὸς γονάτων σε πάντη
πάντως ἱκετεύομεν,
τέκνα φονεύσῃς.

πόθεν θράσος ἢ φρενὸς ἢ [ἀντ.
χειρὶ τέκνων σέθεν
καρδίᾳ τε λήψῃ
δεινὰν προσάγουσα τόλμαν;
πῶς δ΄ ὄμματα προσβαλοῦσα
τέκνοις ἄδακρυν μοῖραν
σχήσεις φόνου; οὐ δυνάσῃ,
παίδων ἱκετᾶν πιτνόντων,
τέγξαι χέρα φοινίαν
τλάμονι θυμῷ.

Ια. ἥκω κελευσθείς· καὶ γὰρ οὖσα δυσμενὴς
οὔ τἂν ἁμάρτοις τοῦδέ γ΄, ἀλλ΄ ἀκούσομαι
τί χρῆμα βούλῃ καινὸν ἐξ ἐμοῦ, γύναι.

Μη. Ἰᾶσον, αἰτοῦμαί σε τῶν εἰρημένων
συγγνώμον᾽ εἶναι· τὰς δ᾽ ἐμὰς ὀργὰς φέρειν
εἰκός σ᾽, ἐπεὶ νῷν πόλλ᾽ ὑπείργασται φίλα.
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐμαυτῇ διὰ λόγων ἀφικόμην
κἀλοιδόρησα· Σχετλία, τί μαίνομαι
καὶ δυσμεναίνω τοῖσι βουλεύουσιν εὖ,
ἐχθρὰ δὲ γαίας κοιράνοις καθίσταμαι
πόσει θ᾽, ὃς ἡμῖν δρᾷ τὰ συμφορώτατα,
γήμας τύραννον καὶ κασιγνήτους τέκνοις
ἐμοῖς φυτεύων; οὐκ ἀπαλλαχθήσομαι
θυμοῦ — τί πάσχω; — θεῶν ποριζόντων καλῶς;
οὐκ εἰσὶ μέν μοι παῖδες, οἶδα δὲ χθόνα
φεύγοντας ἡμᾶς καὶ σπανίζοντας φίλων;
ταῦτ᾽ ἐννοήσασ᾽ ᾐσθόμην ἀβουλίαν
πολλὴν ἔχουσα καὶ μάτην θυμουμένη.
νῦν οὖν ἐπαινῶ· σωφρονεῖν τ᾽ ἐμοὶ δοκεῖς
κῆδος τόδ᾽ ἡμῖν προσλαβών, ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἄφρων,
ᾗ χρῆν μετεῖναι τῶνδε τῶν βουλευμάτων,
καὶ ξυγγαμεῖν σοι, καὶ παρεστάναι λέχει
νύμφην τε κηδεύουσαν ἥδεσθαι σέθεν.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐσμὲν οἷόν ἐσμεν, οὐκ ἐρῶ κακόν,
γυναῖκες· οὔκουν χρῆν σ᾽ ὁμοιοῦσθαι κακοῖς,
οὐδ᾽ ἀντιτείνειν νήπι᾽ ἀντὶ νηπίων.
παριέμεσθα, καί φαμεν κακῶς φρονεῖν
τότ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἄμεινον νῦν βεβούλευμαι τάδε·
ὦ τέκνα τέκνα, δεῦτε, λείπετε στέγας,
ἐξέλθετ᾽, ἀσπάσασθε καὶ προσείπατε
πατέρα μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν, καὶ διαλλάχθηθ᾽ ἅμα
τῆς πρόσθεν ἔχθρας ἐς φίλους μητρὸς μέτα·
σπονδαὶ γὰρ ἡμῖν καὶ μεθέστηκεν χόλος.
λάβεσθε χειρὸς δεξιᾶς· οἴμοι, κακῶν
ὡς ἐννοοῦμαι δή τι τῶν κεκρυμμένων.
ἆρ᾽, ὦ τέκν᾽, οὕτω καὶ πολὺν ζῶντες χρόνον
φίλην ὀρέξετ᾽ ὠλένην; τάλαιν᾽ ἐγώ,
ὡς ἀρτίδακρύς εἰμι καὶ φόβου πλέα.
χρόνῳ δὲ νεῖκος πατρὸς ἐξαιρουμένη
ὄψιν τέρειναν τήνδ᾽ ἔπλησα δακρύων.

Χο. κἀμοὶ κατ΄ ὄσσων χλωρὸν ὡρμήθη δάκρυ·
καὶ μὴ προβαίη μεῖζον ἢ τὸ νῦν κακόν.

Ια. αἰνῶ, γύναι, τάδ΄, οὐδ΄ ἐκεῖνα μέμφομαι·
εἰκὸς γὰρ ὀργὰς θῆλυ ποιεῖσθαι γένος
γάμου παρεμπολῶντος ἀλλοίου πόσει.
ἀλλ΄ ἐς τὸ λῷον σὸν μεθέστηκεν κέαρ,
ἔγνως δὲ τὴν νικῶσαν, ἀλλὰ τῷ χρόνῳ,
βουλήν· γυναικὸς ἔργα ταῦτα σώφρονος.
ὑμῖν δέ, παῖδες, οὐκ ἀφροντίστως πατὴρ
πολλὴν ἔθηκε σὺν θεοῖς σωτηρίαν·
οἶμαι γὰρ ὑμᾶς τῆσδε γῆς Κορινθίας
τὰ πρῶτ΄ ἔσεσθαι σὺν κασιγνήτοις ἔτι.
ἀλλ΄ αὐξάνεσθε· τἄλλα δ΄ ἐξεργάζεται
πατήρ τε καὶ θεῶν ὅστις ἐστὶν εὐμενής·
ἴδοιμι δ΄ ὑμᾶς εὐτραφεῖς ἥβης τέλος
μολόντας, ἐχθρῶν τῶν ἐμῶν ὑπερτέρους.
αὕτη, τί χλωροῖς δακρύοις τέγγεις κόρας,
στρέψασα λευκὴν ἔμπαλιν παρηίδα;
κοὐκ ἀσμένη τόνδ΄ ἐξ ἐμοῦ δέχῃ λόγον;

Μη. οὐδέν. τέκνων τῶνδ΄ ἐννοουμένη πέρι.

Ια. θάρσει νυν· εὖ γὰρ τῶνδ΄ ἐγὼ θήσω πέρι.

Μη. δράσω τάδ΄· οὗτοι σοῖς ἀπιστήσω λόγοις·
γυνὴ δὲ θῆλυ κἀπὶ δακρύοις ἔφυ.

Ια. τί δῆτα λίαν τοῖσδ΄ ἐπιστένεις τέκνοις;

Μη. ἔτικτον αὐτούς· ζῆν δ΄ ὅτ΄ ἐξηύχου τέκνα,
ἐσῆλθέ μ΄ οἶκτος εἰ γενήσεται τάδε.
ἀλλ΄ ὧνπερ οὕνεκ΄ εἰς ἐμοὺς ἥκεις λόγους,
τὰ μὲν λέλεκται, τῶν δ΄ ἐγὼ μνησθήσομαι.
ἐπεὶ τυράννοις γῆς μ΄ ἀποστεῖλαι δοκεῖ
κἀμοὶ τάδ΄ ἐστὶ λῷστα, γιγνώσκω καλῶς,
μήτ΄ ἐμποδὼν σοὶ μήτε κοιράνοις χθονὸς
ναίειν· δοκῶ γὰρ δυσμενὴς εἶναι δόμοις —

ἡμεῖς μὲν ἐκ γῆς τῆσδ΄ ἀπαίρομεν φυγῇ,
παῖδες δ΄ ὅπως ἂν ἐκτραφῶσι σῇ χερί,
αἰτοῦ Κρέοντα τήνδε μὴ φεύγειν χθόνα.

Ια. οὐκ οἶδ΄ ἂν εἰ πείσαιμι, πειρᾶσθαι δὲ χρή.

Μη. σὺ δ΄ ἀλλὰ σὴν κέλευσον αἰτεῖσθαι πατρὸς
γυναῖκα παῖδας τήνδε μὴ φεύγειν χθόνα.

Ια. μάλιστα, καὶ πείσειν γε δοξάζω σφ΄ ἐγώ.

Μη. εἴπερ γυναικῶν ἐστι τῶν ἄλλων μία.
συλλήψομαι δὲ τοῦδέ σοι κἀγὼ πόνου·
πέμψω γὰρ αὐτῇ δῶρ΄ ἃ καλλιστεύεται
τῶν νῦν ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν, οἶδ΄ ἐγώ, πολύ,
λεπτόν τε πέπλον καὶ πλόκον χρυσήλατον
παῖδας φέροντας. ἀλλ΄ ὅσον τάχος χρεὼν
κόσμον κομίζειν δεῦρο προσπόλων τινά.
εὐδαιμονήσει δ΄ οὐχ ἕν, ἀλλὰ μυρία,
ἀνδρός τ΄ ἀρίστου σοῦ τυχοῦσ΄ ὁμευνέτου
κεκτημένη τε κόσμον ὅν ποθ΄ Ἥλιος
πατρὸς πατὴρ δίδωσιν ἐκγόνοισιν οἷς.
λάζυσθε φερνὰς τάσδε, παῖδες, ἐς χέρας
καὶ τῇ τυράννῳ μακαρίᾳ νύμφῃ δότε
φέροντες· οὗτοι δῶρα μεμπτὰ δέξεται.

Ια. τί δ΄, ὦ ματαία, τῶνδε σὰς κενοῖς χέρας;
δοκεῖς σπανίζειν δῶμα βασίλειον πέπλων,
δοκεῖς δὲ χρυσοῦ; σῷζε, μὴ δίδου τάδε.
εἴπερ γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἀξιοῖ λόγου τινὸς
γυνή, προθήσει χρημάτων, σάφ΄ οἶδ΄ ἐγώ.

Μη. μή μοι σύ· πείθειν δῶρα καὶ θεοὺς λόγος·
χρυσὸς δὲ κρείσσων μυρίων λόγων βροτοῖς.
κείνης ὁ δαίμων, κεῖνα νῦν αὔξει θεός,
νέα τυραννεῖ· τῶν δ΄ ἐμῶν παίδων φυγὰς
ψυχῆς ἂν ἀλλαξαίμεθ΄, οὐ χρυσοῦ μόνον.
ἀλλ΄, ὦ τέκν΄, εἰσελθόντε πλουσίους δόμους

πατρὸς νέαν γυναῖκα, δεσπότιν δ΄ ἐμήν,
ἱκετεύετ΄, ἐξαιτεῖσθε μὴ φυγεῖν χθόνα,
κόσμον διδόντες — τοῦδε γὰρ μάλιστα δεῖ —
ἐς χεῖρ΄ ἐκείνης δῶρα δέξασθαι τάδε.
ἴθ΄ ὡς τάχιστα· μητρὶ δ΄ ὧν ἐρᾷ τυχεῖν
εὐάγγελοι γένοισθε πράξαντες καλῶς.

Χο. νῦν ἐλπίδες οὐκέτι μοι παίδων ζόας, [στρ.
οὐκέτι· στείχουσι γὰρ ἐς φόνον ἤδη.
δέξεται νύμφα χρυσέων ἀναδεσμῶν
δέξεται δύστανος ἄταν·
ξανθᾷ δ΄ ἀμφὶ κόμᾳ θήσει τὸν Ἅιδα
κόσμον αὐτὰ χεροῖν. [λαβοῦσα.]

πείσει χάρις ἀμβρόσιός τ΄ αὐγὰ πέπλων [ἀντ.
χρυσέων τευκτὸν στέφανον περιθέσθαι·
νερτέροις δ΄ ἤδη πάρα νυμφοκομήσει.
τοῖον εἰς ἔρκος πεσεῖται
καὶ μοῖραν θανάτου δύστανος· ἄταν δ΄
οὐχ ὑπεκφεύξεται.

σὺ δ΄, ὦ τάλαν, ὦ κακόνυμφε κηδεμὼν τυράννων, [στρ.
παισὶν οὐ κατειδὼς
ὄλεθρον βιοτᾷ προσάγεις ἀλόχῳ τε
σᾷ στυγερὸν θάνατον.
δύστανε μοίρας ὅσον παροίχῃ.

μεταστένομαι δὲ σὸν ἄλγος, ὦ τάλαινα παίδων [ἀντ.
μᾶτερ, ἃ φονεύσεις
τέκνα νυμφιδίων ἕνεκεν λεχέων, ἅ
σοι προλιπὼν ἀνόμως
ἄλλᾳ ξυνοικεῖ πόσις συνεύνῳ.

Πα. δέσποιν΄, ἀφεῖνται παῖδες οἵδε σοὶ φυγῆς,
καὶ δῶρα νύμφη βασιλὶς ἀσμένη χεροῖν
ἐδέξατ΄· εἰρήνη δὲ τἀκεῖθεν τέκνοις.
ἔα.
τί συγχυθεῖσ΄ ἔστηκας ἡνίκ΄ εὐτυχεῖς;

[τί σὴν ἔστρεψας ἔμπαλιν παρηίδα
κοὐκ ἀσμένη τόνδ΄ ἐξ ἐμοῦ δέχῃ λόγον;]

Μη. αἰαῖ.

Πα. τάδ΄ οὐ ξυνῳδὰ τοῖσιν ἐξηγγελμένοις.

Μη. αἰαῖ μάλ΄ αὖθις. Πα. μῶν τιν΄ ἀγγέλων τύχην
οὐκ οἶδα, δόξης δ΄ ἐσφάλην εὐαγγέλου;

Μη. ἤγγειλας οἷ΄ ἤγγειλας· οὐ σὲ μέμφομαι.
Π**α**. τί δαὶ κατηφεῖς ὄμμα καὶ δακρυρροεῖς;

Μη. πολλή μ΄ ἀνάγκη, πρέσβυ· ταῦτα γὰρ θεοὶ
κἀγὼ κακῶς φρονοῦσ΄ ἐμηχανησάμην.

Πα. θάρσει· κάτει τοι καὶ σὺ πρὸς τέκνων ἔτι.

Μη. ἄλλους κατάξω πρόσθεν ἡ τάλαιν΄ ἐγώ.

Πα. οὔτοι μόνη σὺ σῶν ἀπεζύγης τέκνων·
κούφως φέρειν χρὴ θνητὸν ὄντα συμφοράς.

Μη. δράσω τάδ΄. ἀλλὰ βαῖνε δωμάτων ἔσω
καὶ παισὶ πόρσυν΄ οἷα χρὴ καθ΄ ἡμέραν.
ὦ τέκνα τέκνα, σφῷν μὲν ἔστι δὴ πόλις
καὶ δῶμ΄, ἐν ᾧ, λιπόντες ἀθλίαν ἐμέ,
οἰκήσετ΄ αἰεὶ μητρὸς ἐστερημένοι·
ἐγὼ δ΄ ἐς ἄλλην γαῖαν εἶμι δὴ φυγάς,
πρὶν σφῷν ὀνάσθαι κἀπιδεῖν εὐδαίμονας,
πρὶν λέκτρα καὶ γυναῖκα καὶ γαμηλίους
εὐνὰς ἀγῆλαι λαμπάδας τ΄ ἀνασχεθεῖν.
ὦ δυστάλαινα τῆς ἐμῆς αὐθαδίας.
ἄλλως ἄρ΄ ὑμᾶς, ὦ τέκν΄, ἐξεθρεψάμην,
ἄλλως δ΄ ἐμόχθουν καὶ κατεξάνθην πόνοις,
στερρὰς ἐνεγκοῦσ΄ ἐν τόκοις ἀλγηδόνας.
ἦ μήν ποθ΄ ἡ δύστηνος εἶχον ἐλπίδας
πολλὰς ἐν ὑμῖν, γηροβοσκήσειν τ΄ ἐμὲ

καὶ κατθανοῦσαν χερσὶν εὖ περιστελεῖν,
ζηλωτὸν ἀνθρώποισι· νῦν δ΄ ὄλωλε δὴ
γλυκεῖα φροντίς. σφῷν γὰρ ἐστερημένη
λυπρὸν διάξω βίοτον ἀλγεινόν τ΄ ἐμοί.
ὑμεῖς δὲ μητέρ΄ οὐκέτ΄ ὄμμασιν φίλοις
ὄψεσθ΄, ἐς ἄλλο σχῆμ΄ ἀποστάντες βίου.
φεῦ φεῦ· τί προσδέρκεσθέ μ΄ ὄμμασιν, τέκνα;
τί προσγελᾶτε τὸν πανύστατον γέλων;
αἰαῖ· τί δράσω; καρδία γὰρ οἴχεται,
γυναῖκες, ὄμμα φαιδρὸν ὡς εἶδον τέκνων.
οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην· χαιρέτω βουλεύματα
τὰ πρόσθεν· ἄξω παῖδας ἐκ γαίας ἐμούς.
τί δεῖ με πατέρα τῶνδε τοῖς τούτων κακοῖς
λυποῦσαν αὐτὴν δὶς τόσα κτᾶσθαι κακά;
οὐ δῆτ΄ ἔγωγε. χαιρέτω βουλεύματα.
καίτοι τί πάσχω; βούλομαι γέλωτ΄ ὀφλεῖν
ἐχθροὺς μεθεῖσα τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἀζημίους;
τολμητέον τάδ΄. ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐμῆς κάκης,
τὸ καὶ προσέσθαι μαλθακοὺς λόγους φρενί.
χωρεῖτε, παῖδες, ἐς δόμους. ὅτῳ δὲ μὴ
θέμις παρεῖναι τοῖς ἐμοῖσι θύμασιν,
αὐτῷ μελήσει· χεῖρα δ΄ οὐ διαφθερῶ.
ἆ ἆ.
μὴ δῆτα, θυμέ, μὴ σύ γ΄ ἐργάσῃ τάδε·
ἔασον αὐτούς, ὦ τάλαν, φεῖσαι τέκνων·
ἐκεῖ μεθ΄ ἡμῶν ζῶντες εὐφρανοῦσί σε.
μὰ τοὺς παρ΄ Ἅιδῃ νερτέρους ἀλάστορας,
οὔτοι ποτ΄ ἔσται τοῦθ΄ ὅπως ἐχθροῖς ἐγὼ
παῖδας παρήσω τοὺς ἐμοὺς καθυβρίσαι.
[πάντως σφ΄ ἀνάγκη κατθανεῖν· ἐπεὶ δὲ χρή,
ἡμεῖς κτενοῦμεν οἵπερ ἐξεφύσαμεν.]
πάντως πέπρακται ταῦτα κοὐκ ἐκφεύξεται.
καὶ δὴ ΄πὶ κρατὶ στέφανος, ἐν πέπλοισι δὲ
νύμφη τύραννος ὄλλυται, σάφ΄ οἶδ΄ ἐγώ.
ἀλλ΄, εἶμι γὰρ δὴ τλημονεστάτην ὁδόν,
καὶ τούσδε πέμψω τλημονεστέραν ἔτι,
παῖδας προσειπεῖν βούλομαι. — δότ΄, ὦ τέκνα,

δότ΄ ἀσπάσασθαι μητρὶ δεξιὰν χέρα.
ὦ φιλτάτη χείρ, φίλτατον δέ μοι στόμα
καὶ σχῆμα καὶ πρόσωπον εὐγενὲς τέκνων,
εὐδαιμονοῖτον, ἀλλ΄ ἐκεῖ· τὰ δ΄ ἐνθάδε
πατὴρ ἀφείλετ΄. ὦ γλυκεῖα προσβολή,
ὦ μαλθακὸς χρὼς πνεῦμά θ΄ ἥδιστον τέκνων.
χωρεῖτε χωρεῖτ΄· οὐκέτ΄ εἰμὶ προσβλέπειν
οἵα τε πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἀλλὰ νικῶμαι κακοῖς.
καὶ μανθάνω μὲν οἷα δρᾶν μέλλω κακά,
θυμὸς δὲ κρείσσων τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων,
ὅσπερ μεγίστων αἴτιος κακῶν βροτοῖς.

Χο. πολλάκις ἤδη
διὰ λεπτοτέρων μύθων ἔμολον
καὶ πρὸς ἀμίλλας ἦλθον μείζους
ἢ χρὴ γενεὰν θῆλυν ἐρευνᾶν·
ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἔστιν μοῦσα καὶ ἡμῖν,
ἣ προσομιλεῖ σοφίας ἕνεκεν·
πάσαισι μὲν οὔ· παῦρον δὲ δὴ
γένος ἐν πολλαῖς εὕροις ἂν ἴσως
κοὐκ ἀπόμουσον τὸ γυναικῶν.
καί φημι βροτῶν οἵτινές εἰσιν
πάμπαν ἄπειροι μηδ΄ ἐφύτευσαν
παῖδας, προφέρειν εἰς εὐτυχίαν
τῶν γειναμένων.
οἱ μὲν ἄτεκνοι δι΄ ἀπειροσύνην
εἴθ΄ ἡδὺ βροτοῖς εἴτ΄ ἀνιαρὸν
παῖδες τελέθουσ΄ οὐχὶ τυχόντες
πολλῶν μόχθων ἀπέχονται·
οἷσι δὲ τέκνων ἔστιν ἐν οἴκοις
γλυκερὸν βλάστημ΄, ὁρῶ μελέτῃ
κατατρυχομένους τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον,
πρῶτον μὲν ὅπως θρέψουσι καλῶς
βιότόν θ΄ ὁπόθεν λείψουσι τέκνοις·
ἔτι δ΄ ἐκ τούτων εἴτ΄ ἐπὶ φλαύροις
εἴτ΄ ἐπὶ χρηστοῖς
μοχθοῦσι, τόδ΄ ἐστὶν ἄδηλον.

ἓν δὲ τὸ πάντων λοίσθιον ἤδη
πᾶσιν κατερῶ θνητοῖσι κακόν·
καὶ δὴ γὰρ ἅλις βίοτόν θ΄ ηὗρον
σῶμά τ΄ ἐς ἥβην ἦλυθε τέκνων
χρηστοί τ΄ ἐγένοντ΄· εἰ δὲ κυρήσαι
δαίμων οὕτως, φροῦδος ἐς Ἅιδην
θάνατος προφέρων σώματα τέκνων.
πῶς οὖν λύει πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις
τήνδ΄ ἔτι λύπην ἀνιαροτάτην
παίδων ἕνεκεν
θνητοῖσι θεοὺς ἐπιβάλλειν;

Μη. φίλαι, πάλαι τοι προσμένουσα τὴν τύχην
καραδοκῶ τἀκεῖθεν οἶ προβήσεται.
καὶ δὴ δέδορκα τόνδε τῶν Ἰάσονος
στείχοντ΄ ὀπαδῶν· πνεῦμα δ΄ ἠρεθισμένον
δείκνυσιν ὥς τι καινὸν ἀγγελεῖ κακόν.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
ὦ δεινὸν ἔργον παρανόμως εἰργασμένη,
Μήδεια, φεῦγε φεῦγε, μήτε ναΐαν
λιποῦσ΄ ἀπήνην μήτ΄ ὄχον πεδοστιβῆ.

Μη. τί δ΄ ἄξιόν μοι τῆσδε τυγχάνει φυγῆς;

Αγ. ὄλωλεν ἡ τύραννος ἀρτίως κόρη
Κρέων θ΄ ὁ φύσας φαρμάκων τῶν σῶν ὕπο.

Μη. κάλλιστον εἶπας μῦθον, ἐν δ΄ εὐεργέταις
τὸ λοιπὸν ἤδη καὶ φίλοις ἐμοῖς ἔσῃ.

Αγ. τί φῄς; φρονεῖς μὲν ὀρθὰ κοὐ μαίνῃ, γύναι,
ἥτις, τυράννων ἑστίαν ᾐκισμένη,
χαίρεις κλύουσα κοὐ φοβῇ τὰ τοιάδε;

Μη. ἔχω τι κἀγὼ τοῖς γε σοῖς ἐναντίον
λόγοισιν εἰπεῖν· ἀλλὰ μὴ σπέρχου, φίλος,

λέξον δέ· πῶς ὤλοντο; δὶς τόσον γὰρ ἂν
τέρψειας ἡμᾶς, εἰ τεθνᾶσι παγκάκως.

Αγ. ἐπεὶ τέκνων σῶν ἦλθε δίπτυχος γονὴ
σὺν πατρί, καὶ παρῆλθε νυμφικοὺς δόμους,
ἥσθημεν οἵπερ σοῖς ἐκάμνομεν κακοῖς
δμῶες· δι΄ ὤτων δ΄ εὐθὺς ἦν πολὺς λόγος
σὲ καὶ πόσιν σὸν νεῖκος ἐσπεῖσθαι τὸ πρίν.
κυνεῖ δ΄ ὃ μέν τις χεῖρ΄, ὃ δὲ ξανθὸν κάρα
παίδων· ἐγὼ δὲ καὐτὸς ἡδονῆς ὕπο
στέγας γυναικῶν σὺν τέκνοις ἅμ΄ ἐσπόμην.
δέσποινα δ΄ ἦν νῦν ἀντὶ σοῦ θαυμάζομεν,
πρὶν μὲν τέκνων σῶν εἰσιδεῖν ξυνωρίδα,
πρόθυμον εἶχ΄ ὀφθαλμὸν εἰς Ἰάσονα·
ἔπειτα μέντοι προὐκαλύψατ΄ ὄμματα
λευκήν τ΄ ἀπέστρεψ΄ ἔμπαλιν παρηίδα,
παίδων μυσαχθεῖσ΄ εἰσόδους· πόσις δὲ σὸς
ὀργάς τ΄ ἀφῄρει καὶ χόλον νεάνιδος
λέγων τάδ΄· Οὐ μὴ δυσμενὴς ἔσῃ φίλοις,
παύσῃ δὲ θυμοῦ καὶ πάλιν στρέψεις κάρα,
φίλους νομίζουσ΄ οὕσπερ ἂν πόσις σέθεν,
δέξῃ δὲ δῶρα καὶ παραιτήσῃ πατρὸς
φυγὰς ἀφεῖναι παισὶ τοῖσδ΄, ἐμὴν χάριν;
ἣ δ΄ ὡς ἐσεῖδε κόσμον, οὐκ ἠνέσχετο,
ἀλλ΄ ἦνεσ΄ ἀνδρὶ πάντα, καὶ πρὶν ἐκ δόμων
μακρὰν ἀπεῖναι πατέρα καὶ παῖδας, [σέθεν]
λαβοῦσα πέπλους ποικίλους ἠμπέσχετο,
χρυσοῦν τε θεῖσα στέφανον ἀμφὶ βοστρύχοις
λαμπρῷ κατόπτρῳ σχηματίζεται κόμην,
ἄψυχον εἰκὼ προσγελῶσα σώματος.
κἄπειτ΄ ἀναστᾶσ΄ ἐκ θρόνων διέρχεται
στέγας, ἁβρὸν βαίνουσα παλλεύκῳ ποδί,
δώροις ὑπερχαίρουσα, πολλὰ πολλάκις
τένοντ΄ ἐς ὀρθὸν ὄμμασι σκοπουμένη.
τοὐνθένδε μέντοι δεινὸν ἦν θέαμ΄ ἰδεῖν·
χροιὰν γὰρ ἀλλάξασα λεχρία πάλιν
χωρεῖ τρέμουσα κῶλα καὶ μόλις φθάνει

θρόνοισιν ἐμπεσοῦσα μὴ χαμαὶ πεσεῖν.
καί τις γεραιὰ προσπόλων, δόξασά που
ἢ Πανὸς ὀργὰς ἤ τινος θεῶν μολεῖν,
ἀνωλόλυξε, πρίν γ΄ ὁρᾷ διὰ στόμα
χωροῦντα λευκὸν ἀφρόν, ὀμμάτων τ΄ ἄπο
κόρας στρέφουσαν, αἷμά τ΄ οὐκ ἐνὸν χροΐ·
εἶτ΄ ἀντίμολπον ἦκεν ὀλολυγῆς μέγαν
κωκυτόν. εὐθὺς δ΄ ἣ μὲν ἐς πατρὸς δόμους
ὥρμησεν, ἣ δὲ πρὸς τὸν ἀρτίως πόσιν,
φράσουσα νύμφης συμφοράν· ἅπασα δὲ
στέγη πυκνοῖσιν ἐκτύπει δρομήμασιν.
ἤδη δ΄ ἀνέλκων κῶλον ἔκπλεθρον δρόμου
ταχὺς βαδιστὴς τερμόνων ἂν ἥπτετο,
ἣ δ΄ ἐξ ἀναύδου καὶ μύσαντος ὄμματος
δεινὸν στενάξασ΄ ἡ τάλαιν΄ ἠγείρετο.
διπλοῦν γὰρ αὐτῇ πῆμ΄ ἐπεστρατεύετο·
χρυσοῦς μὲν ἀμφὶ κρατὶ κείμενος πλόκος
θαυμαστὸν ἵει νᾶμα παμφάγου πυρός,
πέπλοι δὲ λεπτοί, σῶν τέκνων δωρήματα,
λεπτὴν ἔδαπτον σάρκα τῆς δυσδαίμονος.
φεύγει δ΄ ἀναστᾶσ΄ ἐκ θρόνων πυρουμένη,
σείουσα χαίτην κρᾶτά τ΄ ἄλλοτ΄ ἄλλοσε,
ῥῖψαι θέλουσα στέφανον· ἀλλ΄ ἀραρότως
σύνδεσμα χρυσὸς εἶχε, πῦρ δ΄, ἐπεὶ κόμην
ἔσεισε, μᾶλλον δὶς τόσως ἐλάμπετο.
πίτνει δ΄ ἐς οὖδας συμφορᾷ νικωμένη,
πλὴν τῷ τεκόντι κάρτα δυσμαθὴς ἰδεῖν·
οὔτ΄ ὀμμάτων γὰρ δῆλος ἦν κατάστασις
οὔτ΄ εὐφυὲς πρόσωπον, αἷμα δ΄ ἐξ ἄκρου
ἔσταζε κρατὸς συμπεφυρμένον πυρί,
σάρκες δ΄ ἀπ΄ ὀστέων ὥστε πεύκινον δάκρυ
γναθμοῖς ἀδήλοις φαρμάκων ἀπέρρεον,
δεινὸν θέαμα· πᾶσι δ΄ ἦν φόβος θιγεῖν
νεκροῦ· τύχην γὰρ εἴχομεν διδάσκαλον.
πατὴρ δ΄ ὁ τλήμων συμφορᾶς ἀγνωσίᾳ
ἄφνω προσελθὼν δῶμα προσπίτνει νεκρῷ·
ὤμωξε δ΄ εὐθύς, καὶ περιπτύξας χέρας

κυνεῖ προσαυδῶν τοιάδ΄· Ὦ δύστηνε παῖ,
τίς σ΄ ὧδ΄ ἀτίμως δαιμόνων ἀπώλεσε;
τίς τὸν γέροντα τύμβον ὀρφανὸν σέθεν
τίθησιν; οἴμοι, συνθάνοιμί σοι, τέκνον.
ἐπεὶ δὲ θρήνων καὶ γόων ἐπαύσατο,
χρῄζων γεραιὸν ἐξαναστῆσαι δέμας
προσείχεθ΄ ὥστε κισσὸς ἔρνεσιν δάφνης
λεπτοῖσι πέπλοις, δεινὰ δ΄ ἦν παλαίσματα·
ὃ μὲν γὰρ ἤθελ΄ ἐξαναστῆσαι γόνυ,
ἦ δ΄ ἀντελάζυτ΄. εἰ δὲ πρὸς βίαν ἄγοι,
σάρκας γεραιὰς ἐσπάρασσ΄ ἀπ΄ ὀστέων.
χρόνῳ δ΄ ἀπέσβη καὶ μεθῆχ΄ ὁ δύσμορος
ψυχήν· κακοῦ γὰρ οὐκέτ΄ ἦν ὑπέρτερος.
κεῖνται δὲ νεκροὶ παῖς τε καὶ γέρων πατὴρ
πέλας, ποθεινὴ δακρύοισι συμφορά.
καί μοι τὸ μὲν σὸν ἐκποδὼν ἔστω λόγου·
γνώσῃ γὰρ αὐτὴ ζημίας ἀποστροφήν.
τὰ θνητὰ δ΄ οὐ νῦν πρῶτον ἡγοῦμαι σκιάν,
οὐδ΄ ἂν τρέσας εἴποιμι τοὺς σοφοὺς βροτῶν
δοκοῦντας εἶναι καὶ μεριμνητὰς λόγων
τούτους μεγίστην ζημίαν ὀφλισκάνειν.
θνητῶν γὰρ οὐδείς ἐστιν εὐδαίμων ἀνήρ·
ὄλβου δ΄ ἐπιρρυέντος εὐτυχέστερος
ἄλλου γένοιτ΄ ἂν ἄλλος, εὐδαίμων δ΄ ἂν οὔ.

Χο. ἔοιχ΄ ὁ δαίμων πολλὰ τῇδ΄ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ
κακὰ ξυνάπτειν ἐνδίκως Ἰάσονι.
ὦ τλῆμον, ὡς σου συμφορὰς οἰκτίρομεν,
κόρη Κρέοντος, ἥτις εἰς Ἅιδου δόμους
οἴχῃ γάμων ἕκατι τῶν Ἰάσονος.

Μη. φίλαι, δέδοκται τοὔργον ὡς τάχιστά μοι
παῖδας κτανούσῃ τῆσδ΄ ἀφορμᾶσθαι χθονός,
καὶ μὴ σχολὴν ἄγουσαν ἐκδοῦναι τέκνα
ἄλλῃ φονεῦσαι δυσμενεστέρᾳ χερί.
πάντως σφ΄ ἀνάγκη κατθανεῖν· ἐπεὶ δὲ χρή,
ἡμεῖς κτενοῦμεν, οἵπερ ἐξεφύσαμεν.

ἀλλ΄ εἶ΄ ὁπλίζου, καρδία. τί μέλλομεν
τὰ δεινὰ κἀναγκαῖα μὴ πράσσειν κακά;
ἄγ΄, ὦ τάλαινα χεὶρ ἐμή, λαβὲ ξίφος,
λάβ΄, ἕρπε πρὸς βαλβῖδα λυπηρὰν βίου,
καὶ μὴ κακισθῇς μηδ΄ ἀναμνησθῇς τέκνων,
ὡς φίλταθ΄, ὡς ἔτικτες· ἀλλὰ τήνδε γε
λαθοῦ βραχεῖαν ἡμέραν παίδων σέθεν,
κἄπειτα θρήνει· καὶ γὰρ εἰ κτενεῖς σφ΄, ὅμως
φίλοι γ΄ ἔφυσαν — δυστυχὴς δ΄ ἐγὼ γυνή.

Χο. ἰὼ Γᾶ τε καὶ παμφαὴς [στρ.
ἀκτὶς Ἀελίου, κατίδετ΄ ἴδετε τὰν
ὀλομέναν γυναῖκα, πρὶν φοινίαν
τέκνοις προσβαλεῖν χέρ΄ αὐτοκτόνον·
τεᾶς γὰρ ἀπὸ χρυσέας γονᾶς
ἔβλαστεν, θεοῦ δ΄ αἷμά τι πίτνειν
φόβος ὑπ΄ ἀνέρων.
ἀλλά νιν, ὦ φάος διογενές, κάτειρ-
γε κατάπαυσον, ἔξελ΄ οἴκων φονίαν
τάλαιναν τ΄ Ἐρινὺν ὑπ΄ ἀλαστόρων.

μάταν μόχθος ἔρρει τέκνων, [ἀντ.
ἆρα μάταν γένος φίλιον ἔτεκες, ὦ
κυανεᾶν λιποῦσα Συμπληγάδων
πετρᾶν ἀξενωτάταν ἐσβολάν;
δειλαία, τί σοι φρενῶν βαρὺς
χόλος προσπίτνει καὶ δυσμενὴς
φόνος; ἀμείβεται
χαλεπὰ γὰρ βροτοῖς ὁμογενῆ μιά
σματα ἐπὶ γαῖαν αὐτοφόνταις ξυνῳ
δὰ θεόθεν πίτνοντ΄ ἐπὶ δόμοις ἄχη.

<ΠΑΙΔΕΣ ἔνδοθεν.
αἰαῖ.>

Χο. ἀκούεις βοὰν ἀκούεις τέκνων; [στρ.
— ἰὼ τλᾶμον, ὦ κακοτυχὲς γύναι.

Πα. οἴμοι, τί δράσω; ποῖ φύγω μητρὸς χέρας;
— οὐκ οἶδ΄, ἄδελφε φίλτατ΄· ὀλλύμεσθα γάρ.

Χο. παρέλθω δόμους; ἀρῆξαι φόνον
δοκεῖ μοι τέκνοις.

Πα. ναί, πρὸς θεῶν, ἀρήξατ΄· ἐν δέοντι γάρ.
— ὡς ἐγγὺς ἤδη γ΄ ἐσμὲν ἀρκύων ξίφους.

Χο. τάλαιν΄, ὡς ἄρ΄ ἦσθα πέτρος ἢ σίδα-
ρος, ἅτις τέκνων
ὃν ἔτεκες ἄροτον αὐτόχειρι μοίρᾳ κτενεῖς.

— μίαν δὴ κλύω μίαν τῶν πάρος [ἀντ.
γυναῖκ΄ ἐν φίλοις χέρα βαλεῖν τέκνοις·
Ἰνὼ μανεῖσαν ἐκ θεῶν, ὅθ΄ ἡ Διὸς
δάμαρ νιν ἐξέπεμψε δωμάτων ἄλῃ·
πίτνει δ΄ ἁ τάλαιν΄ ἐς ἅλμαν φόνῳ
τέκνων δυσσεβεῖ,
ἀκτῆς ὑπερτείνασα ποντίας πόδα,
δυοῖν τε παίδοιν συνθανοῦσ΄ ἀπόλλυται.
τί δῆτ΄ οὖν γένοιτ΄ ἂν ἔτι δεινόν; ὦ
γυναικῶν λέχος
πολύπονον, ὅσα βροτοῖς ἔρεξας ἤδη κακά.

Ια. γυναῖκες, αἳ τῆσδ΄ ἐγγὺς ἕστατε στέγης,
ἦρ΄ ἐν δόμοισιν ἡ τὰ δείν΄ εἰργασμένη
Μήδεια τοῖσδ΄ ἔτ΄, ἢ μεθέστηκεν φυγῇ;
δεῖ γάρ νιν ἤτοι γῆς γε κρυφθῆναι κάτω,
ἢ πτηνὸν ἆραι σῶμ΄ ἐς αἰθέρος βάθος,
εἰ μὴ τυράννων δώμασιν δώσει δίκην·
πέποιθ΄ ἀποκτείνασα κοιράνους χθονὸς
ἀθῷος αὐτὴ τῶνδε φεύξεσθαι δόμων;
ἀλλ΄ οὐ γὰρ αὐτῆς φροντίδ΄ ὡς τέκνων ἔχω·
κείνην μὲν οὓς ἔδρασεν ἔρξουσιν κακῶς,
ἐμῶν δὲ παίδων ἦλθον ἐκσῴσων βίον,
μή μοί τι δράσωσ΄ οἱ προσήκοντες γένει,
μητρῷον ἐκπράσσοντες ἀνόσιον φόνον.

Χο. ὦ τλῆμον, οὐκ οἶσθ΄ οἷ κακῶν ἐλήλυθας,
Ἰᾶσον· οὐ γὰρ τούσδ΄ ἂν ἐφθέγξω λόγους.

Ια. τί δ΄ ἔστιν; ἦ που κἄμ΄ ἀποκτεῖναι θέλει;

Χο. παῖδες τεθνᾶσι χειρὶ μητρῴᾳ σέθεν.

Ια. οἴμοι τί λέξεις; ὥς μ΄ ἀπώλεσας, γύναι.

Χο. ὡς οὐκέτ΄ ὄντων σῶν τέκνων φρόντιζε δή.

Ια. ποῦ γάρ νιν ἔκτειν΄; ἐντὸς ἢ ἔξωθεν δόμων;

Χο. πύλας ἀνοίξας σῶν τέκνων ὄψῃ φόνον.

Ια. χαλᾶτε κλῆδας ὡς τάχιστα, πρόσπολοι,
ἐκλύεθ΄ ἁρμούς, ὡς ἴδω διπλοῦν κακόν,
τοὺς μὲν θανόντας — τὴν δὲ τείσωμαι δίκην.

Μη. τί τάσδε κινεῖς κἀναμοχλεύεις πύλας,
νεκροὺς ἐρευνῶν κἀμὲ τὴν εἰργασμένην;
παῦσαι πόνου τοῦδ΄. εἰ δ΄ ἐμοῦ χρείαν ἔχεις,
λέγ΄, εἴ τι βούλῃ, χειρὶ δ΄ οὐ ψαύσεις ποτέ.
τοιόνδ΄ ὄχημα πατρὸς Ἥλιος πατὴρ
δίδωσιν ἡμῖν, ἔρυμα πολεμίας χερός.

Ια. ὦ μῖσος, ὦ μέγιστον ἐχθίστη γύναι
θεοῖς τε κἀμοὶ παντί τ΄ ἀνθρώπων γένει,
ἥτις τέκνοισι σοῖσιν ἐμβαλεῖν ξίφος
ἔτλης τεκοῦσα, κἄμ΄ ἄπαιδ΄ ἀπώλεσας·
καὶ ταῦτα δράσασ΄ ἥλιόν τε προσβλέπεις
καὶ γαῖαν, ἔργον τλᾶσα δυσσεβέστατον·
ὄλοι΄· ἐγὼ δὲ νῦν φρονῶ, τότ΄ οὐ φρονῶν,
ὅτ΄ ἐκ δόμων σε βαρβάρου τ΄ ἀπὸ χθονὸς
Ἕλλην΄ ἐς οἶκον ἠγόμην, κακὸν μέγα,
πατρός τε καὶ γῆς προδότιν ἥ σ΄ ἐθρέψατο.
τὸν σὸν δ΄ ἀλάστορ΄ εἰς ἔμ΄ ἔσκηψαν θεοί·
κτανοῦσα γὰρ δὴ σὸν κάσιν παρέστιον

τὸ καλλίπρῳρον εἰσέβης Ἀργοῦς σκάφος.
ἤρξω μὲν ἐκ τοιῶνδε· νυμφευθεῖσα δὲ
παρ΄ ἀνδρὶ τῷδε καὶ τεκοῦσά μοι τέκνα,
εὐνῆς ἔκατι καὶ λέχους σφ΄ ἀπώλεσας.
οὐκ ἔστιν ἥτις τοῦτ΄ ἂν Ἑλληνὶς γυνὴ
ἔτλη ποθ΄, ὧν γε πρόσθεν ἠξίουν ἐγὼ
γῆμαι σέ, κῆδος ἐχθρὸν ὀλέθριόν τ΄ ἐμοί,
λέαιναν, οὐ γυναῖκα, τῆς Τυρσηνίδος
Σκύλλης ἔχουσαν ἀγριωτέραν φύσιν.
ἀλλ΄ οὐ γὰρ ἄν σε μυρίοις ὀνείδεσι
δάκοιμι· τοιόνδ΄ ἐμπέφυκέ σοι θράσος·
ἔρρ΄, αἰσχροποιὲ καὶ τέκνων μιαιφόνε·
ἐμοὶ δὲ τὸν ἐμὸν δαίμον΄ αἰάζειν πάρα,
ὃς οὔτε λέκτρων νεογάμων ὀνήσομαι,
οὐ παῖδας οὓς ἔφυσα κἀξεθρεψάμην
ἔξω προσειπεῖν ζῶντας, ἀλλ΄ ἀπώλεσα.

Μη. μακρὰν ἂν ἐξέτεινα τοῖσδ΄ ἐναντίον
λόγοισιν, εἰ μὴ Ζεὺς πατὴρ ἠπίστατο
οἷ΄ ἐξ ἐμοῦ πέπονθας οἷά τ΄ εἰργάσω·
σὺ δ΄ οὐκ ἔμελλες τἄμ΄ ἀτιμάσας λέχη
τερπνὸν διάξειν βίοτον ἐγγελῶν ἐμοί·
οὐδ΄ ἡ τύραννος, οὐδ΄ ὁ σοὶ προσθεὶς γάμους
Κρέων ἀνατεὶ τῆσδέ μ΄ ἐκβαλεῖν χθονός.
πρὸς ταῦτα καὶ λέαιναν, εἰ βούλῃ, κάλει
καὶ Σκύλλαν ἢ Τυρσηνὸν ᾤκησεν πέδον·
τῆς σῆς γὰρ ὡς χρὴ καρδίας ἀνθηψάμην.

Ια. καὐτή γε λυπῇ καὶ κακῶν κοινωνὸς εἶ.

Μη. σάφ΄ ἴσθι· λύει δ΄ ἄλγος, ἢν σὺ μὴ ΄γγελᾷς.

Ια. ὦ τέκνα, μητρὸς ὡς κακῆς ἐκύρσατε.

Μη. ὦ παῖδες, ὡς ὤλεσθε πατρῴᾳ νόσῳ.

Ια. οὗτοι νυν ἡμὴ δεξιά σφ΄ ἀπώλεσεν.

Μη. ἀλλ΄ ὕβρις, οἵ τε σοὶ νεοδμῆτες γάμοι.

Ια. λέχους σφε κἠξίωσας οὕνεκα κτανεῖν.

Μη. σμικρὸν γυναικὶ πῆμα τοῦτ΄ εἶναι δοκεῖς;

Ια. ἥτις γε σώφρων· σοὶ δὲ πάντ΄ ἐστὶν κακά.

Μη. οἶδ΄ οὐκέτ΄ εἰσί· τοῦτο γάρ σε δήξεται.

Ια. οἶδ΄ εἰσίν, οἴμοι, σῷ κάρᾳ μιάστορες.

Μη. ἴσασιν ὅστις ἦρξε πημονῆς θεοί.

Ια. ἴσασι δῆτα σήν γ΄ ἀπόπτυστον φρένα.

Μη. στύγει· πικρὰν δὲ βάξιν ἐχθαίρω σέθεν.

Ια. καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ σήν· ῥᾴδιον δ΄ ἀπαλλαγαί.

Μη. πῶς οὖν; τί δράσω; κάρτα γὰρ κἀγὼ θέλω.

Ια. θάψαι νεκρούς μοι τούσδε καὶ κλαῦσαι πάρες.

Μη. οὐ δῆτ΄, ἐπεί σφας τῇδ΄ ἐγὼ θάψω χερί,
φέρουσ΄ ἐς Ἥρας τέμενος Ἀκραίας θεοῦ,
ὡς μή τις αὐτοὺς πολεμίων καθυβρίσῃ, 1380
τύμβους ἀνασπῶν· γῇ δὲ τῇδε Σισύφου
σεμνὴν ἑορτὴν καὶ τέλη προσάψομεν
τὸ λοιπὸν ἀντὶ τοῦδε δυσσεβοῦς φόνου.
αὐτὴ δὲ γαῖαν εἶμι τὴν Ἐρεχθέως,
Αἰγεῖ συνοικήσουσα τῷ Πανδίονος.
σὺ δ΄, ὥσπερ εἰκός, κατθανῇ κακὸς κακῶς,
Ἀργοῦς κάρα σὸν λειψάνῳ πεπληγμένος,
πικρὰς τελευτὰς τῶν ἐμῶν γάμων ἰδών.

Ια. ἀλλά σ΄ Ἐρινὺς ὀλέσειε τέκνων
φονία τε Δίκη. 1390

Μη. τίς δὲ κλύει σοῦ θεὸς ἢ δαίμων,
τοῦ ψευδόρκου καὶ ξειναπάτου;

Ια. φεῦ φεῦ, μυσαρὰ καὶ παιδολέτορ.

Μη. στεῖχε πρὸς οἴκους καὶ θάπτ΄ ἄλοχον.

Ια. στείχω, δισσῶν γ΄ ἄμορος τέκνων.

Μη. οὔπω θρηνεῖς· μένε καὶ γῆρας.

Ια. ὦ τέκνα φίλτατα. **Μη**. μητρί γε, σοὶ δ΄ οὔ.

Ια. κἄπειτ΄ ἔκανες; **Μη**. σέ γε πημαίνουσ΄.

Ια. ὤμοι, φιλίου χρῄζω στόματος
παίδων ὁ τάλας προσπτύξασθαι.

Μη. νῦν σφε προσαυδᾷς, νῦν ἀσπάζῃ,
τότ΄ ἀπωσάμενος. **Ια**. δός μοι πρὸς θεῶν
μαλακοῦ χρωτὸς ψαῦσαι τέκνων.

Μη. οὐκ ἔστι· μάτην ἔπος ἔρριπται.

Ια. Ζεῦ, τάδ΄ ἀκούεις ὡς ἀπελαυνόμεθ΄,
οἷά τε πάσχομεν ἐκ τῆς μυσαρᾶς
καὶ παιδοφόνου τῆσδε λεαίνης;
ἀλλ΄ ὁπόσον γοῦν πάρα καὶ δύναμαι
τάδε καὶ θρηνῶ κἀπιθεάζω,
μαρτυρόμενος δαίμονας ὥς μοι
τέκνα κτείνασ΄ ἀποκωλύεις
ψαῦσαί τε χεροῖν θάψαι τε νεκρούς,
οὓς μήποτ΄ ἐγὼ φύσας ὄφελον
πρὸς σοῦ φθιμένους ἐπιδέσθαι.

Χο. πολλῶν ταμίας Ζεὺς ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ,
πολλὰ δ΄ ἀέλπτως κραίνουσι θεοί·
καὶ τὰ δοκηθέντ΄ οὐκ ἐτελέσθη,

τῶν δ΄ ἀδοκήτων πόρον ηὗρε θεός.
τοιόνδ΄ ἀπέβη τόδε πρᾶγμα.

HERACLEIDAE

Ἰόλαος

Πάλαι ποτ’ ἐστὶ τοῦτ’ ἐμοὶ δεδογμένον·
ὁ μὲν δίκαιος τοῖς πέλας πέφυκ’ ἀνὴρ
<βοηθός, αὐτὸς συμφοραῖσιν ἐμπλακείς,>
ὁ δ’ ἐς τὸ κέρδος λῆμ’ ἔχων ἀνειμένον
πόλει τ’ ἄχρηστος καὶ συναλλάσσειν βαρύς,
[5] αὐτῷ δ’ ἄριστος· οἶδα δ’ οὐ λόγῳ μαθών.
Ἐγὼ γὰρ αἰδοῖ καὶ τὸ συγγενὲς σέβων,
ἐξὸν κατ’ Ἄργος ἡσύχως ναίειν, πόνων
πλείστων μετέσχον εἷς ἀνὴρ Ἡρακλέει,
ὅτ’ ἦν μεθ’ ἡμῶν· νῦν δ’, ἐπεὶ κατ’ οὐρανὸν
[10] ναίει, τὰ κείνου τέκν’ ἔχων ὑπὸ πτεροῖς
σῴζω τάδ’ αὐτὸς δεόμενος σωτηρίας.
Ἐπεὶ γὰρ αὐτῶν γῆς ἀπηλλάχθη πατήρ,
πρῶτον μὲν ἡμᾶς ἤθελ’ Εὐρυσθεὺς κτανεῖν·
ἀλλ’ ἐξέδραμεν, καὶ πόλις μὲν οἴχεται,
[15] ψυχὴ δ’ ἐσώθη. Φεύγομεν δ’ ἀλώμενοι
ἄλλην ἀπ’ ἄλλης ἐξορισθέντες πόλιν.
Πρὸς τοῖς γὰρ ἄλλοις καὶ τόδ’ Εὐρυσθεὺς κακοῖς
ὕβρισμ’ ἐς ἡμᾶς ἠξίωσεν ὑβρίσαι·
πέμπων ὅπου γῆς πυνθάνοιθ’ ἱδρυμένους
[20] κήρυκας ἐξαιτεῖ τε κἀξείργει χθονός,
πόλιν προτείνων Ἄργος οὐ σμικρὸν φίλην
ἐχθράν τε θέσθαι, χαὐτὸν εὐτυχοῦνθ’ ἅμα.
Οἱ δ’ ἀσθενῆ μὲν τἀπ’ ἐμοῦ δεδορκότες,
σμικροὺς δὲ τούσδε καὶ πατρὸς τητωμένους,
[25] τοὺς κρείσσονας σέβοντες ἐξείργουσι γῆς.
Ἐγὼ δὲ σὺν φεύγουσι συμφεύγω τέκνοις
καὶ σὺν κακῶς πράσσουσι συμπράσσω κακῶς,
ὀκνῶν προδοῦναι, μή τις ὧδ’ εἴπῃ βροτῶν·
Ἴδεσθ’, ἐπειδὴ παισὶν οὐκ ἔστιν πατήρ,
[30] Ἰόλαος οὐκ ἤμυνε συγγενὴς γεγώς.
Πάσης δὲ χώρας Ἑλλάδος τητώμενοι,

Μαραθῶνα καὶ σύγκληρον ἐλθόντες χθόνα
ἱκέται καθεζόμεσθα βώμιοι θεῶν
προσωφελῆσαι· πεδία γὰρ τῆσδε χθονὸς
δισσοὺς κατοικεῖν Θησέως παῖδας λόγος
κλήρῳ λαχόντας ἐκ γένους Πανδίονος,
τοῖσδ' ἐγγὺς ὄντας· ὧν ἕκατι τέρμονας
κλεινῶν Ἀθηνῶν τήνδ' ἀφικόμεσθ' ὁδόν.
Δυοῖν γερόντοιν δὲ στρατηγεῖται φυγή·
ἐγὼ μὲν ἀμφὶ τοῖσδε καλχαίνων τέκνοις,
ἡ δ' αὖ τὸ θῆλυ παιδὸς Ἀλκμήνη γένος
ἔσωθε ναοῦ τοῦδ' ὑπηγκαλισμένη
σῴζει· νέας γὰρ παρθένους αἰδούμεθα
ὄχλῳ πελάζειν κἀπιβωμιοστατεῖν.
Ὕλλος δ' ἀδελφοί θ' οἷσι πρεσβεύει γένος
ζητοῦσ' ὅπου γῆς πύργον οἰκιούμεθα,
ἣν τῆσδ' ἀπωθώμεσθα πρὸς βίαν χθονός.

Ὦ τέκνα τέκνα, δεῦρο, λαμβάνεσθ' ἐμῶν
πέπλων· ὁρῶ κήρυκα τόνδ' Εὐρυσθέως
στείχοντ' ἐφ' ἡμᾶς, οὗ διωκόμεσθ' ὕπο
πάσης ἀλῆται γῆς ἀπεστερημένοι.
Ὦ μῖσος, εἴθ' ὅλοιο χὠ πέμψας <σ'> ἀνήρ,
ὡς πολλὰ δὴ καὶ τῶνδε γενναίῳ πατρὶ
ἐκ τοῦδε ταὐτοῦ στόματος ἤγγειλας κακά.

Κῆρυξ

Ἦ που καθῆσθαι τήνδ' ἔδραν καλὴν δοκεῖς
πόλιν τ' ἀφῖχθαι σύμμαχον, κακῶς φρονῶν·
οὐ γάρ τις ἔστιν ὃς πάροιθ' αἱρήσεται
τὴν σὴν ἀχρεῖον δύναμιν ἀντ' Εὐρυσθέως.
Χώρει· τί μοχθεῖς ταῦτ'; Ἀνίστασθαί σε χρὴ
ἐς Ἄργος, οὗ σε λεύσιμος μένει δίκη.

Ἰόλαος

Οὐ δῆτ', ἐπεί μοι βωμὸς ἀρκέσει θεοῦ,
ἐλευθέρα τε γαῖ' ἐν ᾗ βεβήκαμεν.

Κῆρυξ

Βούλῃ πόνον μοι τῇδε προσθεῖναι χερί;

Ἰόλαος

Οὗτοι βίᾳ γέ μ’ οὐδὲ τούσδ’ ἄξεις λαβών.

Κῆρυξ

[65] Γνώσῃ σύ· μάντις δ’ ἦσθ’ ἄρ’ οὐ καλὸς τάδε.

Ἰόλαος

Οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο τοῦτ’ ἐμοῦ ζῶντός ποτε.

Κῆρυξ

Ἄπερρ’· ἐγὼ δὲ τούσδε, κἂν σὺ μὴ θέλῃς,
ἄξω νομίζων, οὖπέρ εἰσ’, Εὐρυσθέως.

Ἰόλαος

Ὦ τὰς Ἀθήνας δαρὸν οἰκοῦντες χρόνον,
[70] ἀμύνεθ’· ἱκέται δ’ ὄντες ἀγοραίου Διὸς
βιαζόμεσθα καὶ στέφη μιαίνεται
πόλει τ’ ὄνειδος καὶ θεῶν ἀτιμίαν.

Χορός

Ἔα ἔα· τίς ἡ βοὴ βωμοῦ πέλας
ἔστηκε; Ποίαν συμφορὰν δείξει τάχα;
[75]Ἴἴδετε τὸν γέροντ’ ἀμαλὸν ἐπὶ πέδῳ χύμενον· ὦ τάλας
πρὸς τοῦ ποτ’ ἐν γῇ πτῶμα δύστηνον πίτνεις;

Ἰόλαος

Ὅδ’ ὦ ξένοι με σοὺς ἀτιμάζων θεοὺς
ἕλκει βιαίως Ζηνὸς ἐκ προβωμίων.

Χορός

Σὺ δ' ἐκ τίνος γῆς, ὦ γέρον, τετράπτολιν
ξύνοικον ἦλθες λαόν; Ἢ πέραθεν ἁλίῳ πλάτᾳ
κατέχετ' ἐκλιπόντες Εὐβοῖδ' ἀκτάν;

Ἰόλαος

Οὐ νησιώτην, ὦ ξένοι, τρίβω βίον,
ἀλλ' ἐκ Μυκηνῶν σὴν ἀφίγμεθα χθόνα.

Χορός

Ὄνομα τί σε, γέρον, Μυκηναῖος ὠνόμαζεν λεώς;

Ἰόλαος

Τὸν Ἡράκλειον ἴστε που παραστάτην
Ἰόλαον· οὐ γὰρ σῶμ' ἀκήρυκτον τόδε.

Χορός

Οἶδ' εἰσακούσας καὶ πρίν· ἀλλὰ τοῦ ποτ' ἐν χειρὶ σᾷ
κομίζεις κόρους νεοτρεφεῖς; Φράσον.

Ἰόλαος

Ἡρακλέους οἵδ' εἰσὶ παῖδες, ὦ ξένοι,
ἱκέται σέθεν τε καὶ πόλεως ἀφιγμένοι.

Χορός

Τί χρέος; Ἢ λόγων πόλεος, ἔνεπέ μοι, μελόμενοι τυχεῖν;

Ἰόλαος

Μήτ' ἐκδοθῆναι μήτε πρὸς βίαν θεῶν
τῶν σῶν ἀποσπασθέντες εἰς Ἄργος μολεῖν.

Κῆρυξ

Ἀλλ’ οὔτι τοῖς σοῖς δεσπόταις τάδ’ ἀρκέσει,
οἳ σοῦ κρατοῦντες ἐνθάδ’ εὑρίσκουσί σε.

Χορός

Εἰκὸς θεῶν ἱκτῆρας αἰδεῖσθαι, ξένε,
καὶ μὴ βιαίῳ χειρὶ δαιμόνων ἀπολιπεῖν σφ’ ἕδη·
πότνια γὰρ Δίκα τάδ’ οὐ πείσεται.

Κῆρυξ

Ἔκπεμπέ νυν γῆς τούσδε τοὺς Εὐρυσθέως,
κοὐδὲν βιαίῳ τῇδε χρήσομαι χερί.

Χορός

Ἄθεον ἱκεσίαν μεθεῖναι πέλει ξένων προστροπάν.

Κῆρυξ

Καλὸν δέ γ’ ἔξω πραγμάτων ἔχειν πόδα,
εὐβουλίας τυχόντα τῆς ἀμείνονος.

Χορός

Οὔκουν τυράννοις τῇσδε γῆς φράσαντά σε
χρῆν ταῦτα τολμᾶν, ἀλλὰ μὴ βίᾳ ξένους
θεῶν ἀφέλκειν, γῆν σέβοντ’ ἐλευθέραν;

Κῆρυξ

Τίς δ’ ἐστὶ χώρας τῇσδε καὶ πόλεως ἄναξ;

Χορός

Ἐσθλοῦ πατρὸς παῖς Δημοφῶν ὁ Θησέως.

Κῆρυξ

Πρὸς τοῦτον ἀγὼν ἆρα τοῦδε τοῦ λόγου
μάλιστ᾽ ἂν εἴη· τἄλλα δ᾽ εἴρηται μάτην.

Χορός

Καὶ μὴν ὅδ᾽ αὐτὸς ἔρχεται σπουδὴν ἔχων
Ἀκάμας τ᾽ ἀδελφός, τῶνδ᾽ ἐπήκοοι λόγων.

Δημοφῶν

[120] Ἐπείπερ ἔφθης πρέσβυς ὢν νεωτέρους
βοηδρομήσας τήνδ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἐσχάραν Διός,
λέξον, τίς ὄχλον τόνδ᾽ ἀθροίζεται τύχη;

Χορός

Κέται κάθηνται παῖδες οἵδ᾽ Ἡρακλέους
βωμὸν καταστέψαντες, ὡς ὁρᾷς, ἄναξ,
[125] πατρός τε πιστὸς Ἰόλεως παραστάτης.

Δημοφῶν

Τί δῆτ᾽ ἰυγμῶν ἥδ᾽ ἐδεῖτο συμφορά;

Χορός

Βίᾳ νιν οὗτος τῆσδ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ἐσχάρας ἄγειν
ζητῶν βοὴν ἔστησε κἄσφηλεν γόνυ
γέροντος, ὥστε μ᾽ ἐκβαλεῖν οἴκτῳ δάκρυ.

Δημοφῶν

[130] Καὶ μὴν στολήν γ᾽ Ἕλληνα καὶ ῥυθμὸν πέπλων
ἔχει, τὰ δ᾽ ἔργα βαρβάρου χερὸς τάδε.
Σὸν δὴ τὸ φράζειν ἐστί, μὴ μέλλειν <δ᾽>, ἐμοὶ
ποίας ἀφῖξαι δεῦρο γῆς ὅρους λιπών;

Κῆρυξ

Ἀργεῖός εἰμι· τοῦτο γὰρ θέλεις μαθεῖν·
ἐφ᾽ οἷσι δ᾽ ἥκω καὶ παρ᾽ οὗ λέγειν θέλω.
πέμπει Μυκηνῶν δεῦρό μ᾽ Εὐρυσθεὺς ἄναξ
ἄξοντα τούσδε· πολλὰ δ᾽ ἦλθον, ὦ ξένε,
δίκαι᾽ ὁμαρτῇ δρᾶν τε καὶ λέγειν ἔχων.

Ἀργεῖος ὢν γὰρ αὐτὸς Ἀργείους ἄγω
ἐκ τῆς ἐμαυτοῦ τούσδε δραπέτας χθονός,
νόμοισι τοῖς ἐκεῖθεν ἐψηφισμένους
θανεῖν· δίκαιοι δ᾽ ἐσμὲν οἰκοῦντες πόλιν
αὐτοὶ καθ᾽ αὑτῶν κυρίους κραίνειν δίκας.
Πολλῶν δὲ κἄλλων ἑστίας ἀφιγμένοι
ἐν τοῖσιν αὐτοῖς τοισίδ᾽ ἔσταμεν λόγοις,
κοὐδεὶς ἐτόλμησ᾽ ἴδια προσθέσθαι κακά.
Ἀλλ᾽ ἤ τιν᾽ ἐν σοὶ μωρίαν ἐσκεμμένοι
δεῦρ᾽ ἦλθον ἢ κίνδυνον ἐξ ἀμηχάνων
ῥίπτοντες, εἴτ᾽ οὖν εἴτε μὴ γενήσεται
<τὰ σ᾽ ὧδ᾽ ἀσύνετα καὶ φρενῶν τητώμενα>.
Οὐ γὰρ φρενήρη γ᾽ ὄντα σ᾽ ἐλπίζουσί που
μόνον τοσαύτης ἣν ἐπῆλθον Ἑλλάδος
τὰς τῶνδ᾽ ἀβούλως συμφορὰς κατοικτιεῖν.

Φέρ᾽ ἀντίθες γάρ· τούσδε τ᾽ ἐς γαῖαν παρεὶς
ἡμᾶς τ᾽ ἐάσας ἐξάγειν, τί κερδανεῖς;
Τὰ μὲν παρ᾽ ἡμῶν τοιάδ᾽ ἔστι σοι λαβεῖν,
Ἄργους τοσήνδε χεῖρα τήν τ᾽ Εὐρυσθέως
ἰσχὺν ἅπασαν τῇδε προσθέσθαι πόλει.
Ἦν δ᾽ ἐς λόγους τε καὶ τὰ τῶνδ᾽ οἰκτίσματα
βλέψας πεπανθῇς, ἐς πάλην καθίσταται
δορὸς τὸ πρᾶγμα· μὴ γὰρ ὡς μεθήσομεν
δόξῃς ἀγῶνος τούσδ᾽ ἄτερ χαλυβδικοῦ.
Τί δῆτα φήσεις, ποῖα πεδί᾽ ἀφαιρεθείς,
τί ῥυσιασθείς, πόλεμον Ἀργείοις ἔχειν;
Ποίοις δ᾽ ἀμύνων συμμάχοις, τίνος δ᾽ ὕπερ
θάψεις νεκροὺς πεσόντας; Ἦ κακὸν λόγον

κτήσῃ πρὸς ἀστῶν, εἰ γέροντος οὕνεκα,
τύμβου, τὸ μηδὲν ὄντος, ὡς εἰπεῖν ἔπος,
παίδων <τε> τῶνδ' ἐς ἄντλον ἐμβήσῃ πόδα·
παρεὶς τὸ λῷστον ἐλπίδ' εὑρήσεις μόνον,
καὶ τοῦτο πολλῷ τοῦ παρόντος ἐνδεές.
Κακῶς γὰρ Ἀργείοισιν οἴδ' ὡπλισμένοις
μάχοιντ' ἂν ἡβήσαντες, εἴ <τι> τοῦτό σε
ψυχὴν ἐπαίρει, χοὐν μέσῳ πολὺς χρόνος
ἐν ᾧ διεργασθεῖτ' ἄν. Ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ πιθοῦ·
δοὺς μηδέν, ἀλλὰ τἄμ' ἐῶν ἄγειν ἐμὲ
κτῆσαι Μυκήνας, μηδ' ὅπερ φιλεῖτε δρᾶν
πάθῃς σὺ τοῦτο, τοὺς ἀμείνονας παρὸν
φίλους ἑλέσθαι, τοὺς κακίονας λαβεῖν.

Χορός

Τίς ἂν δίκην κρίνειεν ἢ γνοίη λόγον,
πρὶν ἂν παρ' ἀμφοῖν μῦθον ἐκμάθῃ σαφῶς;

Ἰόλαος

Ἄναξ, ὑπάρχει γὰρ τόδ' ἐν τῇ σῇ χθονί,
εἰπεῖν ἀκοῦσαί τ' ἐν μέρει πάρεστί μοι,
κοὐδείς μ' ἀπώσει πρόσθεν, ὥσπερ ἄλλοθι.

Ἡμῖν δὲ καὶ τῷδ' οὐδέν ἐστιν ἐν μέσῳ·
ἐπεὶ γὰρ Ἄργους οὐ μέτεσθ' ἡμῖν ἔτι,
ψήφῳ δοκῆσαν, ἀλλὰ φεύγομεν πάτραν,
πῶς ἂν δικαίως ὡς Μυκηναίους ἄγοι
ὅδ' ὄντας ἡμᾶς, οὓς ἀπήλασαν χθονός;
Ξένοι γάρ ἐσμεν. Ἦ τὸν Ἑλλήνων ὅρον
φεύγειν δικαιοῦθ' ὅστις ἂν τἄργος φύγῃ;
Οὔκουν Ἀθήνας γ'· οὐ γὰρ Ἀργείων φόβῳ
τοὺς Ἡρακλείους παῖδας ἐξελῶσι γῆς.
Οὐ γάρ τι Τραχίς ἐστιν οὐδ' Ἀχαιικὸν
πόλισμ', ὅθεν σὺ τούσδε, τῇ δίκῃ μὲν οὔ,
τὸ δ' Ἄργος ὀγκῶν, οἷάπερ καὶ νῦν λέγεις,
ἤλαυνες ἱκέτας βωμίους καθημένους.

Εἰ γὰρ τόδ’ ἔσται καὶ λόγους κρινοῦσι σούς,
οὐκ οἶδ’ Ἀθήνας τάσδ’ ἐλευθέρας ἔτι.
Ἀλλ’ οἶδ’ ἐγὼ τὸ τῶνδε λῆμα καὶ φύσιν·
θνῄσκειν θελήσουσ’· ἡ γὰρ αἰσχύνη <πάρος>
τοῦ ζῆν παρ’ ἐσθλοῖς ἀνδράσιν νομίζεται.

Πόλει μὲν ἀρκεῖ· καὶ γὰρ οὖν ἐπίφθονον
λίαν ἐπαινεῖν ἐστι, πολλάκις δὲ δὴ
καὐτὸς βαρυνθεὶς οἶδ’ ἄγαν αἰνούμενος.
Σοὶ δ’ ὡς ἀνάγκη τούσδε βούλομαι φράσαι
σῴζειν, ἐπείπερ τῆσδε προστατεῖς χθονός.
Πιτθεὺς μέν ἐστι Πέλοπος, ἐκ δὲ Πιτθέως
Αἴθρα, πατὴρ δ’ ἐκ τῆσδε γεννᾶται σέθεν
Θησεύς. Πάλιν δὲ τῶνδ’ ἄνειμί σοι γένος.
Ἡρακλέης ἦν Ζηνὸς Ἀλκμήνης τε παῖς,
κείνη δὲ Πέλοπος θυγατρός. Αὐτανεψίων
πατὴρ ἂν εἴη σός τε χὠ τούτων γεγώς.

Γένους μὲν ἥκεις ὧδε τοῖσδε, Δημοφῶν·
ἃ δ’ ἐκτὸς ἤδη τοῦ προσήκοντός σε δεῖ
τεῖσαι λέγω σοι παισί· φημὶ γάρ ποτε
σύμπλους γενέσθαι τῶνδ’ ὑπασπίζων πατρὶ
ζωστῆρα Θησεῖ τὸν πολυκτόνον μέτα,
Ἅιδου τ’ ἐρυμνῶν ἐξανήγαγεν μυχῶν
πατέρα σόν· Ἑλλὰς πᾶσα τοῦτο μαρτυρεῖ.
Ὧν ἀντιδοῦναί σ’ οἵδ’ ἀπαιτοῦσιν χάριν
μήτ’ ἐκδοθῆναι μήτε πρὸς βίαν θεῶν
τῶν σῶν ἀποσπασθέντες ἐκπεσεῖν χθονός.
Σοὶ γὰρ τόδ’ αἰσχρὸν χωρίς, ἔν τε πόλει κακόν,
ἱκέτας ἀλήτας συγγενεῖς οἴμοι, κακῶν·
βλέψον πρὸς αὐτοὺς βλέψον ἕλκεσθαι βίᾳ.

Ἀλλ’ ἄντομαί σε καὶ καταστέφω χεροῖν,
μὴ πρὸς γενείου, μηδαμῶς ἀτιμάσῃς
τοὺς Ἡρακλείους παῖδας ἐς χέρας λαβεῖν·
γενοῦ δὲ τοῖσδε συγγενής, γενοῦ φίλος

[230] πατὴρ ἀδελφὸς δεσπότης· ἅπαντα γὰρ
τἄλλ’ ἐστὶ κρείσσω πλὴν ὑπ’ Ἀργείοις πεσεῖν.

Χορός

Ὤκτιρ’ ἀκούσας τούσδε συμφορᾶς, ἄναξ.
Τὴν δ’ εὐγένειαν τῆς τύχης νικωμένην
νῦν δὴ μάλιστ’ ἐσεῖδον· οἵδε γὰρ πατρὸς
[235] ἐσθλοῦ γεγῶτες δυστυχοῦσ’ ἀναξίως.

Δημοφῶν

[236] Τρισσαί μ’ ἀναγκάζουσι συννοίας ὁδοί,
Ἰόλαε, τοὺς σοὺς μὴ παρώσασθαι λόγους·
τὸ μὲν μέγιστον Ζεὺς ἐφ’ οὗ σὺ βώμιος
θακεῖς νεοσσῶν τήνδ’ ἔχων πανήγυριν·
[240] τὸ συγγενές τε καὶ τὸ προυφείλειν καλῶς
πράσσειν παρ’ ἡμῶν τούσδε πατρῴαν χάριν·
τό τ’ αἰσχρόν, οὗπερ δεῖ μάλιστα φροντίσαι·
εἰ γὰρ παρήσω τόνδε συλᾶσθαι βίᾳ
ξένου πρὸς ἀνδρὸς βωμόν, οὐκ ἐλευθέραν
[245] οἰκεῖν δοκήσω γαῖαν, Ἀργείων δ’ ὄκνῳ
ἱκέτας προδοῦναι· καὶ τάδ’ ἀγχόνης πέλας.
Ἀλλ’ ὤφελες μὲν εὐτυχέστερος μολεῖν,
ὅμως δὲ καὶ νῦν μὴ τρέσῃς ὅπως σέ τις
σὺν παισὶ βωμοῦ τοῦδ’ ἀποσπάσει βίᾳ.

[250] Οὐ δ’ Ἄργος ἐλθὼν ταῦτά τ’ Εὐρυσθεῖ φράσον,
πρὸς τοῖσδέ τ’, εἴ τι τοισίδ’ ἐγκαλεῖ ξένοις,
δίκης κυρήσειν· τούσδε δ’ οὐκ ἄξεις ποτέ.

Κῆρυξ

Οὐδ’ ἦν δίκαιον ᾗ τι καὶ νικῶ λόγῳ;

Δημοφῶν

Καὶ πῶς δίκαιον τὸν ἱκέτην ἄγειν βίᾳ;

Κῆρυξ

[255] Οὔκουν ἐμοὶ τόδ’ αἰσχρὸν ἀλλ’ <οὐ> σοὶ βλάβος;

Δημοφῶν

Ἐμοί γ’, ἐάν σοι τούσδ’ ἐφέλκεσθαι μεθῶ.

Κῆρυξ

Σὺ δ’ ἐξόριζε, κᾆτ’ ἐκεῖθεν ἄξομεν.

Δημοφῶν

Σκαιὸς πέφυκας τοῦ θεοῦ πλείω φρονῶν.

Κῆρυξ

Δεῦρ’, ὡς ἔοικε, τοῖς κακοῖσι φευκτέον.

Δημοφῶν

[260] Ἅπασι κοινὸν ῥῦμα δαιμόνων ἕδρα.

Κῆρυξ

Ταῦτ’ οὐ δοκήσει τοῖς Μυκηναίοις ἴσως.

Δημοφῶν

Οὔκουν ἐγὼ τῶν ἐνθάδ’ εἰμὶ κύριος;

Κῆρυξ

Βλάπτων <γ’> ἐκείνους μηδὲν ἦν σὺ σωφρονῇς.

Δημοφῶν

Βλάπτεσθ’, ἐμοῦ γε μὴ μιαίνοντος θεούς.

Κῆρυξ

Οὐ βούλομαί σε πόλεμον Ἀργείοις ἔχειν.

Δημοφῶν

Κἀγὼ τοιοῦτος· τῶνδε δ᾽ οὐ μεθήσομαι.

Κῆρυξ

Ἄξω γε μέντοι τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἐγὼ λαβών.

Δημοφῶν

Οὐκ ἦρ᾽ ἐς Ἄργος ῥᾳδίως ἄπει πάλιν.

Κῆρυξ

Πειρώμενος δὴ τοῦτό γ᾽ αὐτίκ᾽ εἴσομαι.

Δημοφῶν

Κλαίων ἄρ᾽ ἄψῃ τῶνδε κοὐκ ἐς ἀμβολάς.

Χορός

Μὴ πρὸς θεῶν κήρυκα τολμήσῃς θενεῖν.

Δημοφῶν

Εἰ μή γ᾽ ὁ κῆρυξ σωφρονεῖν μαθήσεται.

Χορός

Ἄπελθε· καὶ σὺ τοῦδε μὴ θίγῃς, ἄναξ.

Κῆρυξ

Στείχω· μιᾶς γὰρ χειρὸς ἀσθενὴς μάχη.
Ἥξω δὲ πολλὴν Ἄρεος Ἀργείου λαβὼν

πάγχαλκον αἰχμὴν δεῦρο. Μυρίοι δέ με
μένουσιν ἀσπιστῆρες Εὐρυσθεύς τ’ ἄναξ
αὐτὸς στρατηγῶν· Ἀλκάθου δ’ ἐπ’ ἐσχάτοις
καραδοκῶν τἀνθένδε τέρμασιν μένει.
[280] Λαμπρὸς δ’ ἀκούσας σὴν ὕβριν φανήσεται
σοὶ καὶ πολίταις γῇ τε τῇδε καὶ φυτοῖς·
μάτην γὰρ ἦβην ὧδέ γ’ ἂν κεκτῄμεθα
πολλὴν ἐν Ἄργει, μή σε τιμωρούμενοι.

Δημοφῶν

Φθείρου· τὸ σὸν γὰρ Ἄργος οὐ δέδοικ’ ἐγώ.
[285] Ἐνθένδε δ’ οὐκ ἔμελλες αἰσχύνας ἐμὲ
ἄξειν βίᾳ τούσδ’· οὐ γὰρ Ἀργείων πόλιν
ὑπήκοον τήνδ’ ἀλλ’ ἐλευθέραν ἔχω.

Χορός

Ὥρα προνοεῖν, πρὶν ὅροις πελάσαι
στρατὸν Ἀργείων·
[290] μάλα δ’ ὀξὺς Ἄρης ὁ Μυκηναίων,
ἐπὶ τοῖσι δὲ δὴ μᾶλλον ἔτ’ ἢ πρίν.
Πᾶσι γὰρ οὗτος κήρυξι νόμος,
δὶς τόσα πυργοῦν τῶν γιγνομένων.
Πόσα νιν λέξειν βασιλεῦσι δοκεῖς,
[295] ὡς δείν’ ἔπαθεν καὶ παρὰ μικρὸν
ψυχὴν ἦλθεν διακναῖσαι;

Ἰόλαος

[297] Οὐκ ἔστι τοῦδε παισὶ κάλλιον γέρας,
ἢ πατρὸς ἐσθλοῦ κἀγαθοῦ πεφυκέναι·
γαμεῖν τ’ ἀπ’ ἐσθλῶν· ὃς δὲ νικηθεὶς πόθῳ
[300] κακοῖς ἐκοινώνησεν, οὐκ ἐπαινέσω,
τέκνοις ὄνειδος οὕνεχ’ ἡδονῆς λιπεῖν·
τὸ δυστυχὲς γὰρ ηὐγένει’ ἀμύνεται
τῆς δυσγενείας μᾶλλον· ἡμεῖς γὰρ κακῶν
ἐς τοὔσχατον πεσόντες ηὕρομεν φίλους

καὶ ξυγγενεῖς τούσδ’, οἳ τοσῆσδ’ οἰκουμένης
Ἑλληνίδος γῆς τῶνδε προύστησαν μόνοι.
Δότ’, ὦ τέκν’, αὐτοῖς χεῖρα δεξιάν, δότε,
ὑμεῖς τε παισί, καὶ πέλας προσέλθετε.

Ὦ παῖδες, ἐς μὲν πεῖραν ἤλθομεν φίλων·
ἦν δ’ οὖν ποθ’ ὑμῖν νόστος ἐς πάτραν φανῇ
καὶ δώματ’ οἰκήσητε καὶ τιμὰς πατρὸς
< πάλιν λάβητε, τῆσδε κοιράνους χθονὸς>
σωτῆρας αἰεὶ καὶ φίλους νομίζετε,
καὶ μήποτ’ ἐς γῆν ἐχθρὸν αἴρεσθαι δόρυ
μέμνησθέ μοι τήνδ’, ἀλλὰ φιλτάτην πόλιν
πασῶν νομίζετ’. Ἄξιοι δ’ ὑμῖν σέβειν
οἳ γῆν τοσήνδε καὶ Πελασγικὸν λεὼν
ἡμῶν ἐνηλλάξαντο πολεμίους ἔχειν,
πτωχοὺς ἀλήτας εἰσορῶντες ἀλλ’ ὅμως
οὐκ ἐξέδωκαν οὐδ’ ἀπήλασαν χθονός.
Ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ ζῶν <εὐγενῆ σ’ οὐ παύσομαι
πᾶσιν προφαίνων> καὶ θανών, ὅταν θάνω,
πολλῷ σ’ ἐπαίνῳ Θησέως ἑστὼς πέλας
ὑψηλὸν ἀρῶ καὶ λέγων τάδ’ εὐφρανῶ,
ὡς εὖ τ’ ἐδέξω καὶ τέκνοισιν ἤρκεσας
τοῖς Ἡρακλείοις, εὐγενὴς δ’ ἀν’ Ἑλλάδα
σῴζεις πατρῴαν δόξαν, ἐξ ἐσθλῶν δὲ φὺς
οὐδὲν κακίων τυγχάνεις γεγὼς πατρός,
παύρων μετ’ ἄλλων· ἕνα γὰρ ἐν πολλοῖς ἴσως
εὕροις ἂν ὅστις ἐστὶ μὴ χείρων πατρός.

Χορός

Ἀεί ποθ’ ἥδε γαῖα τοῖς ἀμηχάνοις
σὺν τῷ δικαίῳ βούλεται προσωφελεῖν.
Τοιγὰρ πόνους δὴ μυρίους ὑπὲρ φίλων
ἤνεγκε, καὶ νῦν τόνδ’ ἀγῶν’ ὁρῶ πέλας.

Δημοφῶν

Σοί τ’ εὖ λέλεκται καὶ τὰ τῶνδ’ αὐχῶ, γέρον,
τοιαῦτ’ ἔσεσθαι· μνημονεύσεται χάρις.
Κἀγὼ μὲν ἀστῶν σύλλογον ποιήσομαι,
τάξω δ’, ὅπως ἂν τὸν Μυκηναίων στρατὸν
πολλῇ δέχωμαι χειρί· πρῶτα μὲν σκοποὺς
πέμψω πρὸς αὐτόν, μὴ λάθῃ με προσπεσών·
ταχὺς γὰρ Ἄργει πᾶς ἀνὴρ βοηδρόμος·
μάντεις δ’ ἀθροίσας θύσομαι. Σὺ δ’ ἐς δόμους
σὺν παισὶ χώρει, Ζηνὸς ἐσχάραν λιπών.
Εἰσὶν γὰρ οἵ σου, κἂν ἐγὼ θυραῖος ὦ,
μέριμναν ἕξουσ’. Ἀλλ’ ἴθ’ ἐς δόμους, γέρον.

Ἰόλαος

Οὐκ ἂν λίποιμι βωμόν· εὐξόμεσθα δὲ
ἱκέται μένοντες ἐνθάδ’ εὖ πρᾶξαι πόλιν·
ὅταν δ’ ἀγῶνος τοῦδ’ ἀπαλλαχθῇς καλῶς,
ἴμεν πρὸς οἴκους. Θεοῖσι δ’ οὐ κακίοσιν
χρώμεσθα συμμάχοισιν Ἀργείων, ἄναξ·
τῶν μὲν γὰρ Ἥρα προστατεῖ, Διὸς δάμαρ,
ἡμῶν δ’ Ἀθάνα. Φημὶ δ’ εἰς εὐπραξίαν
καὶ τοῦθ’ ὑπάρχειν, θεῶν ἀμεινόνων τυχεῖν·
νικωμένη γὰρ Παλλὰς οὐκ ἀνέξεται.

Χορός

Εἰ σὺ μέγ’ αὐχεῖς, ἕτεροι
σοῦ πλέον οὐ μέλονται,
ξεῖν’ <ἀπ’> Ἀργόθεν ἐλθών,
μεγαληγορίαισι δ’ ἐμὰς
φρένας οὐ φοβήσεις.
Μήπω ταῖς μεγάλαισιν οὕ-
τω καὶ καλλιχόροις Ἀθά-
ναις εἴη· σὺ δ’ ἄφρων, ὅ τ’ Ἄρ-
γει Σθενέλου τύραννος.

Ὃς πόλιν ἐλθὼν ἑτέραν
οὐδὲν ἐλάσσον’ Ἄργους,

θεῶν ἱκτῆρας ἀλάτας
καὶ ἐμᾶς χθονὸς ἀντομένους ξένος ὢν βιαίως
ἔλκεις, οὐ βασιλεῦσιν εἴ-
ξας, οὐκ ἄλλο δίκαιον εἰ-
πών· ποῦ ταῦτα καλῶς ἂν εἴ-
η παρά γ' εὖ φρονοῦσιν;

Εἰρήνα μὲν ἐμοί γ' ἀρέ-
σκει· σοὶ δ', ὦ κακόφρων ἄναξ,
λέγω, εἰ πόλιν ἥξεις,
οὐχ οὕτως ἃ δοκεῖς κυρή-
σεις· οὐ σοὶ μόνῳ ἔγχος οὐδ'
ἰτέα κατάχαλκος.
Ἀλλ', ὦ πολέμων ἐρα-
στά, μή μοι δορὶ συνταρά-
ξῃς τὰν εὖ χαρίτων ἔχου-
σαν πόλιν, ἀλλ' ἀνάσχου.

Ἰόλαος

Ὦ παῖ, τί μοι σύννοιαν ὄμμασιν φέρων
ἥκεις; Νέον τι πολεμίων λέξεις πέρι;
Μέλλουσιν ἢ πάρεισιν ἢ τί πυνθάνῃ;
Οὐ γάρ τι μὴ ψεύσῃς γε κήρυκος λόγους·
ὁ γὰρ στρατηγὸς εὐτυχὴς τὰ πρόσθεν ὢν
εἶσιν, σάφ' οἶδα, καὶ μάλ' οὐ σμικρὸν φρονῶν,
ἐς τὰς Ἀθήνας. Ἀλλά τοι φρονημάτων
ὁ Ζεὺς κολαστὴς τῶν ἄγαν ὑπερφρόνων.

Δημοφῶν

Ἥκει στράτευμ' Ἀργεῖον Εὐρυσθεύς τ' ἄναξ·
ἐγώ νιν αὐτὸς εἶδον. Ἄνδρα γὰρ χρεών,
ὅστις στρατηγεῖν φησ' ἐπίστασθαι καλῶς,
οὐκ ἀγγέλοισι τοὺς ἐναντίους ὁρᾶν.
Πεδία μὲν οὖν γῆς ἐς τάδ' οὐκ ἐφῆκέ πω
στρατόν, λεπαίαν δ' ὀφρύην καθήμενος
σκοπεῖ δόκησιν δὴ τόδ' ἂν λέγοιμί σοι

ποίᾳ προσάξει στρατόπεδον τοσόνδ’ ὅροις
ἐν ἀσφαλεῖ τε τῆσδ’ ἱδρύσεται χθονός.
Καὶ τἀμὰ μέντοι πάντ’ ἄραρ’ ἤδη καλῶς·
πόλις τ’ ἐν ὅπλοις, σφάγιά θ’ ἡτοιμασμένα
ἔστηκεν οἷς χρὴ ταῦτα τέμνεσθαι θεῶν,
θυηπολεῖται δ’ ἄστυ μάντεων ὕπο.
Χρησμῶν δ’ ἀοιδοὺς πάντας εἰς ἓν ἁλίσας
ἤλεγξα καὶ βέβηλα καὶ κεκρυμμένα
λόγια παλαιά, τῇδε γῇ σωτήρια.
Καὶ τῶν μὲν ἄλλων διάφορ’ ἐστὶ θεσφάτοις
πόλλ’· ἓν δὲ πᾶσι γνῶμα ταὐτὸν ἐμπρέπει·
σφάξαι κελεύουσίν με παρθένον κόρῃ
Δήμητρος, ἥτις ἐστὶ πατρὸς εὐγενοῦς,
τροπαῖά τ’ ἐχθρῶν καὶ πόλει σωτήριαν.

Ἐγὼ δ’ ἔχω μέν, ὡς ὁρᾷς, προθυμίαν
τοσήνδ’ ἐς ὑμᾶς· παῖδα δ’ οὔτ’ ἐμὴν κτενῶ
οὔτ’ ἄλλον ἀστῶν τῶν ἐμῶν ἀναγκάσω
ἄκονθ’· ἑκὼν δὲ τίς κακῶς οὕτω φρονεῖ,
ὅστις τὰ φίλτατ’ ἐκ χερῶν δώσει τέκνα;
Καὶ νῦν πυκνὰς ἂν συστάσεις ἂν εἰσίδοις,
τῶν μὲν λεγόντων ὡς δίκαιον ἦν ξένοις
ἱκέταις ἀρήγειν, τῶν δὲ μωρίαν ἐμοῦ
κατηγορούντων· εἰ δὲ δὴ δράσω τόδε,
οἰκεῖος ἤδη πόλεμος ἐξαρτύεται.

Ταῦτ’ οὖν ὅρα σὺ καὶ συνεξεύρισχ’ ὅπως
αὐτοί τε σωθήσεσθε καὶ πέδον τόδε,
κἀγὼ πολίταις μὴ διαβληθήσομαι.
Οὐ γὰρ τυραννίδ’ ὥστε βαρβάρων ἔχω·
ἀλλ’, ἢν δίκαια δρῶ, δίκαια πείσομαι.

Χορός

Ἀλλ’ ἦ πρόθυμον οὖσαν οὐκ ἐᾷ θεὸς
ξένοις ἀρήγειν τήνδε χρῄζουσιν πόλιν;

Ἰόλαος

Ὦ τέκν’, ἔοιγμεν ναυτίλοισιν, οἵτινες
χειμῶνος ἐκφυγόντες ἄγριον μένος
ἐς χεῖρα γῇ συνῆψαν, εἶτα χερσόθεν
πνοιαῖσιν ἠλάθησαν ἐς πόντον πάλιν.
Οὕτω δὲ χἠμεῖς τῆσδ’ ἀπωθούμεσθα γῆς
ἤδη πρὸς ἀκταῖς ὄντες ὡς σεσωμένοι.
Οἴμοι· τί δῆτ’ ἔτερψας ὦ τάλαινά με
ἐλπὶς τότ’, οὐ μέλλουσα διατελεῖν χάριν;
Συγγνωστὰ γάρ τοι καὶ τὰ τοῦδ’, εἰ μὴ θέλει
κτείνειν πολιτῶν παῖδας· αἰνέσαι δ’ ἔχω
καὶ τἀνθάδ’· εἰ θεοῖσι δὴ δοκεῖ τάδε
πράσσειν ἔμ’, οὗτοι σοί γ’ ἀπόλλυται χάρις.

Ὦ παῖδες, ὑμῖν δ’ οὐκ ἔχω τί χρήσομαι.
Ποῖ τρεψόμεσθα; Τίς γὰρ ἄστεπτος θεῶν;
Ποῖον δὲ γαίας ἔρκος οὐκ ἀφίγμεθα;
Ἀλούμεθ’, ὦ τέκν’· ἐκδοθησόμεσθα δή.
Κἀμοῦ μὲν οὐδὲν εἴ με χρὴ θανεῖν μέλει,
πλὴν εἴ τι τέρψω τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἐχθροὺς θανών·
ὑμᾶς δὲ κλαίω καὶ κατοικτίρω, τέκνα,
καὶ τὴν γεραιὰν μητέρ’ Ἀλκμήνην πατρός.
Ὦ δυστάλαινα τοῦ μακροῦ βίου σέθεν,
τλήμων δὲ κἀγὼ πολλὰ μοχθήσας μάτην.
Χρῆν χρῆν ἄρ’ ἡμᾶς ἀνδρὸς εἰς ἐχθροῦ χέρας
πεσόντας αἰσχρῶς καὶ κακῶς λιπεῖν βίον.

Ἀλλ’ οἶσθ’ ὅ μοι σύμπραξον· οὐχ ἅπασα γὰρ
πέφευγεν ἐλπὶς τῶνδέ μοι σωτηρίας·
ἔμ’ ἔκδος Ἀργείοισιν ἀντὶ τῶνδ’, ἄναξ,
καὶ μήτε κινδύνευε, σωθήτω τέ μοι
τέκν’· οὐ φιλεῖν δεῖ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχήν· ἴτω.
Μάλιστα δ’ Εὐρυσθεύς με βούλοιτ’ ἂν λαβὼν
τὸν Ἡράκλειον σύμμαχον καθυβρίσαι·
σκαιὸς γὰρ ἀνήρ. Τοῖς σοφοῖς δ’ εὐκτὸν σοφῷ
ἔχθραν συνάπτειν, μὴ ἀμαθεῖ φρονήματι·
πολλῆς γὰρ αἰδοῦς καὶ δίκης τις ἂν τύχοι.

Χορός

Ὦ πρέσβυ, μή νυν τῶνδ’ ἐπαιτιῶ πόλιν·
τάχ’ ἂν γὰρ ἡμῖν ψευδὲς ἀλλ’ ὅμως κακὸν
γένοιτ’ ὄνειδος ὡς ξένους προυδώκαμεν.

Δημοφῶν

Γενναῖα μὲν τάδ’ εἶπας, ἀλλ’ ἀμήχανα.
Οὐ σοῦ χατίζων δεῦρ’ ἄναξ στρατηλατεῖ
τί γὰρ γέροντος ἀνδρὸς Εὐρυσθεῖ πλέον
θανόντος; Ἀλλὰ τούσδε βούλεται κτανεῖν.
Δεινὸν γὰρ ἐχθροῖς βλαστάνοντες εὐγενεῖς,
νεανίαι τε καὶ πατρὸς μεμνημένοι
λύμας· ἃ κεῖνον πάντα προσκοπεῖν χρεών.
Ἀλλ’, εἴ τιν’ ἄλλην οἶσθα καιριωτέραν
βουλήν, ἑτοίμαζ’, ὡς ἔγωγ’ ἀμήχανος
χρησμῶν ἀκούσας εἰμὶ καὶ φόβου πλέως.

Παρθένος

Ξένοι, θράσος μοι μηδὲν ἐξόδοις ἐμαῖς
προσθῆτε· πρῶτον γὰρ τόδ’ ἐξαιτήσομαι·
γυναικὶ γὰρ σιγή τε καὶ τὸ σωφρονεῖν
κάλλιστον εἴσω θ’ ἥσυχον μένειν δόμων.
Τῶν σῶν δ’ ἀκούσασ’, Ἰόλεως, στεναγμάτων
ἐξῆλθον, οὐ ταχθεῖσα πρεσβεύειν γένους·
ἀλλ’, εἰμὶ γάρ πως πρόσφορος, μέλει δέ μοι
μάλιστ’ ἀδελφῶν τῶνδε κἀμαυτῆς πέρι,
θέλω πυθέσθαι μὴ ‘πὶ τοῖς πάλαι κακοῖς
προσκείμενόν τι πῆμα σὴν δάκνει φρένα.

Ἰόλαος

Ὦ παῖ, μάλιστα σ’ οὐ νεωστὶ δὴ τέκνων
τῶν Ἡρακλείων ἐνδίκως αἰνεῖν ἔχω.
Ἡμῖν δὲ δόξας εὖ προχωρῆσαι δρόμος
πάλιν μεθέστηκ’ αὖθις ἐς τἀμήχανον·

χρησμῶν γὰρ ᾠδούς φησι σημαίνειν ὅδε,
οὐ ταῦρον οὐδὲ μόσχον ἀλλὰ παρθένον
σφάξαι Κόρῃ Δήμητρος ἥτις εὐγενής,
εἰ χρὴ μὲν ἡμᾶς, χρὴ δὲ τήνδ᾽ εἶναι πόλιν.
Ταῦτ᾽ οὖν ἀμηχανοῦμεν· οὔτε γὰρ τέκνα
σφάξειν ὅδ᾽ αὑτοῦ φησιν οὔτ᾽ ἄλλου τινός.
Κἀμοὶ λέγει μὲν οὐ σαφῶς, λέγει δέ πως,
εἰ μή τι τούτων ἐξαμηχανήσομεν,
ἡμᾶς μὲν ἄλλην γαῖαν εὑρίσκειν τινά,
αὐτὸς δὲ σῶσαι τήνδε βούλεσθαι χθόνα.

Παρθένος

Ἐν τῷδε κἀχόμεσθα σωθῆναι λόγῳ;

Ἰόλαος

Ἐν τῷδε, τἄλλα γ᾽ εὐτυχῶς πεπραγότες.

Παρθένος

Μή νυν τρέσῃς ἔτ᾽ ἐχθρὸν Ἀργείων δόρυ·
ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτὴ πρὶν κελευσθῆναι, γέρον,
θνῄσκειν ἑτοίμη καὶ παρίστασθαι σφαγῇ.
Τί φήσομεν γάρ, εἰ πόλις μὲν ἀξιοῖ
κίνδυνον ἡμῶν οὕνεκ᾽ αἱρεσθαι μέγαν,
αὐτοὶ δὲ προστιθέντες ἄλλοισιν πόνους,
παρόν σφε σῶσαι, φευξόμεσθα μὴ θανεῖν;
Οὐ δῆτ᾽, ἐπεί τοι καὶ γέλωτος ἄξια,
στένειν μὲν ἱκέτας δαιμόνων καθημένους,
πατρὸς δ᾽ ἐκείνου φύντας οὗ πεφύκαμεν
κακοὺς ὁρᾶσθαι· ποῦ τάδ᾽ ἐν χρηστοῖς πρέπει;
Κάλλιον, οἶμαι, τῆσδ᾽ ὃ μὴ τύχοι ποτέ
πόλεως ἁλούσης, χεῖρας εἰς ἐχθρῶν πεσεῖν,
κἄπειτ᾽ ἄτιμα πατρὸς οὖσαν εὐγενοῦς
παθοῦσαν Ἅιδην μηδὲν ἧσσον εἰσιδεῖν.
Ἀλλ᾽ ἐκπεσοῦσα τῆσδ᾽ ἀλητεύσω χθονός;
Κοὐκ αἰσχυνοῦμαι δῆτ᾽, ἐὰν δή τις λέγῃ·

Τί δεῦρ’ ἀφίκεσθ’ ἱκεσίοισι σὺν κλάδοις
αὐτοὶ φιλοψυχοῦντες; Ἔξιτε χθονός·
κακοῖς γὰρ ἡμεῖς οὐ προσωφελήσομεν.

Ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ μέντοι, τῶνδε μὲν τεθνηκότων,
αὐτὴ δὲ σωθεῖσ’, ἐλπίδ’ εὖ πράξειν ἔχω
πολλοὶ γὰρ ἤδη τῇδε προύδοσαν φίλους·
τίς γὰρ κόρην ἔρημον ἢ δάμαρτ’ ἔχειν
ἢ παιδοποιεῖν ἐξ ἐμοῦ βουλήσεται;
[525] Οὔκουν θανεῖν ἄμεινον ἢ τούτων τυχεῖν
ἀναξίαν; Ἄλλῃ δὲ κἂν πρέποι τινὶ
μᾶλλον τάδ’, ἥτις μὴ ‘πίσημος ὡς ἐγώ.

Ἡγεῖσθ’ ὅπου δεῖ σῶμα κατθανεῖν τόδε
καὶ στεμματοῦτε καὶ κατάρχεσθ’, εἰ δοκεῖ·
[530] νικᾶτε δ’ ἐχθρούς· ἥδε γὰρ ψυχὴ πάρα
ἑκοῦσα κοὐκ ἄκουσα· κἀξαγγέλλομαι
θνήσκειν ἀδελφῶν τῶνδε κἀμαυτῆς ὕπερ.
Εὕρημα γάρ τοι μὴ φιλοψυχοῦσ’ ἐγὼ
κάλλιστον ηὕρηκ’, εὐκλεῶς λιπεῖν βίον.

Χορός

[535] Φεῦ φεῦ, τί λέξω παρθένου μέγαν λόγον
κλύων, ἀδελφῶν ἢ πάρος θέλει θανεῖν;
Τούτων τίς ἂν λέξειε γενναίους λόγους
μᾶλλον, τίς ἂν δράσειεν ἀνθρώπων ἔτι;

Ἰόλαος

[539] Ὦ τέκνον, οὐκ ἔστ’ ἄλλοθεν τὸ σὸν κάρα
[540] ἀλλ’ ἐξ ἐκείνου· σπέρμα τῆς θείας φρενὸς
πέφυκας Ἡράκλειον· οὐδ’ αἰσχύνομαι
τοῖς σοῖς λόγοισι, τῇ τύχῃ δ’ ἀλγύνομαι.
Ἀλλ’ ᾗ γένοιτ’ ἂν ἐνδικωτέρως φράσω·
πάσας ἀδελφὰς δεῦρο χρὴ τὰς σὰς καλεῖν,
[545] κᾆθ’ ἡ λαχοῦσα θνῃσκέτω γένους ὕπερ·
σὲ δ’ οὐ δίκαιον κατθανεῖν ἄνευ πάλου.

Παρθένος

Οὐκ ἂν θάνοιμι τῇ τύχῃ λαχοῦσ’ ἐγώ·
χάρις γὰρ οὐ πρόσεστι· μὴ λέξῃς, γέρον.
Ἀλλ’, εἰ μὲν ἐνδέχεσθε καὶ βούλεσθέ μοι
[550] χρῆσθαι προθύμῳ, τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν ἐγὼ
δίδωμ’ ἑκοῦσα τοῖσδ’, ἀναγκασθεῖσα δ’ οὔ.

Ἰόλαος

Φεῦ·
ὅδ’ αὖ λόγος σοι τοῦ πρὶν εὐγενέστερος·
κἀκεῖνος ἦν ἄριστος· ἀλλ’ ὑπερφέρεις
[555] τόλμῃ τε τόλμαν καὶ λόγῳ χρηστῷ λόγον.
Οὐ μὴν κελεύω γ’ οὐδ’ ἀπεννέπω, τέκνον,
θνῄσκειν σ’· ἀδελφοὺς <δ’> ὠφελεῖς θανοῦσα σούς.

Παρθένος

Σοφῶς σε λύεις· μὴ τρέσῃς μιάσματος
τοὐμοῦ μετασχεῖν, ἀλλ’ ἐλευθερῶ σ’ <ἐγώ> θάνω.
[560] Ἔπου δέ, πρέσβυ σῇ γὰρ ἐνθανεῖν χερὶ
θέλω, πέπλοις δὲ σῶμ’ ἐμὸν κρύψον παρών·
ἔπου σφαγῆς γὰρ πρὸς τὸ δεινὸν εἶμ’ ἐγώ,
εἴπερ πέφυκα πατρὸς οὕπερ εὔχομαι.

Ἰόλαος

Οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην σῷ παρεστάναι μόρῳ.

Παρθένος

[565] Σὺ δ’ ἀλλὰ τοῦδε χρῇζε, μή μ’ ἐν ἀρσένων
ἀλλ’ ἐν γυναικῶν χερσὶν ἐκπνεῦσαι βίον.

Δημοφῶν

Ἔσται τάδ’, ὦ τάλαινα παρθένων, ἐπεὶ
κἀμοὶ τόδ’ αἰσχρόν, μή σε κοσμεῖσθαι καλῶς,

πολλῶν ἕκατι, τῆς τε σῆς εὐψυχίας
καὶ τοῦ δικαίου. Τλημονεστάτην δέ σε
πασῶν γυναικῶν εἶδον ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐγώ.
Ἀλλ', εἴ τι βούλῃ, τούσδε τὸν γέροντά τε
χώρει προσειποῦσ' ὑστάτοις προσφθέγμασιν.

Παρθένος

Ὦ χαῖρε, πρέσβυ, χαῖρε καὶ δίδασκέ μοι
τοιούσδε τούσδε παῖδας, ἐς τὸ πᾶν σοφούς,
ὥσπερ σύ, μηδὲν μᾶλλον· ἀρκέσουσι γάρ.
Πειρῶ δὲ σῶσαι μὴ θανεῖν, πρόθυμος ὤν·
σοὶ παῖδές ἐσμεν, σαῖν χεροῖν τεθράμμεθα.
Ὁρᾷς δὲ κἀμὲ τὴν ἐμὴν ὥραν γάμου
διδοῦσαν ἀντὶ τῶνδε κατθανουμένην.
Ὑμεῖς τ', ἀδελφῶν ἡ παροῦσ' ὁμιλία,
εὐδαιμονοῖτε, καὶ γένοιθ' ὑμῖν ὅσων
ἡμὴ πάροιθε καρδία σφαλήσεται.
Καὶ τὸν γέροντα τήν τ' ἔσω γραῖαν δόμων
τιμᾶτε πατρὸς μητέρ' Ἀλκμήνην ἐμοῦ
ξένους τε τούσδε. Κἂν ἀπαλλαγὴ πόνων
καὶ νόστος ὑμῖν εὑρεθῇ ποτ' ἐκ θεῶν,
μέμνησθε τὴν σώτειραν ὡς θάψαι χρεών·
κάλλιστά τοι δίκαιον· οὐ γὰρ ἐνδεὴς
ὑμῖν παρέστην, ἀλλὰ προύθανον γένους.
Τάδ' ἀντὶ παίδων ἐστί μοι κειμήλια
καὶ παρθενείας, εἴ τι δὴ κάτω χθονός·
εἴη γε μέντοι μηδέν. Εἰ γὰρ ἔξομεν
κἀκεῖ μερίμνας οἱ θανούμενοι βροτῶν,
οὐκ οἶδ' ὅποι τις τρέψεται· τὸ γὰρ θανεῖν
κακῶν μέγιστον φάρμακον νομίζεται.

Ἰόλαος

Ἀλλ', ὦ μέγιστον ἐκπρέπουσ' εὐψυχίᾳ
πασῶν γυναικῶν, ἴσθι, τιμιωτάτη
καὶ ζῶσ' ὑφ' ἡμῶν καὶ θανοῦσ' ἔσῃ πολύ·

καὶ χαῖρε· δυσφημεῖν γὰρ ἄζομαι θεὰν
ᾗ σὸν κατῆρκται σῶμα, Δήμητρος κόρην.

Ὦ παῖδες, οἰχόμεσθα· λύεται μέλη
λύπῃ· λάβεσθε κἀς ἔδραν μ' ἐρείσατε
αὐτοῦ πέπλοισι τοῖσδε κρύψαντες κάρα.
Ὡς οὔτε τούτοις ἥδομαι πεπραγμένοις,
χρησμοῦ τε μὴ κρανθέντος οὐ βιώσιμον·
μείζων γὰρ ἄτη· συμφορὰ δὲ καὶ τάδε.

Χορός

Οὔτινά φημι θεῶν ἄτερ ὄλβιον, οὐ βαρύποτμον,
ἄνδρα γενέσθαι·
οὐδὲ τὸν αὐτὸν ἀεὶ ‘μβεβάναι δόμον
εὐτυχίᾳ· παρὰ δ' ἄλλαν ἄλλα
μοῖρα διώκει.
Τὸν μὲν ἀφ' ὑψηλῶν βραχὺν ᾤκισε,
τὸν δ' ἀλήταν εὐδαίμονα τεύχει.
Μόρσιμα δ' οὔτι φυγεῖν θέμις, οὐ σοφί-
ᾳ τις ἀπώσεται, ἀλλὰ μάταν
ὁ πρόθυμος ἀεὶ πόνον ἕξει.

Ἀλλὰ σὺ μὴ προπεσὼν τὰ θεῶν στένε, μηδ' ὑπεράλγει
φροντίδα λύπᾳ·
εὐδόκιμον γὰρ ἔχει θανάτου μέρος
ἁ μελέα πρό τ' ἀδελφῶν καὶ γᾶς·
οὐδ' ἀκλεής νιν
δόξα πρὸς ἀνθρώπων ὑποδέξεται·
ἁ δ' ἀρετὰ βαίνει διὰ μόχθων.
Ἄξια μὲν πατρός, ἄξια δ' εὐγενί-
ας τάδε γίγνεται· εἰ δὲ σέβεις
θανάτους ἀγαθῶν, μετέχω σοι.

Θεράπων

Ὦ τέκνα, χαίρετ'· Ἰόλεως δὲ ποῦ γέρων
μήτηρ τε πατρὸς τῆσδ' ἕδρας ἀποστατεῖ;

Ἰόλαος

Πάρεσμεν, οἵα δή γ’ ἐμοῦ παρουσία.

Θεράπων

Τί χρῆμα κεῖσαι καὶ κατηφὲς ὄμμ’ ἔχεις;

Ἰόλαος

Φροντίς τις ἦλθ’ οἰκεῖος, ᾗ συνειχόμην.

Θεράπων

[635] Ἔπαιρέ νυν σεαυτόν, ὄρθωσον κάρα.

Ἰόλαος

Γέροντές ἐσμεν κοὐδαμῶς ἐρρώμεθα.

Θεράπων

Ἥκω γε μέντοι χάρμα σοι φέρων μέγα.

Ἰόλαος

Τίς δ’ εἶ σύ; Ποῦ σοι συντυχὼν ἀμνημονῶ;

Θεράπων

Ὕλλου πενέστης· οὔ με γιγνώσκεις ὁρῶν;

Ἰόλαος

[640] Ὦ φίλταθ’, ἥκετ’ ἆρα σῷ κἄτερ βλάβης;

Θεράπων

Μάλιστα· καὶ πρός γ’ εὐτυχεῖς τὰ νῦν τάδε.

Ἰόλαος

Ὦ μῆτερ ἐσθλοῦ παιδός, Ἀλκμήνην λέγω,
ἔξελθ', ἄκουσον τοῦδε φιλτάτους λόγους.
Πάλαι γὰρ ὠδίνουσα τῶν ἀφιγμένων
ψυχὴν ἐτήκου νόστος εἰ γενήσεται.

Ἀλκμήνη

Τί χρῆμ' ἀϋ̈τῆς πᾶν τόδ' ἐπλήσθη στέγος,
Ἰόλαε; Μῶν τίς σ' αὖ βιάζεται παρὼν
κῆρυξ ἀπ' Ἄργους; Ἀσθενὴς μὲν ἥ γ' ἐμὴ
ῥώμη, τοσόνδε δ' εἰδέναι σε χρή, ξένε,
οὐκ ἔστ' ἄγειν σε τούσδ' ἐμοῦ ζώσης ποτέ.
Ἦ τἄρ' ἐκείνου μὴ νομιζοίμην ἐγὼ
μήτηρ ἔτ'· εἰ δὲ τῶνδε προσθίξῃ χερί,
δυοῖν γερόντοιν οὐ καλῶς ἀγωνιῇ.

Ἰόλαος

Θάρσει, γεραιά, μὴ τρέσῃς· οὐκ Ἀργόθεν
κῆρυξ ἀφῖκται πολεμίους λόγους ἔχων.

Ἀλκμήνη

Τί γὰρ βοὴν ἔστησας ἄγγελον φόβου;

Ἰόλαος

Σὺ πρόσθε ναοῦ τοῦδ' ὅπως βαίης πέλας.

Ἀλκμήνη

Οὐκ ἴσμεν ἡμεῖς ταῦτα· τίς γάρ ἐσθ' ὅδε;

Ἰόλαος

Ἥκοντα παῖδα παιδὸς ἀγγέλλει σέθεν.

Ἀλκμήνη

[660] Ὦ χαῖρε καὶ σὺ τοῖσδε τοῖς ἀγγέλμασιν.
ἀτὰρ τί χώρᾳ τῇδε προσβαλὼν πόδα
[662] ποῦ νῦν ἄπεστι; Τίς νιν εἶργε συμφορὰ
σὺν σοὶ φανέντα δεῦρ᾽ ἐμὴν τέρψαι φρένα;

Θεράπων

Στρατὸν καθίζει τάσσεταί θ᾽ ὃν ἦλθ᾽ ἔχων.

Ἀλκμήνη

[665] Τοῦδ᾽ οὐκέθ᾽ ἡμῖν τοῦ λόγου μέτεστι δή.

Ἰόλαος

Μέτεστιν· ἡμῶν δ᾽ ἔργον ἱστορεῖν τάδε.

Θεράπων

Τί δῆτα βούλῃ τῶν πεπραγμένων μαθεῖν;

Ἰόλαος

Πόσον τι πλῆθος συμμάχων πάρεστ᾽ ἔχων;

Θεράπων

Πολλούς· ἀριθμὸν δ᾽ ἄλλον οὐκ ἔχω φράσαι.

Ἰόλαος

[670] Ἴσασιν, οἶμαι, ταῦτ᾽ Ἀθηναίων πρόμοι.

Θεράπων

Ἴσασι, καὶ δὴ <‘ς> λαιὸν ἔστησαν κέρας.

Ἰόλαος

Ἤδη γὰρ ὡς ἐς ἔργον ὥπλισται στρατός;

Θεράπων

Καὶ δὴ παρῆκται σφάγια τάξεων ἑκάς.

Ἰόλαος

Πόσον τι δ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἄπωθεν Ἀργεῖον δόρυ;

Θεράπων

[675] Ὥστ᾽ ἐξορᾶσθαι τὸν στρατηγὸν ἐμφανῶς.

Ἰόλαος

Τί δρῶντα; Μῶν τάσσοντα πολεμίων στίχας;

Θεράπων

Ἠκάζομεν ταῦτ᾽· οὐ γὰρ ἐξηκούομεν.
Ἀλλ᾽ εἶμ᾽· ἐρήμους δεσπότας τοὐμὸν μέρος
οὐκ ἂν θέλοιμι πολεμίοισι συμβαλεῖν.

Ἰόλαος

[680] Κἄγωγε σὺν σοί· ταὐτὰ γὰρ φροντίζομεν,
φίλοις παρόντες, ὡς ἔοιγμεν, ὠφελεῖν.

Θεράπων

Ἥκιστα πρὸς σοῦ μῶρον ἦν εἰπεῖν ἔπος.

Ἰόλαος

Καὶ μὴ μετασχεῖν γ᾽ ἀλκίμου μάχης φίλοις.

Θεράπων

[688] Οὐκ ἔστιν, ὦ τᾶν, ἥ ποτ’ ἦν ῥώμη σέθεν.

Ἰόλαος

Ἀλλ’ οὖν μαχοῦμαί γ’ ἀριθμὸν οὐκ ἐλάσσοσιν.

Θεράπων

[690] Σμικρὸν τὸ σὸν σήκωμα προστίθης φίλοις.

Ἰόλαος

[687] Οὐδεὶς ἔμ’ ἐχθρῶν προσβλέπων ἀνέξεται.

Θεράπων

[684] Οὐκ ἔστ’ ἐν ὄψει τραῦμα μὴ δρώσης χερός.

Ἰόλαος

[685] Τί δ’; Οὐ θένοιμι κἂν ἐγὼ δι’ ἀσπίδος;

Θεράπων

Θένοις ἄν, ἀλλὰ πρόσθεν αὐτὸς ἂν πέσοις.

Ἰόλαος

[691] Μή τοί μ’ ἔρυκε δρᾶν παρεσκευασμένον.

Θεράπων

Δρᾶν μὲν σύ γ’ οὐχ οἷός τε, βούλεσθαι δ’ ἴσως.

Ἰόλαος

Ὡς μὴ μενοῦντος τἄλλα σοι λέγειν πάρα.

Θεράπων

Πῶς οὖν ὁπλίτης τευχέων ἄτερ φανῇ;

Ἰόλαος

[695]Ἔστ’ ἐν δόμοισιν ἔνδον αἰχμάλωθ’ ὅπλα
τοῖσδ’, οἷσι χρησόμεσθα· κἀποδώσομεν
ζῶντες, θανόντας δ’ οὐκ ἀπαιτήσει θεός.
Ἀλλ’ εἴσιθ’ εἴσω κἀπὸ πασσάλων ἑλὼν
ἔνεγχ’ ὁπλίτην κόσμον ὡς τάχιστά μοι.
[700] Αἰσχρὸν γὰρ οἰκούρημα γίγνεται τόδε,
τοὺς μὲν μάχεσθαι, τοὺς δὲ δειλίᾳ μένειν.

Χορός

Λῆμα μὲν οὔπω στόρνυσι χρόνος
τὸ σόν, ἀλλ’ ἡβᾷ, σῶμα δὲ φροῦδον.
Τί πονεῖς ἄλλως ἃ σὲ μὲν βλάψει,
[705] σμικρὰ δ’ ὀνήσει πόλιν ἡμετέραν;
Χρὴ γνωσιμαχεῖν τὴν ἡλικίαν,
τὰ δ’ ἀμήχαν’ ἐᾶν· οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπως
ἥβην κτήσῃ πάλιν αὖθις.

Ἀλκμήνη

[709] Τί χρῆμα; Μέλλεις σῶν φρενῶν οὐκ ἔνδον ὢν
[710] λιπεῖν μ’ ἔρημον σὺν <τέκνου> τέκνοις ἐμοῖς;

Ἰόλαος

Ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ἀλκή· σοὶ δὲ χρὴ τούτων μέλειν.

Ἀλκμήνη

Τί δ’; Ἢν θάνῃς σύ, πῶς ἐγὼ σωθήσομαι;

Ἰόλαος

Παιδὸς μελήσει παισὶ τῶν λελειμμένων.

Ἀλκμήνη

Ἦν δ’ οὖν, ὃ μὴ γένοιτο, χρήσωνται τύχῃ;

Ἰόλαος

Οἵδ’ οὐ προδώσουσίν σε, μὴ τρέσῃς, ξένοι.

Ἀλκμήνη

Τοσόνδε γάρ τοι θάρσος, οὐδὲν ἄλλ’, ἔχω.

Ἰόλαος

Καὶ Ζηνὶ τῶν σῶν, οἶδ’ ἐγώ, μέλει πόνων.

Ἀλκμήνη

Φεῦ·
Ζεὺς ἐξ ἐμοῦ μὲν οὐκ ἀκούσεται κακῶς·
εἰ δ’ ἐστὶν ὅσιος αὐτὸς οἶδεν εἰς ἐμέ.

Θεράπων

Ὅπλων μὲν ἥδη τήνδ’ ὁρᾷς παντευχίαν,
φθάνοις δ’ ἂν οὐκ ἂν τοῖσδε σὸν κρύπτων δέμας·
ὡς ἐγγὺς ἀγών, καὶ μάλιστ’ Ἄρης στυγεῖ
μέλλοντας· εἰ δὲ τευχέων φοβῇ βάρος,
νῦν μὲν πορεύου γυμνός, ἐν δὲ τάξεσιν
κόσμῳ πυκάζου τῷδ’· ἐγὼ δ’ οἴσω τέως.

Ἰόλαος

Καλῶς ἔλεξας· ἀλλ’ ἐμοὶ πρόχειρ’ ἔχων
τεύχη κόμιζε, χειρὶ δ’ ἔνθες ὀξύην,
λαιόν τ’ ἔπαιρε πῆχυν, εὐθύνων πόδα.

Θεράπων

Ἦ παιδαγωγεῖν γὰρ τὸν ὁπλίτην χρεών;

Ἰόλαος

Ὄρνιθος οὕνεκ᾽ ἀσφαλῶς πορευτέον.

Θεράπων

Εἴθ᾽ ἦσθα δυνατὸς δρᾶν ὅσον πρόθυμος εἶ.

Ἰόλαος

Ἔπειγε· λειφθεὶς δεινὰ πείσομαι μάχης.

Θεράπων

Σύ τοι βραδύνειν, οὐκ ἐγώ, δοκεῖς τι δρᾶν.

Ἰόλαος

Οὔκουν ὁρᾷς μου κῶλον ὡς ἐπείγεται;

Θεράπων

Ὁρῶ δοκοῦντα μᾶλλον ἢ σπεύδοντά σε.

Ἰόλαος

Οὐ ταῦτα λέξεις, ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν λεύσσῃς μ᾽ ἐκεῖ...

Θεράπων

Τί δρῶντα; Βουλοίμην δ᾽ ἂν εὐτυχοῦντά γε.

Ἰόλαος

Δι᾽ ἀσπίδος θείνοντα πολεμίων τινά.

Θεράπων

Εἰ δή ποθ’ ἥξομέν γε· τοῦτο γὰρ φόβος.

Ἰόλαος

Φεῦ·
εἴθ’, ὦ βραχίων, οἷον ἡβήσαντά σε
μεμνήμεθ’ ἡμεῖς, ἡνίκα ξὺν Ἡρακλεῖ
Σπάρτην ἐπόρθεις, σύμμαχος γένοιό μοι
τοιοῦτος· οἵαν ἂν τροπὴν Εὐρυσθέως
θείμην· ἐπεί τοι καὶ κακὸς μένειν δόρυ.
Ἔστιν δ’ ἐν ὄλβῳ καὶ τόδ’ οὐκ ὀρθῶς ἔχον,
εὐψυχίας δόκησις· οἰόμεσθα γὰρ
τὸν εὐτυχοῦντα πάντ’ ἐπίστασθαι καλῶς.

Χορός

Γᾶ καὶ παννύχιος σελά-
να καὶ λαμπρόταται θεοῦ
φαεσιμβρότου αὐγαί,
ἀγγελίαν μοι ἐνέγ-
καιτ’· ἰαχήσατε δ’ οὐρανῷ
καὶ παρὰ θρόνον ἀρχέταν
γλαυκᾶς τ’ ἐν Ἀθάνας.
Μέλλω τᾶς πατριώτιδος
γᾶς, μέλλω καὶ ὑπὲρ δόμων
ἱκέτας ὑποδεχθεὶς
κίνδυνον πολιῷ τεμεῖν σιδάρῳ.

Δεινὸν μὲν πόλιν ὡς Μυκή-
νας εὐδαίμονα καὶ δορὸς
πολυαίνετον ἀλκᾷ
μῆνιν ἐμᾷ χθονὶ κεύ-
θειν· κακὰ δ’, ὦ πόλις, εἰ ξένους
ἱκτῆρας παραδώσομεν
κελεύσμασιν Ἄργους.
Ζεύς μοι σύμμαχος, οὐ φοβοῦ-

μαι, Ζεύς μοι χάριν ἐνδίκως
ἔχει· οὔποτε θνατῶν
ἥσσους <δαίμονες> ἔκ γ’ ἐμοῦ φανοῦνται.

Ἀλλ’, ὦ πότνια, σὸν γὰρ οὖ-
δας γᾶς, καὶ πόλις, ἃς σὺ μά-
τηρ δέσποινά τε καὶ φύλαξ
πόρευσον ἄλλᾳ τὸν οὐ δικαίως
τᾷδ’ ἐπάγοντα δορυσσοῦν
στρατὸν Ἀργόθεν· οὐ γὰρ ἐμᾷ γ’ ἀρετᾷ
δίκαιός εἰμ’ ἐκπεσεῖν μελάθρων.

Ἐπεί σοι πολύθυτος ἀεὶ
τιμὰ κραίνεται, οὐδὲ λά-
θει μηνῶν φθινὰς ἁμέρα,
νέων τ’ ἀοιδαὶ χορῶν τε μολπαί.
Ἀνεμόεντι δ’ ἐπ’ ὄχθῳ
ὀλολύγματα παννυχίοις ὑπὸ παρ-
θένων ἰαχεῖ ποδῶν κρότοισιν.

Ἄγγελος

Δέσποινα, μύθους σοί τε συντομωτάτους·
κλύειν ἐμοί τε τῷδε καλλίστους φέρω·
νικῶμεν ἐχθροὺς καὶ τροπαῖ’ ἱδρύεται
παντευχίαν ἔχοντα πολεμίων σέθεν.

Ἀλκμήνη

Ὦ φίλταθ’, ἥδε σ’ ἡμέρα διώλβισεν·
ἠλευθέρωσαι τοῖσδε τοῖς ἀγγέλμασιν.
Μιᾶς δ’ ἔμ’ οὔπω συμφορᾶς ἐλευθεροῖς·
φόβος γὰρ εἴ μοι ζῶσιν οὓς ἐγὼ θέλω.

Ἄγγελος

Ζῶσιν, μέγιστόν γ’ εὐκλεεῖς κατὰ στρατόν.

Ἀλκμήνη

Ὁ μὲν γέρων οὖν ἔστιν Ἰόλεως ἔτι;

Ἄγγελος

Μάλιστα, πράξας γ’ ἐκ θεῶν κάλλιστα δή.

Ἀλκμήνη

Τί δ’ ἔστι; Μῶν τι κεδνὸν ἠγωνίζετο;

Ἄγγελος

Νέος μεθέστηκ’ ἐκ γέροντος αὖθις αὖ.

Ἀλκμήνη

Θαυμάστ’ ἔλεξας· ἀλλά σ’ εὐτυχῆ φίλων
μάχης ἀγῶνα πρῶτον ἀγγεῖλαι θέλω.

Ἄγγελος

Εἷς μου λόγος σοι πάντα σημανεῖ τάδε.
Ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἀλλήλοισιν ὁπλίτην στρατὸν
κατὰ στόμ’ ἐκτείνοντες ἀντετάξαμεν,
ἐκβὰς τεθρίππων Ὕλλος ἁρμάτων πόδα
ἔστη μέσοισιν ἐν μεταιχμίοις δορός.
Κἄπειτ’ ἔλεξεν· “Ἦ” στρατήγ’ ὃς Ἀργόθεν
ἥκεις, τί τήνδε γαῖαν οὐκ εἰάσαμεν
καὶ τὰς Μυκήνας οὐδὲν ἐργάσῃ κακὸν
ἀνδρῶν στερήσας· ἀλλ’ ἐμοὶ μόνος μόνῳ
μάχην συνάψας, ἢ κτανὼν ἄγου λαβὼν
τοὺς Ἡρακλείους παῖδας ἢ θανὼν ἐμοὶ
τιμὰς πατρῴους καὶ δόμους ἔχειν ἄφες.
Στρατὸς δ’ ἐπῄνεσ’ ἔς τ’ ἀπαλλαγὰς πόνων
καλῶς λελέχθαι μῦθον ἔς τ’ εὐψυχίαν.
Ὁ δ’ οὔτε τοὺς κλύοντας αἰδεσθεὶς λόγων
οὔτ’ αὐτὸς αὑτοῦ δειλίαν στρατηγὸς ὢν

ἐλθεῖν ἐτόλμησ᾽ ἐγγὺς ἀλκίμου δορός,
ἀλλ᾽ ἦν κάκιστος· εἶτα τοιοῦτος γεγὼς
τοὺς Ἡρακλείους ἦλθε δουλώσων γόνους;
Ἄλλος μὲν οὖν ἀπῴχετ᾽ ἐς τάξιν πάλιν·
μάντεις δ᾽, ἐπειδὴ μονομάχου δι᾽ ἀσπίδος
διαλλαγὰς ἔγνωσαν οὐ τελουμένας,
ἔσφαζον, οὐκ ἔμελλον, ἀλλ᾽ ἀφίεσαν
λαιμῶν βοείων εὐθὺς οὔριον φόνον.
Οἱ δ᾽ ἅρματ᾽ εἰσέβαινον, οἱ δ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἀσπίδων
πλευροῖς ἔχριμπτον πλεύρ᾽· Ἀθηναίων δ᾽ ἄναξ
στρατῷ παρήγγελλ᾽ οἷα χρὴ τὸν εὐγενῆ·
“Ὦ” ξυμπολῖται, τῇ τε βοσκούσῃ χθονὶ
καὶ τῇ τεκούσῃ νῦν τιν᾽ ἀρκέσαι χρεών.
Ὁ δ᾽ αὖ τό τ᾽ Ἄργος μὴ καταισχῦναι θέλειν
καὶ τὰς Μυκήνας συμμάχους ἐλίσσετο.

Ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἐσήμην᾽ ὄρθιον Τυρσηνικῇ
σάλπιγγι καὶ συνῆψαν ἀλλήλοις μάχην,
πόσον τιν᾽ αὐχεῖς πάταγον ἀσπίδων βρέμειν,
πόσον τινὰ στεναγμὸν οἰμωγήν θ᾽ ὁμοῦ;
Τὰ πρῶτα μέν νυν πίτυλος Ἀργείου δορὸς
ἐρρήξαθ᾽ ἡμᾶς, εἶτ᾽ ἐχώρησαν πάλιν.
Τὸ δεύτερον δὲ ποὺς ἐπαλλαχθεὶς ποδί,
ἀνὴρ δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀνδρὶ στάς, ἐκαρτέρει μάχη·
πολλοὶ δ᾽ ἔπιπτον. Ἦν δὲ δύο κελεύματα
“Ὦ” τὰς Ἀθήνας “Ὦ” τὸν Ἀργείων γύην
σπείροντες οὐκ ἀρήξετ᾽ αἰσχύνην πόλει;
Μόλις δὲ πάντα δρῶντες οὐκ ἄτερ πόνων
ἐτρεψάμεσθ᾽ Ἀργεῖον ἐς φυγὴν δόρυ.

Κἀνταῦθ᾽ ὁ πρέσβυς Ἄλλον ἐξορμώμενον
ἰδών, ὀρέξας ἱκέτευσε δεξιὰν
Ἰόλαος ἐμβῆσαί νιν ἵππειον δίφρον.
Λαβὼν δὲ χερσὶν ἡνίας Εὐρυσθέως
πώλοις ἐπεῖχε. Τἀπὸ τοῦδ᾽ ἤδη κλύων
λέγοιμ᾽ ἂν ἄλλων, δεῦρο γ᾽ αὐτὸς εἰσιδών.
Παλληνίδος γὰρ σεμνὸν ἐκπερῶν πάγον

δίας Ἀθάνας, ἅρμ᾽ ἰδὼν Εὐρυσθέως,
ἠράσαθ᾽ Ἥβῃ Ζηνί θ᾽ ἡμέραν μίαν
νέος γενέσθαι κἀποτείσασθαι δίκην
ἐχθρούς. Κλύειν δὴ θαύματος πάρεστί σοι.
Δισσὼ γὰρ ἀστέρ᾽ ἱππικοῖς ἐπὶ ζυγοῖς
σταθέντ᾽ ἔκρυψαν ἅρμα λυγαίῳ νέφει·
σὸν δὴ λέγουσι παῖδά γ᾽ οἱ σοφώτεροι
Ἥβην θ᾽· ὁ δ᾽ ὄρφνης ἐκ δυσαιθρίου νέων
βραχιόνων ἔδειξεν ἡβητὴν τύπον.
Αἰρεῖ δ᾽ ὁ κλεινὸς Ἰόλεως Εὐρυσθέως
τέτρωρον ἅρμα πρὸς πέτραις Σκιρωνίσιν,
δεσμοῖς τε δήσας χεῖρας ἀκροθίνιον
κάλλιστον ἥκει τὸν στρατηλάτην ἄγων
τὸν ὄλβιον πάροιθε. Τῇ δὲ νῦν τύχῃ
βροτοῖς ἅπασι λαμπρὰ κηρύσσει μαθεῖν,
τὸν εὐτυχεῖν δοκοῦντα μὴ ζηλοῦν πρὶν ἂν
θανόντ᾽ ἴδῃ τις· ὡς ἐφήμεροι τύχαι.

Χορός

Ὦ Ζεῦ τροπαῖε, νῦν ἐμοὶ δεινοῦ φόβου
ἐλεύθερον πάρεστιν ἦμαρ εἰσιδεῖν.

Ἀλκμήνη

Ὦ Ζεῦ, χρόνῳ μὲν τἄμ᾽ ἐπεσκέψω κακά,
χάριν δ᾽ ὅμως σοι τῶν πεπραγμένων ἔχω·
καὶ παῖδα τὸν ἐμὸν πρόσθεν οὐ δοκοῦσ᾽ ἐγὼ
θεοῖς ὁμιλεῖν νῦν ἐπίσταμαι σαφῶς.

Ὦ τέκνα, νῦν δὴ νῦν ἐλεύθεροι πόνων,
ἐλεύθεροι δὲ τοῦ κακῶς ὀλουμένου
Εὐρυσθέως ἔσεσθε καὶ πόλιν πατρὸς
ὄψεσθε, κλήρους δ᾽ ἐμβατεύσετε χθονὸς
καὶ θεοῖς πατρῴοις θύσεθ᾽, ὧν ἀπειργμένοι
ξένοι πλανήτην εἴχετ᾽ ἄθλιον βίον.

Ἀτὰρ τί κεύθων Ἰόλεως σοφόν ποτε
Εὐρυσθέως ἐφείσαθ’ ὥστε μὴ κτανεῖν;
Λέξον· παρ’ ἡμῖν μὲν γὰρ οὐ σοφὸν τόδε,
ἐχθροὺς λαβόντα μὴ ἀποτείσασθαι δίκην.

Ἄγγελος

Τὸ σὸν προτιμῶν, ὥς νιν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἴδοις
ταρβοῦντα καὶ σῇ δεσποτούμενον χερί.
Οὐ μὴν ἑκόντα γ’ αὐτόν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς βίαν
ἔζευξ’ ἀνάγκη· καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἐβούλετο
ζῶν ἐς σὸν ἐλθεῖν ὄμμα καὶ δοῦναι δίκην.

Ἀλλ’, ὦ γεραιά, χαῖρε καὶ μέμνησό μοι
ὃ πρῶτον εἶπας, ἡνίκ’ ἠρχόμην λόγου,
ἐλευθερώσειν μ’· ἐν δὲ τοῖς τοιοῖσδε χρὴ
ἀψευδὲς εἶναι τοῖσι γενναίοις στόμα.

Χορός

Ἐμοὶ χορὸς μὲν ἡδὺ καὶ λίγεια λω-
τοῦ χάρις ἀμφὶ δαῖτα·
εἴη δ’ <ἂν> εὔχαρις Ἀφροδίτα·
τερπνὸν δέ τι καὶ φίλων ἦρ’
εὐτυχίαν ἰδέσθαι
τῶν πάρος οὐ δοκούντων.
Πολλὰ γὰρ τίκτει Μοῖρα τελεσσιδώ-
τειρ’ Αἰών τε Χρόνου παῖς.

Ἔχεις ὁδόν τιν’, ὦ πόλις, δίκαιον· οὐ
χρή ποτε τοῦδ’ ἀφέσθαι, -
τιμᾶν θεούς· ὁ <δὲ> μή σε φάσκων
ἐγγὺς μανιῶν ἐλαύνει,
δεικνυμένων ἐλέγχων
τῶνδ’· ἐπίσημα γάρ τοι
θεὸς παραγγέλλει, τῶν ἀδίκων παραι-
ρῶν φρονήματος αἰεί.

[910] Ἔστιν ἐν οὐρανῷ βεβα-
κὼς ὁ σὸς γόνος, ὦ γεραι-
ά· φεύγει λόγον ὡς τὸν Ἄι-
δα δόμον κατέβα, πυρὸς
δεινᾷ φλογὶ σῶμα δαισθείς·
[915] Ἥβας τ᾽ ἐρατὸν χροΐ-
ζει λέχος χρυσέαν κατ᾽ αὐλάν.
Ὦ Ὑμέναιε, δισ-
σοὺς παῖδας Διὸς ἠξίωσας.

Συμφέρεται δὲ πολλὰ πολ-
[920] λοῖς· καὶ γὰρ πατρὶ τῶνδ᾽ Ἀθά-
ναν λέγουσ᾽ ἐπίκουρον εἶ-
ναι, καὶ τούσδε θεᾶς πόλις
καὶ λαὸς ἔσωσε κείνας·
ἔσχεν δ᾽ ὕβριν ἀνδρὸς ᾧ
[925] θυμὸς ἦν πρὸ δίκας βίαιος.
Μήποτ᾽ ἐμοὶ φρόνη-
μα ψυχά τ᾽ ἀκόρεστος εἴη.

Θεράπων

[928] Δέσποιν᾽, ὁρᾷς μέν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως εἰρήσεται,
Εὐρυσθέα σοι τόνδ᾽ ἄγοντες ἥκομεν,
[930] ἄελπτον ὄψιν, τῷδέ τ᾽ οὐχ ἧσσον τύχην·
οὐ γάρ ποτ᾽ ηὔχει χεῖρας ἵξεσθαι σέθεν,
ὅτ᾽ ἐκ Μυκηνῶν πολυπόνῳ σὺν ἀσπίδι
ἔστειχε μείζω τῆς δίκης φρονῶν, πόλιν
πέρσων Ἀθάνας. Ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐναντίαν
[935] δαίμων ἔθηκε καὶ μετέστησεν τύχην.

Ὕλλος μὲν οὖν ὅ τ᾽ ἐσθλὸς Ἰόλεως βρέτας
Διὸς τροπαίου καλλίνικον ἵστασαν·
ἐμοὶ δὲ πρὸς σὲ τόνδ᾽ ἐπιστέλλουσ᾽ ἄγειν,
τέρψαι θέλοντες σὴν φρέν᾽· ἐκ γὰρ εὐτυχοῦς
[940] ἥδιστον ἐχθρὸν ἄνδρα δυστυχοῦνθ᾽ ὁρᾶν.

Ἀλκμήνη

[939] Ὦ μῖσος, ἥκεις; Εἶλέ σ’ ἡ Δίκη χρόνῳ;
Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν μοι δεῦρ’ ἐπίστρεψον κάρα
καὶ τλῆθι τοὺς σοὺς προσβλέπειν ἐναντίον
ἐχθρούς· κρατῇ γὰρ νῦν γε κοὐ κρατεῖς ἔτι.
[945] Ἐκεῖνος εἶ σύ, βούλομαι γὰρ εἰδέναι,
ὃς πολλὰ μὲν τὸν ὄνθ’ ὅπου ‘στὶ νῦν ἐμὸν
παῖδ’ ἀξιώσας, ὦ πανοῦργ’, ἐφυβρίσαι
[950] ὕδρας λέοντάς τ’ ἐξαπολλύναι λέγων
ἔπεμπες; Ἄλλα δ’ οἶ’ ἐμηχανῶ κακὰ
σιγῶ· μακρὸς γὰρ μῦθος ἂν γένοιτό μοι.
[948] Τί γὰρ σὺ κεῖνον οὐκ ἔτλης καθυβρίσαι
ὃς καὶ παρ’ Ἅιδην ζῶντά νιν κατήγαγες;
[953] Κοὐκ ἤρκεσέν σοι ταῦτα τολμῆσαι μόνον,
ἀλλ’ ἐξ ἁπάσης κἀμὲ καὶ τέκν’ Ἑλλάδος
[955] ἤλαυνες ἱκέτας δαιμόνων καθημένους,
τοὺς μὲν γέροντας, τοὺς δὲ νηπίους ἔτι.
Ἀλλ’ ηὗρες ἄνδρας καὶ πόλισμ’ ἐλεύθερον,
οἵ σ’ οὐκ ἔδεισαν. Δεῖ σε κατθανεῖν κακῶς,
καὶ κερδανεῖς ἅπαντα· χρῆν γὰρ οὐχ ἅπαξ
[960] θνῄσκειν σὲ πολλὰ πήματ’ ἐξειργασμένον.

Θεράπων

[961] Οὐκ ἔστ’ ἀνυστὸν τόνδε σοι κατακτανεῖν.

Ἀλκμήνη

Ἄλλως ἄρ’ αὐτὸν αἰχμάλωτον εἴλομεν.

<**Θεράπων**>

[962α] <Ἄλλως, κατακτανεῖν νιν εἰ πρόθυμος εἶ.>

Ἀλκμήνη

[963] Εἴργει δὲ δὴ τίς τόνδε μὴ θνῄσκειν νόμος;

Θεράπων

Τοῖς τῆσδε χώρας προστάταισιν οὐ δοκεῖ.

Ἀλκμήνη

[965] Τί δὴ τόδ’; Ἐχθροὺς τοισίδ’ οὐ καλὸν κτανεῖν;

Θεράπων

Οὐχ ὅντιν’ ἄν γε ζῶνθ’ ἕλωσιν ἐν μάχῃ.

Ἀλκμήνη

Καὶ ταῦτα δόξανθ’ Ὕλλος ἐξηνέσχετο;

Θεράπων

Χρῆν αὐτόν, οἶμαι, τῇδ’ ἀπιστῆσαι χθονί.

Ἀλκμήνη

Χρῆν τόνδε μὴ ζῆν μηδ’ ἔτ’ εἰσορᾶν φάος.

<**Θεράπων**>

[969α] < >

Ἀλκμήνη

[970] Τότ’ ἠδικήθη πρῶτον οὐ θανὼν ὅδε.

<**Θεράπων**>

[970α] < >

Ἀλκμήνη

[971] Οὔκουν ἔτ’ ἐστὶν ἐν καλῷ δοῦναι δίκην;

Θεράπων

Οὐκ ἔστι τοῦτον ὅστις ἂν κατακτάνοι.

Ἀλκμήνη

Ἔγωγε· καίτοι φημὶ κἄμ’ εἶναί τινα.

Θεράπων

Πολλὴν ἄρ’ ἕξεις μέμψιν, εἰ δράσεις τόδε.

Ἀλκμήνη

Φιλῶ πόλιν τήνδ’· οὐδὲν ἀντιλεκτέον·
τοῦτον δ’, ἐπείπερ χεῖρας ἦλθεν εἰς ἐμάς,
οὐκ ἔστι θνητῶν ὅστις ἐξαιρήσεται.
Πρὸς ταῦτα τὴν θρασεῖαν ὅστις ἂν θέλῃ
καὶ τὴν φρονοῦσαν μεῖζον ἢ γυναῖκα χρὴ
λέξει· τὸ δ’ ἔργον τοῦτ’ ἐμοὶ πεπράξεται.

Χορός

Δεινόν τι καὶ συγγνωστόν, ὦ γύναι, σ’ ἔχει
νεῖκος πρὸς ἄνδρα τόνδε, γιγνώσκω καλῶς.

Εὐρυσθεύς

Γύναι, σάφ’ ἴσθι μή με θωπεύσοντά σε
μηδ’ ἄλλο μηδὲν τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς πέρι
λέξονθ’ ὅθεν χρὴ δειλίαν ὀφλεῖν τινα.
Ἐγὼ δὲ νεῖκος οὐχ ἑκὼν τόδ’ ἠράμην·
ἤδη γε σοὶ μὲν αὐτανέψιος γεγώς,
τῷ σῷ δὲ παιδὶ συγγενὴς Ἡρακλέει.
Ἀλλ’ εἴτ’ ἔχρῃζον εἴτε μή θεὸς γὰρ ἦν
Ἥρα με κάμνειν τήνδ’ ἔθηκε τὴν νόσον.
Ἐπεὶ δ’ ἐκείνῳ δυσμένειαν ἠράμην
κἄγνων ἀγῶνα τόνδ’ ἀγωνιούμενος,
πολλῶν σοφιστὴς πημάτων ἐγιγνόμην
καὶ πόλλ’ ἔτικτον νυκτὶ συνθακῶν ἀεί,

[995] ὅπως διώσας καὶ κατακτείνας ἐμοὺς
ἐχθροὺς τὸ λοιπὸν μὴ συνοικοίην φόβῳ,
εἰδὼς μὲν οὐκ ἀριθμὸν ἀλλ᾽ ἐτητύμως
ἄνδρ᾽ ὄντα τὸν σὸν παῖδα· καὶ γὰρ ἐχθρὸς ὢν
ἀκούσεται γ᾽ ἐσθλὰ χρηστὸς ὢν ἀνήρ.
[1000] Κείνου δ᾽ ἀπαλλαχθέντος οὐκ ἐχρῆν μ᾽ ἄρα,
μισούμενον πρὸς τῶνδε καὶ ξυνειδότα
ἔχθραν πατρῴαν, πάντα κινῆσαι πέτρον
κτείνοντα κἀκβάλλοντα καὶ τεχνώμενον;
Τοιαῦτα δρῶντι τἄμ᾽ ἐγίγνετ᾽ ἀσφαλῆ.
[1005] Οὔκουν σύ γ᾽ ἀναλαβοῦσα τὰς ἐμὰς τύχας
ἐχθροῦ λέοντος δυσγενῆ βλαστήματα
ἤλαυνες ἂν κακοῖσιν, ἀλλὰ σωφρόνως
εἴασας οἰκεῖν Ἄργος. Οὔτιν᾽ ἂν πίθοις.

Νῦν οὖν ἐπειδή μ᾽ οὐ διώλεσαν τότε
[1010] πρόθυμον ὄντα, τοῖσιν Ἑλλήνων νόμοις
οὐχ ἁγνός εἰμι τῷ κτανόντι κατθανών·
πόλις τ᾽ ἀφῆκε σωφρονοῦσα, τὸν θεὸν
μεῖζον τίουσα τῆς ἐμῆς ἔχθρας πολύ.
Προσεῖπας, ἀντήκουσας· ἐντεῦθεν δὲ χρὴ
[1015] τὸν προστρόπαιον τόν τε γενναῖον καλεῖν.
Οὕτω γε μέντοι τἄμ᾽ ἔχεις· θανεῖν μὲν οὐ
χρῄζω, λιπὼν δ᾽ ἂν οὐδὲν ἀχθοίμην βίον.

Χορός

Παραινέσαι σοι σμικρόν, Ἀλκμήνη, θέλω,
τὸν ἄνδρ᾽ ἀφεῖναι τόνδ᾽, ἐπεὶ δοκεῖ πόλει.

Ἀλκμήνη

[1020] Τί δ᾽, ἢν θάνῃ τε καὶ πόλει πιθώμεθα;

Χορός

Τὰ λῷστ᾽ ἂν εἴη· πῶς τάδ᾽ οὖν γενήσεται;

Ἀλκμήνη

Ἐγὼ διδάξω ῥᾳδίως· κτανοῦσα γὰρ
τόνδ’ εἶτα νεκρὸν τοῖς μετελθοῦσιν φίλων
δώσω· τὸ γὰρ σῶμ’ οὐκ ἀπιστήσω χθονί,
οὗτος δὲ δώσει τὴν δίκην θανὼν ἐμοί.

Εὐρυσθεύς

Κτεῖν’, οὐ παραιτοῦμαί σε· τήνδε δὲ πτόλιν,
ἐπεί μ’ ἀφῆκε καὶ κατῃδέσθη κτανεῖν,
χρησμῷ παλαιῷ Λοξίου δωρήσομαι,
ὃς ὠφελήσει μείζον’ ἢ δοκεῖ χρόνῳ.
Θανόντα γάρ με θάψεθ’ οὗ τὸ μόρσιμον,
δίας πάροιθε παρθένου Παλληνίδος·
καὶ σοὶ μὲν εὔνους καὶ πόλει σωτήριος
μέτοικος αἰεὶ κείσομαι κατὰ χθονός,
τοῖς τῶνδε δ’ ἐκγόνοισι πολεμιώτατος,
ὅταν μόλωσι δεῦρο σὺν πολλῇ χερὶ
χάριν προδόντες τήνδε. Τοιούτων ξένων
προύστητε. Πῶς οὖν ταῦτ’ ἐγὼ πεπυσμένος
δεῦρ’ ἦλθον, ἀλλ’ οὐ χρησμὸν ἡζόμην θεοῦ;
Ἥραν νομίζων θεσφάτων κρείσσω πολὺ
κοὐκ ἂν προδοῦναί μ’. Ἀλλὰ μήτε μοι χοὰς
μήθ’ αἷμ’ ἐάσητ’ εἰς ἐμὸν στάξαι τάφον.
Κακὸν γὰρ αὐτοῖς νόστον ἀντὶ τῶνδ’ ἐγὼ
δώσω· διπλοῦν δὲ κέρδος ἕξετ’ ἐξ ἐμοῦ·
ὑμᾶς τ’ ὀνήσω τούσδε τε βλάψω θανών.

Ἀλκμήνη

Τί δῆτα μέλλετ’, εἰ πόλει σωτηρίαν
κατεργάσασθαι τοῖσί τ’ ἐξ ἡμῶν χρεών
κτείνειν τὸν ἄνδρα τόνδ’, ἀκούοντες τάδε;
Δείκνυσι γὰρ κέλευθον ἀσφαλεστάτην·
ἐχθρὸς μὲν ἀνήρ, ὠφελεῖ δὲ κατθανών.
Κομίζετ’ αὐτόν, δμῶες, ἔνθα χρὴ κυσὶν

δοῦναι κτανόντας· μὴ γὰρ ἐλπίσῃς ὅπως
αὖθις πατρῴας ζῶν ἔμ’ ἐκβαλεῖς χθονός.

Χορός

Ταῦτα δοκεῖ μοι. στείχετ’, ὀπαδοί.
τὰ γὰρ ἐξ ἡμῶν
[1055] καθαρῶς ἔσται βασιλεῦσιν.

HIPPOLYTUS

Ἀφροδίτη

Πολλὴ μὲν ἐν βροτοῖσι κοὐκ ἀνώνυμος
θεὰ κέκλημαι Κύπρις οὐρανοῦ τ' ἔσω·
ὅσοι τε Πόντου τερμόνων τ' Ἀτλαντικῶν
ναίουσιν εἴσω, φῶς ὁρῶντες ἡλίου,
τοὺς μὲν σέβοντας τἀμὰ πρεσβεύω κράτη,
σφάλλω δ' ὅσοι φρονοῦσιν εἰς ἡμᾶς μέγα.
Ἔνεστι γὰρ δὴ κἀν θεῶν γένει τόδε·
τιμώμενοι χαίρουσιν ἀνθρώπων ὕπο.
Δείξω δὲ μύθων τῶνδ' ἀλήθειαν τάχα·
ὁ γάρ με Θησέως παῖς, Ἀμαζόνος τόκος,
Ἱππόλυτος, ἁγνοῦ Πιτθέως παιδεύματα,
μόνος πολιτῶν τῆσδε γῆς Τροζηνίας
λέγει κακίστην δαιμόνων πεφυκέναι·
ἀναίνεται δὲ λέκτρα κοὐ ψαύει γάμων,
Φοίβου δ' ἀδελφὴν Ἄρτεμιν, Διὸς κόρην,
τιμᾷ, μεγίστην δαιμόνων ἡγούμενος,
χλωρὰν δ' ἀν' ὕλην παρθένῳ ξυνὼν ἀεὶ
κυσὶν ταχείαις θῆρας ἐξαιρεῖ χθονός,
μείζω βροτείας προσπεσὼν ὁμιλίας.
Τούτοισι μέν νυν οὐ φθονῶ· τί γάρ με δεῖ;
Ἃ δ' εἰς ἔμ' ἡμάρτηκε τιμωρήσομαι
Ἱππόλυτον ἐν τῇδ' ἡμέρᾳ· τὰ πολλὰ δὲ
πάλαι προκόψασ', οὐ πόνου πολλοῦ με δεῖ.
Ἐλθόντα γάρ νιν Πιτθέως ποτ' ἐκ δόμων
σεμνῶν ἐς ὄψιν καὶ τέλη μυστηρίων
Πανδίονος γῆν πατρὸς εὐγενὴς δάμαρ
ἰδοῦσα Φαίδρα καρδίαν κατέσχετο
ἔρωτι δεινῷ τοῖς ἐμοῖς βουλεύμασιν.
Καὶ πρὶν μὲν ἐλθεῖν τήνδε γῆν Τροζηνίαν,
πέτραν παρ' αὐτὴν Παλλάδος, κατόψιον
γῆς τῆσδε ναὸν Κύπριδος ἐγκαθίσατο,
ἐρῶσ' ἔρωτ' ἔκδημον, Ἱππολύτῳ δ' ἔπι

τὸ λοιπὸν ὀνομάσουσιν ἱδρῦσθαι θεάν.
Ἐπεὶ δὲ Θησεὺς Κεκροπίαν λείπει χθόνα
μίασμα φεύγων αἵματος Παλλαντιδῶν
καὶ τήνδε σὺν δάμαρτι ναυστολεῖ χθόνα,
ἐνιαυσίαν ἔκδημον αἰνέσας φυγήν,
ἐνταῦθα δὴ στένουσα κἀκπεπληγμένη
κέντροις ἔρωτος ἡ τάλαιν᾽ ἀπόλλυται
σιγῇ, ξύνοιδε δ᾽ οὔτις οἰκετῶν νόσον.
Ἀλλ᾽ οὔτι ταύτῃ τόνδ᾽ ἔρωτα χρὴ πεσεῖν,
δείξω δὲ Θησεῖ πρᾶγμα κἀκφανήσεται.
Καὶ τὸν μὲν ἡμῖν πολέμιον νεανίαν
κτενεῖ πατὴρ ἀραῖσιν ἃς ὁ πόντιος
ἄναξ Ποσειδῶν ὤπασεν Θησεῖ γέρας,
μηδὲν μάταιον ἐς τρὶς εὔξασθαι θεῷ.
Ἡ δ᾽ εὐκλεὴς μὲν ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως ἀπόλλυται
Φαίδρα· τὸ γὰρ τῆσδ᾽ οὐ προτιμήσω κακὸν
τὸ μὴ οὐ παρασχεῖν τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἐμοὶ
δίκην τοσαύτην ὥστ᾽ ἐμοὶ καλῶς ἔχειν.
Ἀλλ᾽ εἰσορῶ γὰρ τόνδε παῖδα Θησέως
στείχοντα, θήρας μόχθον ἐκλελοιπότα,
Ἱππόλυτον, ἔξω τῶνδε βήσομαι τόπων.
Πολὺς δ᾽ ἅμ᾽ αὐτῷ προσπόλων ὀπισθόπους
κῶμος λέλακεν, Ἄρτεμιν τιμῶν θεὰν
ὕμνοισιν· οὐ γὰρ οἶδ᾽ ἀνεῳγμένας πύλας
Ἅιδου, φάος δὲ λοίσθιον βλέπων τόδε.

Ἱππόλυτος

Ἕπεσθ᾽ ἄδοντες ἕπεσθε
τὰν Διὸς οὐρανίαν
Ἄρτεμιν, ᾗ μελόμεσθα.
Ἱππόλυτος καὶ θεράποντες
πότνια πότνια σεμνοτάτα,
Ζηνὸς γένεθλον,
χαῖρε, χαῖρέ μοι, ὦ κόρα
Λατοῦς Ἄρτεμι καὶ Διός,
καλλίστα πολὺ παρθένων,

ἃ μέγαν κατ᾽ οὐρανὸν
ναίεις εὐπατέρειαν αὐ-
λάν, Ζηνὸς πολύχρυσον οἶκον.
[70] Χαῖρέ μοι, ὦ καλά, καλ-
λίστα τῶν κατ᾽ Ὄλυμπον
παρθένων, Ἄρτεμι.

Ἱππόλυτος

[73] Σοὶ τόνδε πλεκτὸν στέφανον ἐξ ἀκηράτου
λειμῶνος, ὦ δέσποινα, κοσμήσας φέρω,
[75] ἔνθ᾽ οὔτε ποιμὴν ἀξιοῖ φέρβειν βοτὰ
οὔτ᾽ ἦλθέ πω σίδηρος, ἀλλ᾽ ἀκήρατον
μέλισσα λειμῶν᾽ ἠρινὴ διέρχεται,
Αἰδὼς δὲ ποταμίαισι κηπεύει δρόσοις,
ὅσοις διδακτὸν μηδὲν ἀλλ᾽ ἐν τῇ φύσει
[80] τὸ σωφρονεῖν εἴληχεν ἐς τὰ πάντ᾽ ἀεί,
τούτοις δρέπεσθαι, τοῖς κακοῖσι δ᾽ οὐ θέμις.
Ἀλλ᾽, ὦ φίλη δέσποινα, χρυσέας κόμης
ἀνάδημα δέξαι χειρὸς εὐσεβοῦς ἄπο.
Μόνῳ γάρ ἐστι τοῦτ᾽ ἐμοὶ γέρας βροτῶν·
[85] σοὶ καὶ ξύνειμι καὶ λόγοις ἀμείβομαι,
κλύων μὲν αὐδῆς, ὄμμα δ᾽ οὐχ ὁρῶν τὸ σόν.
Τέλος δὲ κάμψαιμ᾽ ὥσπερ ἠρξάμην βίου.

Θεράπων

[88] Ἄναξ θεοὺς γὰρ δεσπότας καλεῖν χρεών
ἆρ᾽ ἄν τί μου δέξαιο βουλεύσαντος εὖ;

Ἱππόλυτος

[90] Καὶ κάρτα γ᾽· ἦ γὰρ οὐ σοφοὶ φαινοίμεθ᾽ ἄν.

Θεράπων

Οἶσθ᾽ οὖν βροτοῖσιν ὃς καθέστηκεν νόμος;

Ἱππόλυτος

Οὐκ οἶδα· τοῦ δὲ καί μ’ ἀνιστορεῖς πέρι;

Θεράπων

Μισεῖν τὸ σεμνὸν καὶ τὸ μὴ πᾶσιν φίλον.

Ἱππόλυτος

Ὀρθῶς γε· τίς δ’ οὐ σεμνὸς ἀχθεινὸς βροτῶν;

Θεράπων

[95] Ἐν δ’ εὐπροσηγόροισίν ἐστί τις χάρις;

Ἱππόλυτος

Πλείστη γε, καὶ κέρδος γε σὺν μόχθῳ βραχεῖ.

Θεράπων

Ἦ κἀν θεοῖσι ταὐτὸν ἐλπίζεις τόδε;

Ἱππόλυτος

Εἴπερ γε θνητοὶ θεῶν νόμοισι χρώμεθα.

Θεράπων

Πῶς οὖν σὺ σεμνὴν δαίμον’ οὐ προσεννέπεις;

Ἱππόλυτος

[100] Τίν’; Εὐλαβοῦ δὲ μή τί σου σφαλῇ στόμα.

Θεράπων

Τήνδ’, ἣ πύλαισι σαῖς ἐφέστηκεν πέλας.

Ἱππόλυτος

Πρόσωθεν αὐτὴν ἁγνὸς ὢν ἀσπάζομαι.

Θεράπων

Σεμνή γε μέντοι κἀπίσημος ἐν βροτοῖς.

Ἱππόλυτος

[106] Οὐδείς μ’ ἀρέσκει νυκτὶ θαυμαστὸς θεῶν.

Θεράπων

Τιμαῖσιν, ὦ παῖ, δαιμόνων χρῆσθαι χρεών.

Ἱππόλυτος

[104] Ἄλλοισιν ἄλλος θεῶν τε κἀνθρώπων μέλει.

Θεράπων

[105] Εὐδαιμονοίης νοῦν ἔχων ὅσον σε δεῖ.

Ἱππόλυτος

[108] Χωρεῖτ’, ὀπαδοί, καὶ παρελθόντες δόμους
σίτων μέλεσθε· τερπνὸν ἐκ κυναγίας
[110] τράπεζα πλήρης· καὶ καταψήχειν χρεὼν
ἵππους, ὅπως ἂν ἅρμασιν ζεύξας ὕπο
βορᾶς κορεσθεὶς γυμνάσω τὰ πρόσφορα.
Τὴν σὴν δὲ Κύπριν πόλλ’ ἐγὼ χαίρειν λέγω.

Θεράπων

Ἡμεῖς δέ, τοὺς νέους γὰρ οὐ μιμητέον
[115] φρονοῦντας οὕτως, ὡς πρέπει δούλοις λέγειν
προσευξόμεσθα τοῖσι σοῖς ἀγάλμασιν,
δέσποινα Κύπρι. Χρὴ δὲ συγγνώμην ἔχειν·

εἴ τίς σ᾽ ὑφ᾽ ἥβης σπλάγχνον ἔντονον φέρων
μάταια βάζει, μὴ δόκει τούτων κλύειν.
Σοφωτέρους γὰρ χρὴ βροτῶν εἶναι θεούς.

Χορός

Ὠκεανοῦ τις ὕδωρ στάζουσα πέτρα λέγεται,
βαπτὰν κάλπισι παγὰν ῥυτὰν προιεῖσα κρημνῶν·
τόθι μοί τις ἦν φίλα
πορφύρεα φάρεα
ποταμίᾳ δρόσῳ
τέγγουσα, θερμᾶς δ᾽ ἐπὶ νῶτα πέτρας
εὐαλίου κατέβαλλ᾽· ὅθεν μοι
πρώτα φάτις ἦλθε δεσποίνας,
τειρομέναν νοσερᾷ κοίτᾳ δέμας ἐντὸς ἔχειν
οἴκων, λεπτὰ δὲ φάρη ξανθὰν κεφαλὰν σκιάζειν·
τριτάταν δέ νιν κλύω
τάνδ᾽ ἀβρωσίᾳ
στόματος ἀμέραν
Δάματρος ἀκτᾶς δέμας ἁγνὸν ἴσχειν,
κρυπτῷ πένθει θανάτου θέλουσαν
κέλσαι ποτὶ τέρμα δύστανον.

Σύ γὰρ ἔνθεος, ὦ κούρα,
εἴτ᾽ ἐκ Πανὸς εἴθ᾽ Ἑκάτας
ἢ σεμνῶν Κορυβάντων φοιτᾷς ἢ ματρὸς ὀρείας;
Σὺ δ᾽ ἀμφὶ τὰν πολύθηρον Δίκτυνναν ἀμπλακίαις
ἀνίερος ἀθύτων πελάνων τρύχῃ;
Φοιτᾷ γὰρ καὶ διὰ λίμνας χέρσον θ᾽ ὑπὲρ πελάγους
δίναις ἐν νοτίαις ἅλμας.

Ἦ πόσιν, τὸν Ἐρεχθειδᾶν
ἀρχαγόν, τὸν εὐπατρίδαν,

ποιμαίνει τις ἐν οἴκοις κρυ-
πτὰ κοίτα λεχέων σῶν;
[155] Ἦ ναυβάτας τις ἔπλευ-
σεν Κρήτας ἔξορμος ἀνὴρ
λιμένα τὸν εὐξεινότατον ναύταις
φήμαν πέμπων βασιλείᾳ,
λύπᾳ δ' ὑπὲρ παθέων
[160] εὐναία δέδεται ψυχά;

Φιλεῖ δὲ τᾷ δυστρόπῳ γυναικῶν
ἁρμονίᾳ κακὰ δύστανος ἀμηχανία συνοικεῖν
ὠδίνων τε καὶ ἀφροσύνας.
[165] Δι' ἐμᾶς ᾖξέν ποτε νηδύος ἄδ'
αὔρα· τὰν δ' εὔλοχον οὐρανίαν
τόξων μεδέουσαν ἀύτευν
Ἄρτεμιν, καί μοι πολυζήλωτος αἰεὶ
σὺν θεοῖσι φοιτᾷ.

[170] Ἀλλ' ἥδε τροφὸς γεραιὰ πρὸ θυρῶν
τήνδε κομίζουσ' ἔξω μελάθρων.
Στυγνὸν δ' ὀφρύων νέφος αὐξάνεται.
Τί ποτ' ἔστι μαθεῖν ἔραται ψυχή,
τί δεδήληται
[175] δέμας ἀλλόχροον βασιλείας.

Τροφός

[176] Ὦ κακὰ θνητῶν στυγεραί τε νόσοι.
Τί σ' ἐγὼ δράσω; Τί δὲ μὴ δράσω;
Τόδε σοι φέγγος, λαμπρὸς ὅδ' αἰθήρ,
ἔξω δὲ δόμων ἤδη νοσερᾶς
[180] δέμνια κοίτης.
Δεῦρο γὰρ ἐλθεῖν πᾶν ἔπος ἦν σοι,
τάχα δ' ἐς θαλάμους σπεύσεις τὸ πάλιν.
Ταχὺ γὰρ σφάλλῃ κοὐδενὶ χαίρεις,
οὐδέ σ' ἀρέσκει τὸ παρόν, τὸ δ' ἀπὸν
[185] φίλτερον ἡγῇ.
Κρεῖσσον δὲ νοσεῖν ἢ θεραπεύειν·

τὸ μέν ἐστιν ἁπλοῦν, τῷ δὲ συνάπτει
λύπη τε φρενῶν χερσίν τε πόνος.
Πᾶς δ' ὀδυνηρὸς βίος ἀνθρώπων
κοὐκ ἔστι πόνων ἀνάπαυσις.
Ἀλλ' ὅ τι τοῦ ζῆν φίλτερον ἄλλο
σκότος ἀμπίσχων κρύπτει νεφέλαις.
Δυσέρωτες δὴ φαινόμεθ' ὄντες
τοῦδ' ὅ τι τοῦτο στίλβει κατὰ γῆν
δι' ἀπειροσύνην ἄλλου βιότου
κοὐκ ἀπόδειξιν τῶν ὑπὸ γαίας,
μύθοις δ' ἄλλως φερόμεσθα.

Φαίδρα

Αἴρετέ μου δέμας, ὀρθοῦτε κάρα·
λέλυμαι μελέων σύνδεσμα φίλων.
Λάβετ' εὐπήχεις χεῖρας, πρόπολοι.
Βαρύ μοι κεφαλῆς ἐπίκρανον ἔχειν·
ἄφελ', ἀμπέτασον βόστρυχον ὤμοις.

Τροφός

Θάρσει, τέκνον, καὶ μὴ χαλεπῶς
μετάβαλλε δέμας·
ῥᾷον δὲ νόσον μετά θ' ἡσυχίας
καὶ γενναίου λήματος οἴσεις.
Μοχθεῖν δὲ βροτοῖσιν ἀνάγκη.

Φαίδρα

Αἰαῖ·
πῶς ἂν δροσερᾶς ἀπὸ κρηνῖδος
καθαρῶν ὑδάτων πῶμ' ἀρυσαίμαν,
ὑπό τ' αἰγείροις ἔν τε κομήτῃ
λειμῶνι κλιθεῖσ' ἀναπαυσαίμαν;

Τροφός

Ὦ παῖ, τί θροεῖς;
Οὐ μὴ παρ᾽ ὄχλῳ τάδε γηρύσῃ
μανίας ἔποχον ῥίπτουσα λόγον;

Φαίδρα

Πέμπετέ μ᾽ εἰς ὄρος· εἶμι πρὸς ὕλαν
καὶ παρὰ πεύκας, ἵνα θηροφόνοι
στείβουσι κύνες
βαλιαῖς ἐλάφοις ἐγχριμπτόμεναι.
Πρὸς θεῶν, ἔραμαι κυσὶ θωύξαι
καὶ παρὰ χαίταν ξανθὰν ῥῖψαι
Θεσσαλὸν ὅρπακ᾽, ἐπίλογχον ἔχουσ᾽
ἐν χειρὶ βέλος.

Τροφός

Τί ποτ᾽, ὦ τέκνον, τάδε κηραίνεις;
Τί κυνηγεσίων καί σοι μελέτη;
Τί δὲ κρηναίων νασμῶν ἔρασαι;
Πάρα γὰρ δροσερὰ πύργοις συνεχὴς
κλειτύς, ὅθεν σοι πῶμα γένοιτ᾽ ἄν.

Φαίδρα

Δέσποιν᾽ ἁλίας Ἄρτεμι Λίμνας
καὶ γυμνασίων τῶν ἱπποκρότων,
εἴθε γενοίμαν ἐν σοῖς δαπέδοις,
πώλους Ἐνέτας δαμαλιζομένα.

Τροφός

Τί τόδ᾽ αὖ παράφρων ἔρριψας ἔπος;
Νῦν δὴ μὲν ὄρος βᾶσ᾽ ἐπὶ θήρας
πόθον ἐστέλλου, νῦν δ᾽ αὖ ψαμάθοις
ἐπ᾽ ἀκυμάντοις πώλων ἔρασαι.
Τάδε μαντείας ἄξια πολλῆς,

ὅστις σε θεῶν ἀνασειράζει
καὶ παρακόπτει φρένας, ὦ παῖ.

Φαίδρα

Δύστηνος ἐγώ, τί ποτ᾽ εἰργασάμην;
Ποῖ παρεπλάγχθην γνώμης ἀγαθῆς;
Ἐμάνην, ἔπεσον δαίμονος ἄτῃ.
Φεῦ φεῦ, τλήμων.
Μαῖα, πάλιν μου κρύψον κεφαλήν,
αἰδούμεθα γὰρ τὰ λελεγμένα μοι.
Κρύπτε· κατ᾽ ὄσσων δάκρυ μοι βαίνει,
καὶ ἐπ᾽ αἰσχύνην ὄμμα τέτραπται.
Τὸ γὰρ ὀρθοῦσθαι γνώμην ὀδυνᾷ,
τὸ δὲ μαινόμενον κακόν· ἀλλὰ κρατεῖ
μὴ γιγνώσκοντ᾽ ἀπολέσθαι.

Τροφός

Κρύπτω· τὸ δ᾽ ἐμὸν πότε δὴ θάνατος
σῶμα καλύψει;
Πολλὰ διδάσκει μ᾽ ὁ πολὺς βίοτος·
χρῆν γὰρ μετρίας εἰς ἀλλήλους
φιλίας θνητοὺς ἀνακίρνασθαι
καὶ μὴ πρὸς ἄκρον μυελὸν ψυχῆς,
εὔλυτα δ᾽ εἶναι στέργηθρα φρενῶν
ἀπό τ᾽ ὤσασθαι καὶ ξυντεῖναι.
Τὸ δ᾽ ὑπὲρ δισσῶν μίαν ὠδίνειν
ψυχὴν χαλεπὸν βάρος, ὡς κἀγὼ
τῆσδ᾽ ὑπεραλγῶ.
Βιότου δ᾽ ἀτρεκεῖς ἐπιτηδεύσεις
φασὶ σφάλλειν πλέον ἢ τέρπειν
τῇ θ᾽ ὑγιείᾳ μᾶλλον πολεμεῖν·
οὕτω τὸ λίαν ἧσσον ἐπαινῶ
τοῦ μηδὲν ἄγαν·
καὶ ξυμφήσουσι σοφοί μοι.

Χορός

Γύναι γεραιά, βασιλίδος πιστὴ τροφέ,
Φαίδρας ὁρῶμεν τάσδε δυστήνους τύχας.
Ἄσημα δ᾽ ἡμῖν ἥτις ἐστὶν ἡ νόσος·
[270] σοῦ δ᾽ ἂν πυθέσθαι καὶ κλύειν βουλοίμεθ᾽ ἄν.

Τροφός

Ἔληξ᾽ ἐλέγχουσ᾽· οὐ γὰρ ἐννέπειν θέλει.

Χορός

[272] Οὐδ᾽ ἥτις ἀρχὴ τῶνδε πημάτων ἔφυ;

Τροφός

Ἐς ταὐτὸν ἥκεις· πάντα γὰρ σιγᾷ τάδε.

Χορός

Ὡς ἀσθενεῖ τε καὶ κατέξανται δέμας.

Τροφός

Π275] πῶς δ᾽ οὔ, τριταίαν γ᾽ οὖσ᾽ ἄσιτος ἡμέραν;

Χορός

Πότερον ὑπ᾽ ἄτης ἢ θανεῖν πειρωμένη;

Τροφός

Θανεῖν; Ἀσιτεῖ γ᾽ εἰς ἀπόστασιν βίου.

Χορός

Θαυμαστὸν εἶπας, εἰ τάδ᾽ ἐξαρκεῖ πόσει.

Τροφός

Κρύπτει γὰρ ἥδε πῆμα κοὐ φησιν νοσεῖν.

Χορός

[280] Ὁ δ᾽ ἐς πρόσωπον οὐ τεκμαίρεται βλέπων;

Τροφός

Ἔκδημος ὢν γὰρ τῆσδε τυγχάνει χθονός.

Χορός

Σὺ δ᾽ οὐκ ἀνάγκην προσφέρεις, πειρωμένη
νόσον πυθέσθαι τῆσδε καὶ πλάνον φρενῶν;

Τροφός

[284] Ἐς πάντ᾽ ἀφῖγμαι κοὐδὲν εἴργασμαι πλέον.
[285] Οὐ μὴν ἀνήσω γ᾽ οὐδὲ νῦν προθυμίας,
ὡς ἂν παροῦσα καὶ σύ μοι ξυμμαρτυρῇς
οἷα πέφυκα δυστυχοῦσι δεσπόταις.
Ἄγ᾽, ὦ φίλη παῖ, τῶν πάροιθε μὲν λόγων
λαθώμεθ᾽ ἄμφω, καὶ σύ θ᾽ ἡδίων γενοῦ
[290] στυγνὴν ὀφρὺν λύσασα καὶ γνώμης ὀδόν,
ἐγώ θ᾽ ὅπῃ σοι μὴ καλῶς τόθ᾽ εἱπόμην
μεθεῖσ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἄλλον εἶμι βελτίω λόγον.
Κεἰ μὲν νοσεῖς τι τῶν ἀπορρήτων κακῶν,
γυναῖκες αἵδε συγκαθιστάναι νόσον·
[295] εἰ δ᾽ ἔκφορός σοι συμφορὰ πρὸς ἄρσενας,
λέγ᾽, ὡς ἰατροῖς πρᾶγμα μηνυθῇ τόδε.
Εἶέν· τί σιγᾷς; Οὐκ ἐχρῆν σιγᾶν, τέκνον,
ἀλλ᾽ ἤ μ᾽ ἐλέγχειν, εἴ τι μὴ καλῶς λέγω,
ἢ τοῖσιν εὖ λεχθεῖσι συγχωρεῖν λόγοις.
[300] Φθέγξαι τι, δεῦρ᾽ ἄθρησον. Ὦ τάλαιν᾽ ἐγώ.
Γυναῖκες, ἄλλως τούσδε μοχθοῦμεν πόνους,
ἴσον δ᾽ ἄπεσμεν τῷ πρίν· οὔτε γὰρ τότε
λόγοις ἐτέγγεθ᾽ ἥδε νῦν τ᾽ οὐ πείθεται.
Ἀλλ᾽ ἴσθι μέντοι πρὸς τάδ᾽ αὐθαδεστέρα

γίγνου θαλάσσης εἰ θανῇ, προδοῦσα σοὺς
παῖδας, πατρῴων μὴ μεθέξοντας δόμων,
μὰ τὴν ἄνασσαν ἱππίαν Ἀμαζόνα,
ἣ σοῖς τέκνοισι δεσπότην ἐγείνατο
νόθον φρονοῦντα γνήσι', οἶσθά νιν καλῶς,
Ἱππόλυτον . . .

Φαίδρα

Οἴμοι.

Τροφός

Θιγγάνει σέθεν τόδε;

Φαίδρα

Ἀπώλεσάς με, μαῖα, καί σε πρὸς θεῶν
τοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς αὖθις λίσσομαι σιγᾶν πέρι.

Τροφός

Ὁρᾷς; Φρονεῖς μὲν εὖ, φρονοῦσα δ' οὐ θέλεις
παῖδάς τ' ὀνῆσαι καὶ σὸν ἐκσῶσαι βίον.

Φαίδρα

Φιλῶ τέκν'· ἄλλῃ δ' ἐν τύχῃ χειμάζομαι.

Τροφός

Ἁγνὰς μέν, ὦ παῖ, χεῖρας αἵματος φορεῖς;

Φαίδρα

Χεῖρες μὲν ἁγναί, φρὴν δ' ἔχει μίασμά τι.

Τροφός

Μῶν ἐξ ἐπακτοῦ πημονῆς ἐχθρῶν τινος;

Φαίδρα

Φίλος μ’ ἀπόλλυσ’ οὐχ ἑκοῦσαν οὐχ ἑκών.

Τροφός

[320] Θησεύς τιν’ ἡμάρτηκεν ἐς σ’ ἁμαρτίαν;

Φαίδρα

Μὴ δρῶσ’ ἔγωγ’ ἐκεῖνον ὀφθείην κακῶς.

Τροφός

Τί γὰρ τὸ δεινὸν τοῦθ’ ὅ σ’ ἐξαίρει θανεῖν;

Φαίδρα

Ἔα μ’ ἁμαρτεῖν· οὐ γὰρ ἐς σ’ ἁμαρτάνω.

Τροφός

Οὐ δῆθ’ ἑκοῦσά γ’, ἐν δὲ σοὶ λελείψομαι.

Φαίδρα

[325] Τί δρᾷς; Βιάζῃ χειρὸς ἐξαρτωμένη;

Τροφός

Καὶ σῶν γε γονάτων, κοὐ μεθήσομαί ποτε.

Φαίδρα

Κάκ’ ᾦ τάλαινά σοι τάδ’, εἰ πεύσῃ, κακά.

Τροφός

Μεῖζον γὰρ ἢ σου μὴ τυχεῖν τί μοι κακόν;

Φαίδρα

Ὀλῇ. τὸ μέντοι πρᾶγμ᾽ ἐμοὶ τιμὴν φέρει.

Τροφός

Κἄπειτα κρύπτεις, χρήσθ᾽ ἱκνουμένης ἐμοῦ;

Φαίδρα

Ἐκ τῶν γὰρ αἰσχρῶν ἐσθλὰ μηχανώμεθα.

Τροφός

Οὐκοῦν λέγουσα τιμιωτέρα φανῇ;

Φαίδρα

Ἄπελθε πρὸς θεῶν δεξιάν τ᾽ ἐμὴν μέθες.

Τροφός

Οὐ δῆτ᾽, ἐπεί μοι δῶρον οὐ δίδως ὃ χρῆν.

Φαίδρα

Δώσω· σέβας γὰρ χειρὸς αἰδοῦμαι τὸ σόν.

Τροφός

Σιγῷμ᾽ ἂν ἤδη· σὸς γὰρ οὑντεῦθεν λόγος.

Φαίδρα

Ὦ τλῆμον, οἷον, μῆτερ, ἠράσθης ἔρον.

Τροφός

Ὃν ἔσχε ταύρου, τέκνον, ἢ τί φῂς τόδε;

Φαίδρα

Σύ τ’, ὦ τάλαιν’ ὄμαιμε, Διονύσου δάμαρ.

Τροφός

[340] Τέκνον, τί πάσχεις; Συγγόνους κακορροθεῖς;

Φαίδρα

Τρίτη δ’ ἐγὼ δύστηνος ὡς ἀπόλλυμαι.

Τροφός

Ἔκ τοι πέπληγμαι· ποῖ προβήσεται λόγος;

Φαίδρα

Ἐκεῖθεν ἡμεῖς, οὐ νεωστί, δυστυχεῖς.

Τροφός

Οὐδέν τι μᾶλλον οἶδ’ ἃ βούλομαι κλύειν.

Φαίδρα

Φεῦ·
[345] πῶς ἂν σύ μοι λέξειας ἀμὲ χρὴ λέγειν;

Τροφός

Οὐ μάντις εἰμὶ τἀφανῆ γνῶναι σαφῶς.

Φαίδρα

Τί τοῦθ’ ὃ δὴ λέγουσιν ἀνθρώπους ἐρᾶν;

Τροφός

Ἥδιστον, ὦ παῖ, ταὐτὸν ἀλγεινόν θ’ ἅμα.

Φαίδρα

Ἡμεῖς ἂν εἶμεν θατέρῳ κεχρημένοι.

Τροφός

Τί φῄς; Ἐρᾷς, ὦ τέκνον; Ἀνθρώπων τίνος;

Φαίδρα

Ὅστις ποθ’ οὗτός ἐσθ’, ὁ τῆς Ἀμαζόνος. . .

Τροφός

Ἱππόλυτον αὐδᾷς;

Φαίδρα

Σοῦ τάδ’, οὐκ ἐμοῦ κλύεις.

Τροφός

Οἴμοι, τί λέξεις, τέκνον; Ὡς μ’ ἀπώλεσας.
Γυναῖκες, οὐκ ἀνασχέτ’, οὐκ ἀνέξομαι
ζῶσ’· ἐχθρὸν ἦμαρ, ἐχθρὸν εἰσορῶ φάος.
Ῥίψω μεθήσω σῶμ’, ἀπαλλαχθήσομαι
βίου θανοῦσα· χαίρετ’, οὐκέτ’ εἴμ’ ἐγώ.
Οἱ σώφρονες γάρ, οὐχ ἑκόντες ἀλλ’ ὅμως,
κακῶν ἐρῶσι. Κύπρις οὐκ ἄρ’ ἦν θεός,
ἀλλ’ εἴ τι μεῖζον ἄλλο γίγνεται θεοῦ,
ἣ τήνδε κἀμὲ καὶ δόμους ἀπώλεσεν.

Χορός

Ἄιες ὤ, ἔκλυες ὤ,
ἀνήκουστα τᾶς
τυράννου πάθεα μέλεα θρεομένας;

Ὀλοίμαν ἔγωγε πρὶν σᾶν, φίλα,
κατανύσαι φρενῶν. Ἰώ μοι, φεῦ φεῦ·
ὦ τάλαινα τῶνδ’ ἀλγέων·
ὦ πόνοι τρέφοντες βροτούς.
Ὄλωλας, ἐξέφηνας ἐς φάος κακά.
Τίς σε παναμέριος ὅδε χρόνος μένει;
Τελευτάσεταί τι καινὸν δόμοις.
Ἄσημα δ’ οὐκέτ’ ἐστὶν οἷ φθίνει τύχα
Κύπριδος, ὦ τάλαινα παῖ Κρησία.

Φαίδρα

Τροζήνιαι γυναῖκες, αἳ τόδ’ ἔσχατον
οἰκεῖτε χώρας Πελοπίας προνώπιον,
ἤδη ποτ’ ἄλλως νυκτὸς ἐν μακρῷ χρόνῳ
θνητῶν ἐφρόντισ’ ᾗ διέφθαρται βίος.
Καί μοι δοκοῦσιν οὐ κατὰ γνώμης φύσιν
πράσσειν κάκιον· ἔστι γὰρ τό γ’ εὖ φρονεῖν
πολλοῖσιν· ἀλλὰ τῇδ’ ἀθρητέον τόδε·
τὰ χρήστ’ ἐπιστάμεσθα καὶ γιγνώσκομεν,
οὐκ ἐκπονοῦμεν δ’, οἱ μὲν ἀργίας ὕπο,
οἱ δ’ ἡδονὴν προθέντες ἀντὶ τοῦ καλοῦ
ἄλλην τιν’. Εἰσὶ δ’ ἡδοναὶ πολλαὶ βίου,
μακραί τε λέσχαι καὶ σχολή, τερπνὸν κακόν,
αἰδώς τε. Δισσαὶ δ’ εἰσίν, ἡ μὲν οὐ κακή,
ἡ δ’ ἄχθος οἴκων. Εἰ δ’ ὁ καιρὸς ἦν σαφής,
οὐκ ἂν δύ’ ἦστην ταὔτ’ ἔχοντε γράμματα.
Ταῦτ’ οὖν ἐπειδὴ τυγχάνω προγνοῦσ’ ἐγώ,
οὐκ ἔσθ’ ὁποίῳ φαρμάκῳ διαφθερεῖν
ἔμελλον, ὥστε τοὔμπαλιν πεσεῖν φρενῶν.
Λέξω δὲ καί σοι τῆς ἐμῆς γνώμης ὁδόν.
Ἐπεί μ’ ἔρως ἔτρωσεν, ἐσκόπουν ὅπως
κάλλιστ’ ἐνέγκαιμ’ αὐτόν. Ἠρξάμην μὲν οὖν
ἐκ τοῦδε, σιγᾶν τήνδε καὶ κρύπτειν νόσον.
Γλώσσῃ γὰρ οὐδὲν πιστόν, ἣ θυραῖα μὲν
φρονήματ’ ἀνδρῶν νουθετεῖν ἐπίσταται,
αὐτὴ δ’ ὑφ’ αὑτῆς πλεῖστα κέκτηται κακά.

Τὸ δεύτερον δὲ τὴν ἄνοιαν εὖ φέρειν
τῷ σωφρονεῖν νικῶσα προυνοησάμην.
Τρίτον δ', ἐπειδὴ τοισίδ' οὐκ ἐξήνυτον
Κύπριν κρατῆσαι, κατθανεῖν ἔδοξέ μοι,
κράτιστον οὐδεὶς ἀντερεῖ βουλευμάτων.
Ἐμοὶ γὰρ εἴη μήτε λανθάνειν καλὰ
μήτ' αἰσχρὰ δρώσῃ μάρτυρας πολλοὺς ἔχειν.
Τὸ δ' ἔργον ἤδη τὴν νόσον τε δυσκλεᾶ,
γυνή τε πρὸς τοῖσδ' οὖσ' ἐγίγνωσκον καλῶς,
μίσημα πᾶσιν. Ὡς ὅλοιτο παγκάκως
ἥτις πρὸς ἄνδρας ἤρξατ' αἰσχύνειν λέχη
πρώτη θυραίους. Ἐκ δὲ γενναίων δόμων
τόδ' ἦρξε θηλείαισι γίγνεσθαι κακόν·
ὅταν γὰρ αἰσχρὰ τοῖσιν ἐσθλοῖσιν δοκῇ,
ἦ κάρτα δόξει τοῖς κακοῖς γ' εἶναι καλά.
Μισῶ δὲ καὶ τὰς σώφρονας μὲν ἐν λόγοις,
λάθρᾳ δὲ τόλμας οὐ καλὰς κεκτημένας·
αἳ πῶς ποτ', ὦ δέσποινα ποντία Κύπρι,
βλέπουσιν ἐς πρόσωπα τῶν ξυνευνετῶν
οὐδὲ σκότον φρίσσουσι τὸν ξυνεργάτην
τέραμνά τ' οἴκων μή ποτε φθογγὴν ἀφῇ;
Ἡμᾶς γὰρ αὐτὸ τοῦτ' ἀποκτείνει, φίλαι,
ὡς μήποτ' ἄνδρα τὸν ἐμὸν αἰσχύνασ' ἁλῶ,
μὴ παῖδας οὓς ἔτικτον·
ἀλλ' ἐλεύθεροι
παρρησίᾳ θάλλοντες οἰκοῖεν πόλιν
κλεινῶν Ἀθηνῶν, μητρὸς οὕνεκ' εὐκλεεῖς.
Δουλοῖ γὰρ ἄνδρα, κἂν θρασύσπλαγχνός τις ᾖ,
ὅταν ξυνειδῇ μητρὸς ἢ πατρὸς κακά.
Μόνον δὲ τοῦτό φασ' ἀμιλλᾶσθαι βίῳ,
γνώμην δικαίαν κἀγαθήν ὅτῳ παρῇ.
Κακοὺς δὲ θνητῶν ἐξέφην' ὅταν τύχῃ,
προθεὶς κάτοπτρον ὥστε παρθένῳ νέᾳ,
χρόνος·
παρ' οἶσι μήποτ' ὀφθείην ἐγώ.

Χορός

Φεῦ φεῦ, τὸ σῶφρον ὡς ἁπανταχοῦ καλὸν
καὶ δόξαν ἐσθλὴν ἐν βροτοῖς καρπίζεται.

Τροφός

Δέσποιν', ἐμοί τοι συμφορὰ μὲν ἀρτίως
ἡ σὴ παρέσχε δεινὸν ἐξαίφνης φόβον·
νῦν δ' ἐννοοῦμαι φαῦλος οὖσα, κἀν βροτοῖς
αἱ δεύτεραί πως φροντίδες σοφώτεραι.
Οὐ γὰρ περισσὸν οὐδὲν οὐδ' ἔξω λόγου
πέπονθας, ὀργαὶ δ' ἐς σ' ἀπέσκηψαν θεᾶς.
Ἐρᾷς·
τί τοῦτο θαῦμα; Σὺν πολλοῖς βροτῶν.
Κἄπειτ' ἔρωτος οὕνεκα ψυχὴν ὀλεῖς;
Οὔ τἄρα λύει τοῖς ἐρῶσι τῶν πέλας,
ὅσοι τε μέλλουσ', εἰ θανεῖν αὐτοὺς χρεών.
Κύπρις γὰρ οὐ φορητὸν ἢν πολλὴ ῥυῇ,
ἢ τὸν μὲν εἴκονθ' ἡσυχῇ μετέρχεται,
ὃν δ' ἂν περισσὸν καὶ φρονοῦνθ' εὕρῃ μέγα,
τοῦτον λαβοῦσα πῶς δοκεῖς καθύβρισεν.
Φοιτᾷ δ' ἀν' αἰθέρ', ἔστι δ' ἐν θαλασσίῳ
κλύδωνι Κύπρις, πάντα δ' ἐκ ταύτης ἔφυ·
ἥδ' ἐστὶν ἡ σπείρουσα καὶ διδοῦσ' ἔρον,
οὗ πάντες ἐσμὲν οἱ κατὰ χθόν' ἔκγονοι.
Ὅσοι μὲν οὖν γραφάς τε τῶν παλαιτέρων
ἔχουσιν αὐτοί τ' εἰσὶν ἐν μούσαις ἀεὶ
ἴσασι μὲν Ζεὺς ὥς ποτ' ἠράσθη γάμων
Σεμέλης, ἴσασι δ' ὡς ἀνήρπασέν ποτε
ἡ καλλιφεγγὴς Κέφαλον ἐς θεοὺς Ἕως
ἔρωτος οὕνεκ'·
ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐν οὐρανῷ
ναίουσι κοὐ φεύγουσιν ἐκποδὼν θεούς,
στέργουσι δ', οἶμαι, ξυμφορᾷ νικώμενοι.
Σὺ δ' οὐκ ἀνέξῃ; Χρῆν σ' ἐπὶ ῥητοῖς ἄρα
πατέρα φυτεύειν, ἢ 'πὶ δεσπόταις θεοῖς
ἄλλοισιν, εἰ μὴ τούσδε γε στέρξεις νόμους.
Πόσους δοκεῖς δὴ κάρτ' ἔχοντας εὖ φρενῶν

νοσοῦνθ’ ὁρῶντας λέκτρα μὴ δοκεῖν ὁρᾶν;
Πόσους δὲ παισὶ πατέρας ἡμαρτηκόσι
συνεκκομίζειν Κύπριν; Ἐν σοφοῖσι γὰρ
τάδ’ ἐστὶ θνητῶν, λανθάνειν τὰ μὴ καλά.
Οὐδ’ ἐκπονεῖν τοι χρὴ βίον λίαν βροτούς·
οὐδὲ στέγην γὰρ ᾗ κατηρεφεῖς δόμοι
καλῶς ἀκριβώσαις ἄν·
ἐς δὲ τὴν τύχην
πεσοῦσ’ ὅσην σύ, πῶς ἂν ἐκνεῦσαι δοκεῖς;
Ἀλλ’ εἰ τὰ πλείω χρηστὰ τῶν κακῶν ἔχεις,
ἄνθρωπος οὖσα κάρτα γ’ εὖ πράξειας ἄν.
Ἀλλ’, ὦ φίλη παῖ, λῆγε μὲν κακῶν φρενῶν,
λῆξον δ’ ὑβρίζουσ’·
οὐ γὰρ ἄλλο πλὴν ὕβρις
τάδ’ ἐστί, κρείσσω δαιμόνων εἶναι θέλειν,
τόλμα δ’ ἐρῶσα·
θεὸς ἐβουλήθη τάδε.
Νοσοῦσα δ’ εὖ πως τὴν νόσον καταστρέφου.
Εἰσὶν δ’ ἐπῳδαὶ καὶ λόγοι θελκτήριοι·
φανήσεταί τι τῆσδε φάρμακον νόσου.
Ἦ τἄρ’ ἂν ὀψέ γ’ ἄνδρες ἐξεύροιεν ἄν,
εἰ μὴ γυναῖκες μηχανὰς εὑρήσομεν.

Χορός

Φαίδρα, λέγει μὲν ἥδε χρησιμώτερα
πρὸς τὴν παροῦσαν ξυμφοράν, αἰνῶ δὲ σέ.
Ὁ δ’ αἶνος οὗτος δυσχερέστερος λόγων
τῶν τῆσδε καί σοι μᾶλλον ἀλγίων κλύειν.

Φαίδρα

Τοῦτ’ ἔσθ’ ὃ θνητῶν εὖ πόλεις οἰκουμένας
δόμους τ’ ἀπόλλυσ’, οἱ καλοὶ λίαν λόγοι.
Οὐ γάρ τι τοῖσιν ὠσὶ τερπνὰ χρὴ λέγειν,
ἀλλ’ ἐξ ὅτου τις εὐκλεὴς γενήσεται.

Τροφός

[490] Τί σεμνομυθεῖς; Οὐ λόγων εὐσχημόνων
δεῖ σ', ἀλλὰ τἀνδρός. Ὡς τάχος διιστέον,
τὸν εὐθὺν ἐξειπόντας ἀμφὶ σοῦ λόγον.
Εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἦν σοι μὴ 'πὶ συμφοραῖς βίος
τοιαῖσδε, σώφρων δ' οὖσ' ἐτύγχανες γυνή,
[495] οὐκ ἄν ποτ' εὐνῆς οὕνεχ' ἡδονῆς τε σῆς
προῆγον ἄν σε δεῦρο·
νῦν δ' ἀγὼν μέγας
σῶσαι βίον σόν, κοὐκ ἐπίφθονον τόδε.

Φαίδρα

Ὦ δεινὰ λέξασ', οὐχὶ συγκλήσεις στόμα
καὶ μὴ μεθήσεις αὖθις αἰσχίστους λόγους;

Τροφός

[500] Αἴσχρ', ἀλλ' ἀμείνω τῶν καλῶν τάδ' ἐστί σοι·

κρεῖσσον δὲ τοὔργον, εἴπερ ἐκσώσει γέ σε,
ἢ τοὔνομ', ᾧ σὺ κατθανῇ γαυρουμένη.

Φαίδρα

Ἆ μή σε πρὸς θεῶν εὖ λέγεις γάρ, αἰσχρὰ δέ
πέρα προβῇς τῶνδ'·
ὡς ὑπείργασμαι μὲν εὖ
[505] ψυχὴν ἔρωτι, τἀσχρὰ δ' ἢν λέγῃς καλῶς,
ἐς τοῦθ' ὃ φεύγω νῦν ἀναλωθήσομαι.

Τροφός

[507] Εἴ τοι δοκεῖ σοι χρῆν μὲν οὔ σ' ἁμαρτάνειν·
εἰ δ' οὖν, πιθοῦ μοι·
δευτέρα γὰρ ἡ χάρις,
ἔστιν κατ' οἴκους φίλτρα μοι θελκτήρια
[510] ἔρωτος, ἦλθε δ' ἄρτι μοι γνώμης ἔσω,
ἃ σ' οὔτ' ἐπ' αἰσχροῖς οὔτ' ἐπὶ βλάβῃ φρενῶν

παύσει νόσου τῆσδ’, ἢν σὺ μὴ γένῃ κακή.
Δεῖ δ’ ἐξ ἐκείνου δή τι τοῦ ποθουμένου
σημεῖον, ἢ πλόκον τιν’ ἢ πέπλων ἄπο,
[515] λαβεῖν, συνάψαι τ’ ἐκ δυοῖν μίαν χάριν.

Φαίδρα

Πότερα δὲ χριστὸν ἢ ποτὸν τὸ φάρμακον;

Τροφός

Οὐκ οἶδ’·
ὀνάσθαι, μὴ μαθεῖν, βούλου, τέκνον.

Φαίδρα

Δέδοιχ’ ὅπως μοι μὴ λίαν φανῇς σοφή.

Τροφός

Πάντ’ ἂν φοβηθεῖσ’ ἴσθι·
δειμαίνεις δὲ τί;

Φαίδρα

[520] Μή μοί τι Θησέως τῶνδε μηνύσῃς τόκῳ.

Τροφός

Ἔασον, ὦ παῖ·
ταῦτ’ ἐγὼ θήσω καλῶς.
Μόνον σύ μοι, δέσποινα ποντία Κύπρι,
συνεργὸς εἴης. τἄλλα δ’ οἷ’ ἐγὼ φρονῶ
τοῖς ἔνδον ἡμῖν ἀρκέσει λέξαι φίλοις.

Χορός

[525] Ἔρως Ἔρως, ὁ κατ’ ὀμμάτων
στάζων πόθον, εἰσάγων γλυκεῖαν

ψυχᾷ χάριν οὓς ἐπιστρατεύσῃ,
μή μοί ποτε σὺν κακῷ φανείης
μηδ' ἄρρυθμος ἔλθοις.
Οὔτε γὰρ πυρὸς οὔτ' ἄστρων ὑπέρτερον βέλος,
οἷον τὸ τᾶς Ἀφροδίτας ἵησιν ἐκ χερῶν
Ἔρως ὁ Διὸς παῖς.
Ἄλλως ἄλλως παρά τ' Ἀλφεῷ
Φοίβου τ' ἐπὶ Πυθίοις τεράμνοις
βούταν φόνον Ἑλλὰς <αἰ'> ἀέξει·
Ἔρωτα δέ, τὸν τύραννον ἀνδρῶν,
τὸν τᾶς Ἀφροδίτας
φιλτάτων θαλάμων κληδοῦχον, οὐ σεβίζομεν,
πέρθοντα καὶ διὰ πάσας ἰέντα συμφορᾶς
θνατοὺς ὅταν ἔλθῃ.
Τὰν μὲν Οἰχαλίᾳ
πῶλον ἄζυγα λέκτρων, ἄναν-
δρον τὸ πρὶν καὶ ἄνυμφον, οἴ-
κων ζεύξασ' ἀπ' Εὐρυτίων
δρομάδα ναί¨δ' ὅπως τε βάκ-
χαν σὺν αἵματι, σὺν καπνῷ,
φονίοισι νυμφείοις
Ἀλκμήνας τόκῳ Κύπρις ἐξέδωκεν·
ὦ τλάμων ὑμεναίων.
Ὦ Θήβας ἱερὸν
τεῖχος, ὦ στόμα Δίρκας, συνεί-
ποιτ' ἂν ἁ Κύπρις οἷον ἔρ-
πει·
βροντᾷ γὰρ ἀμφιπύρῳ
τοκάδα τὰν διγόνοιο Βάκ-
χου νυμφευσαμένα πότμῳ
φονίῳ κατηύνασεν.
Δεινὰ γὰρ τὰ πάντ' ἐπιπνεῖ, μέλισσα δ'
οἵα τις πεπόταται.

Φαίδρα

[565] Σιγήσατ’, ὦ γυναῖκες·
ἐξειργάσμεθα.

Χορός

Τί δ’ ἔστι, Φαίδρα, δεινὸν ἐν δόμοισί σοι;

Φαίδρα

Ἐπίσχετ’, αὐδὴν τῶν ἔσωθεν ἐκμάθω.

Χορός

Σιγῶ·
τὸ μέντοι φροίμιον κακὸν τόδε.

Φαίδρα

Ἰώ μοι, αἰαῖ·

[570] ὦ δυστάλαινα τῶν ἐμῶν παθημάτων.

Χορός

Τίνα θροεῖς αὐδάν; Τίνα βοᾷς λόγον;
Ἔνεπε, τίς φοβεῖ σε φήμα, γύναι,
φρένας ἐπίσσυτος;

Φαίδρα

[575] Ἀπωλόμεσθα·
ταῖσδ’ ἐπιστᾶσαι πύλαις
ἀκούσαθ’ οἷος κέλαδος ἐν δόμοις πίτνει.

Χορός

Σὺ παρὰ κλῇθρα, σοὶ μέλει πομπίμα
φάτις δωμάτων·

ἔνεπε δ᾽ ἔνεπέ μοι, τί ποτ᾽ ἔβα κακόν;

Φαίδρα

Ὁ τῆς φιλίππου παῖς Ἀμαζόνος βοᾷ
Ἱππόλυτος, αὐδῶν δεινὰ πρόσπολον κακά.

Χορός

Ἰὰν μὲν κλύω, σαφὲς δ᾽ οὐκ ἔχω·

γεγώνει δ᾽ οἵα
διὰ πύλας ἔμολεν ἔμολε σοὶ βοά.

Φαίδρα

Καὶ μὴν σαφῶς γε τὴν κακῶν προμνήστριαν,
τὴν δεσπότου προδοῦσαν ἐξαυδᾷ λέχος.

Χορός

Ὤμοι ἐγὼ κακῶν·
προδέδοσαι, φίλα.
τί σοι μήσομαι;
Τὰ κρυπτὰ γὰρ πέφηνε, διὰ δ᾽ ὄλλυσαι,
αἰαῖ, ἒ ἔ, πρόδοτος ἐκ φίλων.

Φαίδρα

Ἀπώλεσέν μ᾽ εἰποῦσα συμφορὰς ἐμάς,
φίλως καλῶς δ᾽ οὐ τήνδ᾽ ἰωμένη νόσον.

Χορός

Πῶς οὖν; Τί δράσεις, ὦ παθοῦσ᾽ ἀμήχανα;

Φαίδρα

Οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἔν, κατθανεῖν ὅσον τάχος,
τῶν νῦν παρόντων πημάτων ἄκος μόνον.

Ἱππόλυτος

Ὦ γαῖα μῆτερ ἡλίου τ' ἀναπτυχαί,
οἵων λόγων ἄρρητον εἰσήκουσ' ὄπα.

Τροφός

Σίγησον, ὦ παῖ, πρίν τιν' αἰσθέσθαι βοῆς.

Ἱππόλυτος

Οὐκ ἔστ' ἀκούσας δείν' ὅπως σιγήσομαι.

Τροφός

Ναί, πρός σε τῆς σῆς δεξιᾶς εὐωλένου.

Ἱππόλυτος

Οὐ μὴ προσοίσεις χεῖρα μηδ' ἅψῃ πέπλων;

Τροφός

Ὦ πρός σε γονάτων, μηδαμῶς μ' ἐξεργάσῃ.

Ἱππόλυτος

Τί δ', εἴπερ, ὡς φῄς, μηδὲν εἴρηκας κακόν;

Τροφός

Ὁ μῦθος, ὦ παῖ, κοινὸς οὐδαμῶς ὅδε.

Ἱππόλυτος

Τά τοι κάλ' ἐν πολλοῖσι κάλλιον λέγειν.

Τροφός

Ὦ τέκνον, ὅρκους μηδαμῶς ἀτιμάσῃς.

Ἱππόλυτος

Ἡ γλῶσσ᾽ ὀμώμοχ᾽, ἡ δὲ φρὴν ἀνώμοτος.

Τροφός

Ὦ παῖ, τί δράσεις; Σοὺς φίλους διεργάσῃ;

Ἱππόλυτος

Ἀπέπτυσ᾽·
οὐδεὶς ἄδικός ἐστί μοι φίλος.

Τροφός

Σύγγνωθ᾽·
ἁμαρτεῖν εἰκὸς ἀνθρώπους, τέκνον.

Ἱππόλυτος

Ὦ Ζεῦ, τί δὴ κίβδηλον ἀνθρώποις κακὸν
γυναῖκας ἐς φῶς ἡλίου κατῴκισας;
Εἰ γὰρ βρότειον ἤθελες σπεῖραι γένος,
οὐκ ἐκ γυναικῶν χρῆν παρασχέσθαι τόδε,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀντιθέντας σοῖσιν ἐν ναοῖς βροτοὺς
ἢ χαλκὸν ἢ σίδηρον ἢ χρυσοῦ βάρος
παίδων πρίασθαι σπέρμα του τιμήματος,
τῆς ἀξίας ἕκαστον, ἐν δὲ δώμασιν
ναίειν ἐλευθέροισι θηλειῶν ἄτερ.
Νῦν δ᾽ ἐς δόμους μὲν πρῶτον ἄξεσθαι κακὸν
μέλλοντες ὄλβον δωμάτων ἐκτίνομεν.
Τούτῳ δὲ δῆλον ὡς γυνὴ κακὸν μέγα·
προσθεὶς γὰρ ὁ σπείρας τε καὶ θρέψας πατὴρ
φερνὰς ἀπῴκισ᾽, ὡς ἀπαλλαχθῇ κακοῦ.
Ὁ δ᾽ αὖ λαβὼν ἀτηρὸν ἐς δόμους φυτὸν

γέγηθε κόσμον προστιθεὶς ἀγάλματι
καλὸν κακίστῳ καὶ πέπλοισιν ἐκπονεῖ
δύστηνος, ὄλβον δωμάτων ὑπεξελών.
Ἔχει δ' ἀνάγκην·
ὥστε κηδεύσας καλῶς
γαμβροῖσι χαίρων σῴζεται πικρὸν λέχος,
ἢ χρηστὰ λέκτρα πενθεροὺς δ' ἀνωφελεῖς
λαβὼν πιέζει τἀγαθῷ τὸ δυστυχές.
Ῥᾷστον δ' ὅτῳ τὸ μηδέν ἀλλ' ἀνωφελὴς
εὐηθίᾳ κατ' οἶκον ἵδρυται γυνή.
Σοφὴν δὲ μισῶ·
μὴ γὰρ ἔν γ' ἐμοῖς δόμοις
εἴη φρονοῦσα πλείον' ἢ γυναῖκα χρή.
Τὸ γὰρ κακοῦργον μᾶλλον ἐντίκτει Κύπρις
ἐν ταῖς σοφαῖσιν·
ἡ δ' ἀμήχανος γυνὴ
γνώμῃ βραχείᾳ μωρίαν ἀφῃρέθη.
Χρῆν δ' ἐς γυναῖκα πρόσπολον μὲν οὐ περᾶν,
ἄφθογγα δ' αὐταῖς συγκατοικίζειν δάκη
θηρῶν, ἵν' εἶχον μήτε προσφωνεῖν τινα
μήτ' ἐξ ἐκείνων φθέγμα δέξασθαι πάλιν.
Νῦν δ' αἱ μὲν ἔνδον δρῶσιν αἱ κακαὶ κακὰ
βουλεύματ', ἔξω δ' ἐκφέρουσι πρόσπολοι.
Ὡς καὶ σύ γ' ἡμῖν πατρός, ὦ κακὸν κάρα,
λέκτρων ἀθίκτων ἦλθες ἐς συναλλαγάς·
ἀγὼ ῥυτοῖς νασμοῖσιν ἐξομόρξομαι,
ἐς ὦτα κλύζων. Πῶς ἂν οὖν εἴην κακός,
ὃς οὐδ' ἀκούσας τοιάδ' ἀγνεύειν δοκῶ;
Εὖ δ' ἴσθι, τοὐμόν σ' εὐσεβὲς σῴζει, γύναι·
εἰ μὴ γὰρ ὅρκοις θεῶν ἄφαρκτος ἠρέθην,
οὐκ ἄν ποτ' ἔσχον μὴ οὐ τάδ' ἐξειπεῖν πατρί.
Νῦν δ' ἐκ δόμων μέν, ἔστ' ἂν ἔκδημος χθονὸς
Θησεύς, ἄπειμι·
σῖγα δ' ἕξομεν στόμα.
Θεάσομαι δὲ σὺν πατρὸς μολὼν ποδὶ
πῶς νιν προσόψῃ καὶ σὺ καὶ δέσποινα σή.
Τῆς σῆς δὲ τόλμης εἴσομαι γεγευμένος.

Ὄλοισθε. Μισῶν δ’ οὔποτ’ ἐμπλησθήσομαι
γυναῖκας, οὐδ’ εἴ φησί τίς μ’ ἀεὶ λέγειν·
ἀεὶ γὰρ οὖν πώς εἰσι κἀκεῖναι κακαί.
Ἢ νύν τις αὐτὰς σωφρονεῖν διδαξάτω,
ἢ κἄμ’ ἐάτω ταῖσδ’ ἐπεμβαίνειν ἀεί.

Τροφός

Τάλανες ὦ κακοτυχεῖς
γυναικῶν πότμοι.
Τίν’ ἢ νῦν τέχναν ἔχομεν ἢ λόγον
σφαλεῖσαι κάθαμμα λύειν λόγου;
Ἐτύχομεν δίκας. Ἰὼ γᾶ καὶ φῶς·
πᾷ ποτ’ ἐξαλύξω τύχας;
Πῶς δὲ πῆμα κρύψω, φίλαι;
Τίς ἂν θεῶν ἀρωγὸς ἢ τίς ἂν βροτῶν
πάρεδρος ἢ ξυνεργὸς ἀδίκων ἔργων
φανείη; Τὸ γὰρ παρ’ ἡμῖν πάθος
πέραν δυσεκπέρατον ἔρχεται βίου.
Κακοτυχεστάτα γυναικῶν ἐγώ.

Χορός

Φεῦ φεῦ, πέπρακται, κοὐ κατώρθωνται τέχναι,
δέσποινα, τῆς σῆς προσπόλου, κακῶς δ’ ἔχει.

Φαίδρα

Ὦ παγκακίστη καὶ φίλων διαφθορεῦ,
οἷ’ εἰργάσω με. Ζεύς σε γεννήτωρ ἐμὸς
πρόρριζον ἐκτρίψειεν οὐτάσας πυρί.
Οὐκ εἶπον οὐ σῆς προυνοησάμην φρενός;
Σιγᾶν ἐφ’ οἷσι νῦν ἐγὼ κακύνομαι;
Σὺ δ’ οὐκ ἀνέσχου·
τοιγὰρ οὐκέτ’ εὐκλεεῖς
θανούμεθ’. Ἀλλὰ δεῖ με δὴ καινῶν λόγων.
Οὗτος γὰρ ὀργῇ συντεθηγμένος φρένας
ἐρεῖ καθ’ ἡμῶν πατρὶ σὰς ἁμαρτίας,

ἐρεῖ δὲ Πιτθεῖ τῷ γέροντι συμφοράς,
πλήσει τε πᾶσαν γαῖαν αἰσχίστων λόγων.
Ὅλοιο καὶ σὺ χὤστις ἄκοντας φίλους
πρόθυμός ἐστι μὴ καλῶς εὐεργετεῖν.

Τροφός

Δέσποιν', ἔχεις μὲν τἀμὰ μέμψασθαι κακά,
τὸ γὰρ δάκνον σου τὴν διάγνωσιν κρατεῖ·
ἔχω δὲ κἀγὼ πρὸς τάδ', εἰ δέξῃ, λέγειν.
Ἔθρεψά σ' εὔνους τ' εἰμί·
τῆς νόσου δέ σοι
ζητοῦσα φάρμαχ' ηὗρον οὐχ ἁβουλόμην.
Εἰ δ' εὖ γ' ἔπραξα, κάρτ' ἂν ἐν σοφοῖσιν ἦ·

πρὸς τὰς τύχας γὰρ τὰς φρένας κεκτήμεθα.

Φαίδρα

Ἦ γὰρ δίκαια ταῦτα κἀξαρκοῦντά μοι,
τρώσασαν ἡμᾶς εἶτα συγχωρεῖν λόγοις;

Τροφός

Μακρηγοροῦμεν·
οὐκ ἐσωφρόνουν ἐγώ.
Ἀλλ' ἔστι κἀκ τῶνδ' ὥστε σωθῆναι, τέκνον.

Φαίδρα

Παῦσαι λέγουσα·
καὶ τὸ πρὶν γὰρ οὐ καλῶς
παρῄνεσάς μοι κἀπεχείρησας κακά.
Ἀλλ' ἐκποδὼν ἄπελθε καὶ σαυτῆς πέρι
φρόντιζ'·
ἐγὼ γὰρ τἀμὰ θήσομαι καλῶς.
Ὑμεῖς δέ, παῖδες εὐγενεῖς Τροζήνιαι,

τοσόνδε μοι παράσχετ’ ἐξαιτουμένῃ,
σιγῇ καλύψαθ’ ἁνθάδ’ εἰσηκούσατε.

Χορός

Ὕμνυμι σεμνὴν Ἄρτεμιν, Διὸς κόρην,
μηδὲν κακῶν σῶν ἐς φάος δείξειν ποτέ.

Φαίδρα

[715] Καλῶς ἔλεξας·
ἓν δὲ προτρέπουσ’ ἐγὼ
εὕρημα δῆτα τῆσδε συμφορᾶς ἔχω,
ὥστ’ εὐκλεᾶ μὲν παισὶ προσθεῖναι βίον
αὐτή τ’ ὀνάσθαι πρὸς τὰ νῦν πεπτωκότα.
Οὐ γάρ ποτ’ αἰσχυνῶ γε Κρησίους δόμους
[720] οὐδ’ ἐς πρόσωπον Θησέως ἀφίξομαι
αἰσχροῖς ἐπ’ ἔργοις οὕνεκα ψυχῆς μιᾶς.

Χορός

Μέλλεις δὲ δὴ τί δρᾶν ἀνήκεστον κακόν;

Φαίδρα

Θανεῖν·
ὅπως δέ, τοῦτ’ ἐγὼ βουλεύσομαι.

Χορός

Εὔφημος ἴσθι.

Φαίδρα

Καὶ σύ γ’ εὖ με νουθέτει.
[725] Ἐγὼ δὲ Κύπριν, ἥπερ ἐξόλλυσί με,
ψυχῆς ἀπαλλαχθεῖσα τῇδ’ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ
τέρψω·
πικροῦ δ’ ἔρωτος ἡσσηθήσομαι.

Ἀτὰρ κακόν γε χἀτέρῳ γενήσομαι
θανοῦσ’, ἵν’ εἰδῇ μὴ ‘πὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖς κακοῖς
ὑψηλὸς εἶναι·
τῆς νόσου δὲ τῆσδέ μοι
κοινῇ μετασχὼν σωφρονεῖν μαθήσεται.

Χορός

Ἠλιβάτοις ὑπὸ κευθμῶσι γενοίμαν,
ἵνα με πτεροῦσσαν ὄρνιν
θεὸς ἐν ποταναῖς
ἀγέλαις θείη·
ἀρθείην δ’ ἐπὶ πόντιον
κῦμα τᾶς Ἀδριηνᾶς
ἀκτᾶς Ἠριδανοῦ θ’ ὕδωρ,
ἔνθα πορφύρεον σταλάσ-
σουσ’ ἐς οἶδμα τάλαιναι
κόραι Φαέθοντος οἴκτῳ δακρύων
τὰς ἠλεκτροφαεῖς αὐγάς.

Ἑσπερίδων δ’ ἐπὶ μηλόσπορον ἀκτὰν
ἀνύσαιμι τᾶν ἀοιδῶν,
ἵν’ ὁ πορφυρέας πον-
τομέδων λίμνας
ναύταις οὐκέθ’ ὁδὸν νέμει,
σεμνὸν τέρμονα κυρῶν
οὐρανοῦ, τὸν Ἄτλας ἔχει·
κρῆναί τ’ ἀμβρόσιαι χέον-
ται Ζηνὸς μελάθρων παρὰ κοίταις,
ἵν’ ὀλβιόδωρος αὔξει ζαθέα
χθὼν εὐδαιμονίαν θεοῖς.

Ὦ λευκόπτερε Κρησία
πορθμίς, ἃ διὰ πόντιον
κῦμ’ ἀλίκτυπον ἅλμας
ἐπόρευσας ἐμὰν ἄνασσαν ὀλβίων ἀπ’ οἴκων
κακονυμφοτάταν ὄνασιν·
ἦ γὰρ ἀπ’ ἀμφοτέρων οἱ Κρησίας <τ’> ἐκ γᾶς δύσορνις

ἔπτατο κλεινὰς Ἀθήνας Μουνίχου τ’ ἀ-
κταῖσιν ἐκδήσαντο πλεκτὰς πεισμάτων ἀρ-
χάς, ἐπ’ ἀπείρου τε γᾶς ἔβασαν.
Ἀνθ’ ὧν, οὐχ ὁσίων ἐρώ-
των δεινᾷ φρένας Ἀφροδί-
τας νόσῳ κατεκλάσθη·
χαλεπᾷ δ’ ὑπέραντλος οὖσα συμφορᾷ τεράμνων
ἀπὸ νυμφιδίων κρεμαστὸν
ἄψεται ἀμφὶ βρόχον λευκᾷ καθαρμόζουσα δείρᾳ,
δαίμονα στυγνὸν καταιδεσθεῖσα, τὰν τ’ εὔ-
δοξον ἀνθαιρουμένα φήμαν, ἀπαλλάσ-
σουσά τ’ ἀλγεινὸν φρενῶν ἔρωτα.

Τροφός

ἔσωθεν

Ἰοὺ ἰού·
βοηδρομεῖτε πάντες οἱ πέλας δόμων·
ἐν ἀγχόναις δέσποινα, Θησέως δάμαρ.

Χορός

Φεῦ φεῦ, πέπρακται·
βασιλὶς οὐκέτ’ ἔστι δὴ
γυνή, κρεμαστοῖς ἐν βρόχοις ἠρτημένη.

Τροφός

Οὐ σπεύσετ’; Οὐκ οἴσει τις ἀμφιδέξιον
σίδηρον, ᾧ τόδ’ ἄμμα λύσομεν δέρης;

Χορός

Φίλαι, τί δρῶμεν; Ἢ δοκεῖ περᾶν δόμους
λῦσαί τ’ ἄνασσαν ἐξ ἐπισπαστῶν βρόχων;
Τί δ’; Οὐ πάρεισι πρόσπολοι νεανίαι;
Τὸ πολλὰ πράσσειν οὐκ ἐν ἀσφαλεῖ βίου.

Τροφός

Ὀρθώσατ’ ἐκτείνοντες ἄθλιον νέκυν·

πικρὸν τόδ’ οἰκούρημα δεσπόταις ἐμοῖς.

Χορός

Ὤλωλεν ἡ δύστηνος, ὡς κλύω, γυνή·

ἤδη γὰρ ὡς νεκρόν νιν ἐκτείνουσι δή.

Θησεύς

[790] Γυναῖκες, ἴστε τίς ποτ’ ἐν δόμοις βοὴ
ἠχὼ βαρεῖα προσπόλων ἀφίκετο;
Οὐ γάρ τί μ’ ὡς θεωρὸν ἀξιοῖ δόμος
πύλας ἀνοίξας εὐφρόνως προσεννέπειν.
Μῶν Πιτθέως τι γῆρας εἴργασται νέον;
[795] Πρόσω μὲν ἤδη βίοτος, ἀλλ’ ὅμως ἔτ’ ἂν
λυπηρὸς ἡμῖν τούσδ’ ἂν ἐκλίποι δόμους.

Χορός

Οὐκ ἐς γέροντας ἥδε σοι τείνει τύχη,
Θησεῦ·
νέοι θανόντες ἀλγύνουσί σε.

Θησεύς

Οἴμοι·
τέκνων μοι μή τι συλᾶται βίος;

Χορός

[800] Ζῶσιν, θανούσης μητρὸς ὡς ἄλγιστά σοι.

Θησεύς

Τί φῄς; Ὄλωλεν ἄλοχος; Ἐκ τίνος τύχης;

Χορός

Βρόχον κρεμαστὸν ἀγχόνης ἀνήψατο.

Θησεύς

Λύπῃ παχνωθεῖσ', ἢ ἀπὸ συμφορᾶς τίνος;

Χορός

Τοσοῦτον ἴσμεν·
ἄρτι γὰρ κἀγὼ δόμους,
[805] Θησεῦ, πάρειμι σῶν κακῶν πενθήτρια.

Θησεύς

[806] Αἰαῖ·
τί δῆτα τοῖσδ' ἀνέστεμμαι κάρα
πλεκτοῖσι φύλλοις, δυστυχὴς θεωρὸς ὤν;
Χαλᾶτε κλῆθρα, πρόσπολοι, πυλωμάτων,
[825] ἐκλύεθ' ἁρμούς, ὡς ἴδω πικρὰν θέαν
[810] γυναικός, ἥ με κατθανοῦσ' ἀπώλεσεν.

Χορός

Ἰὼ ἰὼ τάλαινα μελέων κακῶν·
ἔπαθες, εἰργάσω
τοσοῦτον ὥστε τούσδε συγχέαι δόμους,
αἰαῖ τόλμας,
βιαίως θανοῦσ' ἀνοσίῳ τε συμ-
[815] φορᾷ, σᾶς χερὸς πάλαισμα μελέας.
Τίς ἄρα σάν, τάλαιν', ἀμαυροῖ ζόαν;

Θησεύς

Ὤμοι ἐγὼ πόνων·
ἔπαθον, ὦ τάλας,

τὰ μάκιστ᾽ ἐμῶν κακῶν. Ὦ τύχα,
ὥς μοι βαρεῖα καὶ δόμοις ἐπεστάθης,
κηλὶς ἄφραστος ἐξ ἀλαστόρων τινός·
κατακονὰ μὲν οὖν ἀβίοτος βίου.
Κακῶν δ᾽, ὦ τάλας, πέλαγος εἰσορῶ
τοσοῦτον ὥστε μήποτ᾽ ἐκνεῦσαι πάλιν
μηδ᾽ ἐκπερᾶσαι κῦμα τῆσδε συμφορᾶς.
Τίνι λόγῳ, τάλας, τίνι τύχαν σέθεν
βαρύποτμον, γύναι, προσαυδῶν τύχω;
Ὄρνις γὰρ ὥς τις ἐκ χερῶν ἄφαντος εἶ,
πήδημ᾽ ἐς Ἅιδου κραιπνὸν ὁρμήσασά μοι.
Αἰαῖ αἰαῖ, μέλεα μέλεα τάδε πάθη·
πρόσωθεν δέ ποθεν ἀνακομίζομαι
τύχαν δαιμόνων ἀμπλακίαισι τῶν
πάροιθέν τινος.

Χορός

Οὐ σοὶ τάδ᾽, ὦναξ, ἦλθε δὴ μόνῳ κακά,
πολλῶν μετ᾽ ἄλλων δ᾽ ὤλεσας κεδνὸν λέχος.

Θησεύς

Τὸ κατὰ γᾶς θέλω, τὸ κατὰ γᾶς κνέφας
μετοικεῖν σκότῳ θανών, ὦ τλάμων,
τῆς σῆς στερηθεὶς φιλτάτης ὁμιλίας·
ἀπώλεσας γὰρ μᾶλλον ἢ κατέφθισο.
Τίνος κλύω πόθεν θανάσιμος τύχα,
γύναι, σὰν ἔβα, τάλαινα, κραδίαν;
Εἴποι τις ἂν τὸ πραχθέν, ἢ μάτην ὄχλον
στέγει τύραννον δῶμα προσπόλων ἐμῶν;
Ὤμοι μοι < > σέθεν,
μέλεος, οἷον εἶδον ἄλγος δόμων,
οὐ τλητὸν οὐδὲ ῥητόν. Ἀλλ᾽ ἀπωλόμην·
ἔρημος οἶκος, καὶ τέκν᾽ ὀρφανεύεται.
<Αἰαῖ αἰαῖ,> ἔλιπες ἔλιπες, ὦ φίλα
γυναικῶν ἀρίστα θ᾽ ὁπόσας ὁρᾷ

φέγγος θ’ ἁλίοιο καὶ νυκτὸς ἀ-
στερωπὸν σέλας.

Χορός

῏Ω τάλας, ὅσον κακὸν ἔχει δόμος.
Δάκρυσί μου βλέφαρα
καταχυθέντα τέγγεται σᾷ τύχᾳ·
τὸ δ’ ἐπὶ τῷδε πῆμα φρίσσω πάλαι.

Θησεύς

Ἔα ἔα·
τί δή ποθ’ ἥδε δέλτος ἐκ φίλης χερὸς
ἠρτημένη; Θέλει τι σημῆναι νέον;
Ἀλλ’ ἦ λέχους μοι καὶ τέκνων ἐπιστολὰς
ἔγραψεν ἡ δύστηνος, ἐξαιτουμένη;
Θάρσει, τάλαινα·
λέκτρα γὰρ τὰ Θησέως
οὐκ ἔστι δῶμά θ’ ἥτις εἴσεισιν γυνή.
Καὶ μὴν τύποι γε σφενδόνης χρυσηλάτου
τῆς οὐκέτ’ οὔσης οἵδε προσσαίνουσί με.
Φέρ’ ἐξελίξας περιβολὰς σφραγισμάτων
ἴδω τί λέξαι δέλτος ἥδε μοι θέλει.

Χορός

Φεῦ φεῦ, τόδ’ αὖ νεοχμὸν ἐκδοχαῖς
ἐπεισφρεῖ θεὸς κακόν. ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν ἀβίοτος βίου
τύχα πρὸς τὸ κρανθὲν εἴη τυχεῖν.
Ὀλομένους γάρ, οὐκέτ’ ὄντας λέγω,
φεῦ φεῦ, τῶν ἐμῶν τυράννων δόμους.
῏Ω δαῖμον, εἴ πως ἔστι, μὴ σφήλῃς δόμους,
αἰτουμένης δὲ κλῦθί μου·
πρὸς γάρ τινος
οἰωνὸν ὥστε μάντις εἰσορῶ κακοῦ.

Θησεύς

Οἴμοι, τόδ’ οἷον ἄλλο πρὸς κακῷ κακόν,
οὐ τλητὸν οὐδὲ λεκτόν·
ὦ τάλας ἐγώ.

Χορός

Τί χρῆμα; Λέξον, εἴ τί μοι λόγου μέτα.

Θησεύς

Βοᾷ βοᾷ δέλτος ἄλαστα. Πᾷ φύγω
βάρος κακῶν; Ἀπὸ γὰρ ὀλόμενος οἴχομαι,
οἷον οἷον εἶδον γραφαῖς μέλος
φθεγγόμενον τλάμων.

Χορός

Αἰαῖ, κακῶν ἀρχηγὸν ἐκφαίνεις λόγον.

Θησεύς

Τόδε μὲν οὐκέτι στόματος ἐν πύλαις
καθέξω δυσεκπέρατον ὀλοὸν
κακόν·
ἰὼ πόλις.
Ἱππόλυτος εὐνῆς τῆς ἐμῆς ἔτλη θιγεῖν
βίᾳ, τὸ σεμνὸν Ζηνὸς ὄμμ’ ἀτιμάσας.
Ἀλλ’, ὦ πάτερ Πόσειδον, ἃς ἐμοί ποτε
ἀρὰς ὑπέσχου τρεῖς, μιᾷ κατέργασαι
τούτων ἐμὸν παῖδ’, ἡμέραν δὲ μὴ φύγοι
τήνδ’, εἴπερ ἡμῖν ὤπασας σαφεῖς ἀράς.

Χορός

Ἄναξ, ἀπεύχου ταῦτα πρὸς θεῶν πάλιν,
γνώσῃ γὰρ αὖθις ἀμπλακών·
ἐμοὶ πιθοῦ.

Θησεύς

Οὐκ ἔστι. Καὶ πρός γ’ ἐξελῶ σφε τῆσδε γῆς,
δυοῖν δὲ μοίραιν θατέρᾳ πεπλήξεται·
ἢ γὰρ Ποσειδῶν αὐτὸν εἰς Ἅιδου δόμους
θανόντα πέμψει τὰς ἐμὰς ἀρὰς σέβων,
ἢ τῆσδε χώρας ἐκπεσὼν ἀλώμενος
ξένην ἐπ’ αἶαν λυπρὸν ἀντλήσει βίον.

Χορός

Καὶ μὴν ὅδ’ αὐτὸς παῖς σὸς ἐς καιρὸν πάρα
Ἱππόλυτος·
ὀργῆς δ’ ἐξανεὶς κακῆς, ἄναξ
Θησεῦ, τὸ λῷστον σοῖσι βούλευσαι δόμοις.

Ἱππόλυτος

Κραυγῆς ἀκούσας σῆς ἀφικόμην, πάτερ,
σπουδῇ·
τὸ μέντοι πρᾶγμ’ ὅτῳ στένεις ἔπι
οὐκ οἶδα, βουλοίμην δ’ ἂν ἐκ σέθεν κλύειν.
Ἔα, τί χρῆμα; Σὴν δάμαρθ’ ὁρῶ, πάτερ,
νεκρόν·
μεγίστου θαύματος τόδ’ ἄξιον·
ἦν ἀρτίως ἔλειπον, ἢ φάος τόδε
οὔπω χρόνος παλαιὸς εἰσεδέρκετο.
Τί χρῆμα πάσχει; Τῷ τρόπῳ διόλλυται;
Πάτερ, πυθέσθαι βούλομαι σέθεν πάρα.
Σιγᾷς·
σιωπῆς δ’ οὐδὲν ἔργον ἐν κακοῖς·
ἡ γὰρ ποθοῦσα πάντα καρδία κλύειν
κἀν τοῖς κακοῖσι λίχνος οὖσ’ ἁλίσκεται.
Οὐ μὴν φίλους γε, κἄτι μᾶλλον ἢ φίλους,
κρύπτειν δίκαιον σάς, πάτερ, δυσπραξίας.

Θησεύς

Ὦ πόλλ’ ἁμαρτάνοντες ἄνθρωποι μάτην,
τί δὴ τέχνας μὲν μυρίας διδάσκετε

καὶ πάντα μηχανᾶσθε κἀξευρίσκετε,
ἓν δ' οὐκ ἐπίστασθ' οὐδ' ἐθηράσασθέ πω,
φρονεῖν διδάσκειν οἵσιν οὐκ ἔνεστι νοῦς;

Ἱππόλυτος

Δεινὸν σοφιστὴν εἶπας, ὅστις εὖ φρονεῖν
τοὺς μὴ φρονοῦντας δυνατός ἐστ' ἀναγκάσαι.
Ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ ἐν δέοντι λεπτουργεῖς, πάτερ,
δέδοικα μή σου γλῶσσ' ὑπερβάλλῃ κακοῖς.

Θησεύς

Φεῦ, χρῆν βροτοῖσι τῶν φίλων τεκμήριον
σαφές τι κεῖσθαι καὶ διάγνωσιν φρενῶν,
ὅστις τ' ἀληθής ἐστιν ὅς τε μὴ φίλος,
δισσάς τε φωνὰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἔχειν,
τὴν μὲν δικαίαν, τὴν δ' ὅπως ἐτύγχανεν,
ὡς ἡ φρονοῦσα τἄδικ' ἐξηλέγχετο
πρὸς τῆς δικαίας, κοὐκ ἂν ἠπατώμεθα.

Ἱππόλυτος

Ἀλλ' ἦ τις ἐς σὸν οὖς με διαβαλὼν ἔχει
φίλων, νοσοῦμεν δ' οὐδὲν ὄντες αἴτιοι;
Ἔκ τοι πέπληγμαι·
σοὶ γὰρ ἐκπλήσσουσί με
λόγοι παραλλάσσοντες ἕξεδροι φρενῶν.

Θησεύς

Φεῦ τῆς βροτείας ποῖ προβήσεται; Φρενός.
Τί τέρμα τόλμης καὶ θράσους γενήσεται;
Εἰ γὰρ κατ' ἀνδρὸς βίοτον ἐξογκώσεται,
ὁ δ' ὕστερος τοῦ πρόσθεν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν
πανοῦργος ἔσται, θεοῖσι προσβαλεῖν χθονὶ
ἄλλην δεήσει γαῖαν, ἢ χωρήσεται
τοὺς μὴ δικαίους καὶ κακοὺς πεφυκότας.

Σκέψασθε δ’ ἐς τόνδ’, ὅστις ἐξ ἐμοῦ γεγὼς
ἦσχυνε τἀμὰ λέκτρα κἀξελέγχεται
πρὸς τῆς θανούσης ἐμφανῶς κάκιστος ὤν.
Δεῖξον δ’, ἐπειδή γ’ ἐς μίασμ’ ἐλήλυθα,
τὸ σὸν πρόσωπον δεῦρ’ ἐναντίον πατρί.
Σὺ δὴ θεοῖσιν ὡς περισσὸς ὢν ἀνὴρ
ξύνει; Σὺ σώφρων καὶ κακῶν ἀκήρατος;
Οὐκ ἂν πιθοίμην τοῖσι σοῖς κόμποις ἐγὼ
θεοῖσι προσθεὶς ἀμαθίαν φρονεῖν κακῶς.
Ἤδη νυν αὔχει καὶ δι’ ἀψύχου βορᾶς
σίτοις καπήλευ’ Ὀρφέα τ’ ἄνακτ’ ἔχων
βάκχευε πολλῶν γραμμάτων τιμῶν καπνούς·
ἐπεί γ’ ἐλήφθης. Τοὺς δὲ τοιούτους ἐγὼ
φεύγειν προφωνῶ πᾶσι·
θηρεύουσι γὰρ
σεμνοῖς λόγοισιν, αἰσχρὰ μηχανώμενοι.
Τέθνηκεν ἥδε·
τοῦτό σ’ ἐκσώσειν δοκεῖς;
Ἐν τῷδ’ ἁλίσκῃ πλεῖστον, ὦ κάκιστε σύ·
ποῖοι γὰρ ὅρκοι κρείσσονες, τίνες λόγοι
τῆσδ’ ἂν γένοιντ’ ἄν, ὥστε σ’ αἰτίαν φυγεῖν;
Μισεῖν σε φήσεις τήνδε, καὶ τὸ δὴ νόθον
τοῖς γνησίοισι πολέμιον πεφυκέναι·
κακὴν ἄρ’ αὐτὴν ἔμπορον βίου λέγεις,
εἰ δυσμενείᾳ σῇ τὰ φίλτατ’ ὤλεσεν.
Ἀλλ’ ὡς τὸ μῶρον ἀνδράσιν μὲν οὐκ ἔνι,
γυναιξὶ δ’ ἐμπέφυκεν; Οἶδ’ ἐγὼ νέους,
οὐδὲν γυναικῶν ὄντας ἀσφαλεστέρους,
ὅταν ταράξῃ Κύπρις ἡβῶσαν φρένα·
τὸ δ’ ἄρσεν αὐτοὺς ὠφελεῖ προσκείμενον.
Νῦν οὖν τί ταῦτα σοῖς ἀμιλλῶμαι λόγοις
νεκροῦ παρόντος μάρτυρος σαφεστάτου;
Ἔξερρε γαίας τῆσδ’ ὅσον τάχος φυγάς,
καὶ μήτ’ Ἀθήνας τὰς θεοδμήτους μόλῃς
μήτ’ εἰς ὅρους γῆς ἧς ἐμὸν κρατεῖ δόρυ.
Εἰ γὰρ παθών γε σοῦ τάδ’ ἡσσηθήσομαι,
οὐ μαρτυρήσει μ’ Ἴσθμιος Σίνις ποτὲ

κτανεῖν ἑαυτὸν ἀλλὰ κομπάζειν μάτην,
οὐδ’ αἱ θαλάσσῃ σύννομοι Σκιρωνίδες
φήσουσι πέτραι τοῖς κακοῖς μ’ εἶναι βαρύν.

Χορός

Οὐκ οἶδ’ ὅπως εἴποιμ’ ἂν εὐτυχεῖν τινα
θνητῶν·
τὰ γὰρ δὴ πρῶτ’ ἀνέστραπται πάλιν.

Ἱππόλυτος

Πάτερ, μένος μὲν ξύντασίς τε σῶν φρενῶν
δεινή·
τὸ μέντοι πρᾶγμ’, ἔχον καλοὺς λόγους,
εἴ τις διαπτύξειεν οὐ καλὸν τόδε.
Ἐγὼ δ’ ἄκομψος εἰς ὄχλον δοῦναι λόγον,
ἐς ἥλικας δὲ κὠλίγους σοφώτερος·
ἔχει δὲ μοῖραν καὶ τόδ’·
οἱ γὰρ ἐν σοφοῖς
φαῦλοι παρ’ ὄχλῳ μουσικώτεροι λέγειν.
Ὅμως δ’ ἀνάγκη, ξυμφορᾶς ἀφιγμένης,
γλῶσσάν μ’ ἀφεῖναι. Πρῶτα δ’ ἄρξομαι λέγειν
ὅθεν μ’ ὑπῆλθες πρῶτον ὡς διαφθερῶν
οὐκ ἀντιλέξοντ’. Εἰσορᾷς φάος τόδε
καὶ γαῖαν·
ἐν τοῖσδ’ οὐκ ἔνεστ’ ἀνὴρ ἐμοῦ,
οὐδ’ ἢν σὺ μὴ φῇς, σωφρονέστερος γεγώς.
Ἐπίσταμαι γὰρ πρῶτα μὲν θεοὺς σέβειν
φίλοις τε χρῆσθαι μὴ ἀδικεῖν πειρωμένοις
ἀλλ’ οἷσιν αἰδὼς μήτ’ ἐπαγγέλλειν κακὰ
μήτ’ ἀνθυπουργεῖν αἰσχρὰ τοῖσι χρωμένοι,·
οὐκ ἐγγελαστὴς τῶν ὁμιλούντων, πάτερ,
ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς οὐ παροῦσι κἀγγὺς ὢν φίλοις.
Ἑνὸς δ’ ἄθικτος, ᾧ με νῦν ἔχειν δοκεῖς·
λέχους γὰρ ἐς τόδ’ ἡμέρας ἁγνὸν δέμας·
οὐκ οἶδα πρᾶξιν τήνδε πλὴν λόγῳ κλύων
γραφῇ τε λεύσσων·

οὐδὲ ταῦτα γὰρ σκοπεῖν
πρόθυμός εἰμι, παρθένον ψυχὴν ἔχων.
Καὶ δὴ τὸ σῶφρον τοὐμὸν οὐ πείθει σ'·
ἴτω·
δεῖ δή σε δεῖξαι τῷ τρόπῳ διεφθάρην.
Πότερα τὸ τῆσδε σῶμ' ἐκαλλιστεύετο
[1010] πασῶν γυναικῶν; Ἢ σὸν οἰκήσειν δόμον
ἔγκληρον εὐνὴν προσλαβὼν ἐπήλπισα;
Μάταιος ἆρ' ἦν, οὐδαμοῦ μὲν οὖν φρενῶν.
Ἀλλ' ὡς τυραννεῖν ἡδὺ τοῖσι σώφροσιν;
Ἥκιστ', ἐπεί τοι τὰς φρένας διέφθορεν
[1015] θνητῶν ὅσοισιν ἀνδάνει μοναρχία.
Ἐγὼ δ' ἀγῶνας μὲν κρατεῖν Ἑλληνικοὺς
πρῶτος θέλοιμ' ἄν, ἐν πόλει δὲ δεύτερος
σὺν τοῖς ἀρίστοις εὐτυχεῖν ἀεὶ φίλοις·
πράσσειν τε γὰρ πάρεστι, κίνδυνός τ' ἀπὼν
[1020] κρείσσω δίδωσι τῆς τυραννίδος χάριν.
Ἓν οὐ λέλεκται τῶν ἐμῶν, τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἔχεις·
εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἦν μοι μάρτυς οἷός εἰμ' ἐγὼ
καὶ τῆσδ' ὁρώσης φέγγος ἠγωνιζόμην,
ἔργοις ἂν εἶδες τοὺς κακοὺς διεξιών·
[1025] νῦν δ' ὅρκιόν σοι Ζῆνα καὶ πέδον χθονὸς
ὄμνυμι τῶν σῶν μήποθ' ἅψασθαι γάμων
μηδ' ἂν θελῆσαι μηδ' ἂν ἔννοιαν λαβεῖν.
Ἦ τἄρ' ὀλοίμην ἀκλεὴς ἀνώνυμος
ἄπολις ἄοικος, φυγὰς ἀλητεύων χθόνα,
[1030] καὶ μήτε πόντος μήτε γῆ δέξαιτό μου
σάρκας θανόντος, εἰ κακὸς πέφυκ' ἀνήρ.
Τί δ' ἥδε δειμαίνουσ' ἀπώλεσεν βίον
οὐκ οἶδ', ἐμοὶ γὰρ οὐ θέμις πέρα λέγειν·
ἐσωφρόνησε δ' οὐκ ἔχουσα σωφρονεῖν,
[1035] ἡμεῖς δ' ἔχοντες οὐ καλῶς ἐχρώμεθα.

Χορός

[1036] Ἀρκοῦσαν εἶπας αἰτίας ἀποστροφήν,
ὅρκους παρασχών, πίστιν οὐ σμικράν, θεῶν.

Θησεύς

Ἆρ’ οὐκ ἐπῳδὸς καὶ γόης πέφυχ’ ὅδε,
ὃς τὴν ἐμὴν πέποιθεν εὐοργησίᾳ
ψυχὴν κρατήσειν, τὸν τεκόντ’ ἀτιμάσας;

Ἱππόλυτος

Καὶ σοῦ γε ταὐτὰ κάρτα θαυμάζω, πάτερ·
εἰ γὰρ σὺ μὲν παῖς ἦσθ’, ἐγὼ δὲ σὸς πατήρ,
ἔκτεινά τοί σ’ ἂν κοὐ φυγαῖς ἐζημίουν,
εἴπερ γυναικὸς ἠξίους ἐμῆς θιγεῖν.

Θησεύς

Ὡς ἄξιον τόδ’ εἶπας·
οὐχ οὕτω θανῇ,
ὥσπερ σὺ σαυτῷ τόνδε προύθηκας νόμον·
ταχὺς γὰρ Ἅιδης ῥᾷστος ἀνδρὶ δυστυχεῖ·
ἀλλ’ ἐκ πατρῴας φυγὰς ἀλητεύων χθονὸς
ξένην ἐπ’ αἶαν λυπρὸν ἀντλήσεις βίον.
Μισθὸς γὰρ οὗτός ἐστιν ἀνδρὶ δυσσεβεῖ.

Ἱππόλυτος

Οἴμοι, τί δράσεις; Οὐδὲ μηνυτὴν χρόνον
δέξῃ καθ’ ἡμῶν, ἀλλά μ’ ἐξελᾷς χθονός;

Θησεύς

Πέραν γε πόντου καὶ τόπων Ἀτλαντικῶν,
εἴ πως δυναίμην, ὡς σὸν ἐχθαίρω κάρα.

Ἱππόλυτος

Οὐδ’ ὅρκον οὐδὲ πίστιν οὐδὲ μάντεων
φήμας ἐλέγξας ἄκριτον ἐκβαλεῖς με γῆς;

Θησεύς

Ἡ δέλτος ἥδε κλῆρον οὐ δεδεγμένη
κατηγορεῖ σου πιστά·
τοὺς δ᾽ ὑπὲρ κάρα
φοιτῶντας ὄρνις πόλλ᾽ ἐγὼ χαίρειν λέγω.

Ἱππόλυτος

Ὦ θεοί, τί δῆτα τοὐμὸν οὐ λύω στόμα,
ὅστις γ᾽ ὑφ᾽ ὑμῶν, οὓς σέβω, διόλλυμαι;
Οὐ δῆτα·
πάντως οὐ πίθοιμ᾽ ἂν οὕς με δεῖ,
μάτην δ᾽ ἂν ὅρκους συγχέαιμ᾽ οὓς ὤμοσα.

Θησεύς

Οἴμοι, τὸ σεμνὸν ὥς μ᾽ ἀποκτενεῖ τὸ σόν.
Οὐκ εἶ πατρῴας ἐκτὸς ὡς τάχιστα γῆς;

Ἱππόλυτος

Ποῖ δῆθ᾽ ὁ τλήμων τρέψομαι; Τίνος ξένων
δόμους ἔσειμι, τῇδ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αἰτίᾳ φυγών;

Θησεύς

Ὅστις γυναικῶν λυμεῶνας ἥδεται
ξένους κομίζων καὶ ξυνοικούρους κακῶν.

Ἱππόλυτος

Αἰαῖ, πρὸς ἦπαρ·
δακρύων ἐγγὺς τόδε,
εἰ δὴ κακός γε φαίνομαι δοκῶ τε σοί.

Θησεύς

Τότε στενάζειν καὶ προγιγνώσκειν σ᾽ ἐχρῆν
ὅτ᾽ ἐς πατρῴαν ἄλοχον ὑβρίζειν ἔτλης.

Ἱππόλυτος

Ὦ δώματ’, εἴθε φθέγμα γηρύσαισθέ μοι
καὶ μαρτυρήσαιτ’ εἰ κακὸς πέφυκ’ ἀνήρ.

Θησεύς

Ἐς τοὺς ἀφώνους μάρτυρας φεύγεις σοφῶς·

τὸ δ’ ἔργον οὐ λέγον σε μηνύει κακόν.

Ἱππόλυτος

Φεῦ·

εἴθ’ ἦν ἐμαυτὸν προσβλέπειν ἐναντίον
στάνθ’, ὡς ἐδάκρυσ’ οἷα πάσχομεν κακά.

Θησεύς

Πολλῷ γε μᾶλλον σαυτὸν ἤσκησας σέβειν
ἢ τοὺς τεκόντας ὅσια δρᾶν δίκαιος ὤν.

Ἱππόλυτος

Ὦ δυστάλαινα μῆτερ, ὦ πικραὶ γοναί·

μηδείς ποτ’ εἴη τῶν ἐμῶν φίλων νόθος.

Θησεύς

Οὐχ ἕλξετ’ αὐτόν, δμῶες; Οὐκ ἀκούετε
πάλαι ξενοῦσθαι τόνδε προυννέποντά με;

Ἱππόλυτος

Κλαίων τις αὐτῶν ἆρ’ ἐμοῦ γε θίξεται·

σὺ δ’ αὐτός, εἴ σοι θυμός, ἐξώθει χθονός.

Θησεύς

Δράσω τάδ’, εἰ μὴ τοῖς ἐμοῖς πείσῃ λόγοις·

οὐ γάρ τις οἶκτος σῆς μ’ ὑπέρχεται φυγῆς.

Ἱππόλυτος

Ἄραρεν, ὡς ἔοικεν·
ὦ τάλας ἐγώ·
ὡς οἶδα μὲν ταῦτ’, οἶδα δ’ οὐχ ὅπως φράσω.
Ὦ φιλτάτη μοι δαιμόνων Λητοῦς κόρη,
σύνθακε, συγκύναγε, φευξούμεσθα δὴ
κλεινὰς Ἀθήνας. Ἀλλὰ χαιρέτω πόλις
καὶ γαῖ’ Ἐρεχθέως·
ὦ πέδον Τροζήνιον,
ὡς ἐγκαθηβᾶν πόλλ’ ἔχεις εὐδαίμονα,
χαῖρ’·
ὕστατον γάρ σ’ εἰσορῶν προσφθέγγομαι.
Ἴτ’ ὦ νέοι μοι τῆσδε γῆς ὁμήλικες,
προσείπαθ’ ἡμᾶς καὶ προπέμψατε χθονός·
ὡς οὔποτ’ ἄλλον ἄνδρα σωφρονέστερον
ὄψεσθε, κεἰ μὴ ταῦτ’ ἐμῷ δοκεῖ πατρί.

Χορός

Ἦ μέγα μοι τὰ θεῶν μελεδήμαθ’, ὅταν φρένας ἔλθῃ,
λύπα παραιρεῖ ξύνεσίς τε·
τίς ἐλπὶς ἃ κεύθει
λείπεται ἔν τε τύχαις θνατῶν καὶ ἐν ἔργμασι λεύσσειν;
Ἄλλα γὰρ ἄλλοθεν ἀμείβεται, μετὰ δ’ ἵσταται ἀνδράσιν αἰὼν
πολυπλάνητος αἰεί.

Εἴθε μοι εὐξαμένᾳ θεόθεν τάδε μοῖρα παράσχοι,
τύχαν μετ’ ὄλβου καὶ ἀκήρατον ἄλγεσι θυμόν.
Δόξα δὲ μήτ’ ἀτρεκὴς μήτ’ αὖ παράσημος ἐνείη,
ῥᾴδια δ’ ἤθεα τὸν αὔριον μεταβαλλομένα χρόνον αἰεὶ
βίον συνευτυχοίην.

Οὐκέτι γὰρ καθαρὰν φρέν’ ἔχω, παρὰ δ’ ἐλπίδ’ ἃ λεύσσω,
ἐπεὶ τὸν Ἑλλανίας φανερώτατον ἀστέρ’ Ἀθήνας
εἴδομεν εἴδομεν ἐκ πατρὸς ὀργᾶς
ἄλλαν ἐπ’ αἶαν ἰέμενον.
Ὦ ψάμαθοι πολιήτιδος ἀκτᾶς,
ὦ δρυμὸς ὄρεος, ὅθι κυνῶν
ὠκυπόδων μέτα θῆρας ἔναιρεν
Δίκτυνναν ἀμφὶ σεμνάν.

Οὐκέτι συζυγίαν πώλων Ἐνετᾶν ἐπιβάσῃ
τὸν ἀμφὶ Λίμνας τρόχον κατέχων ποδὶ γυμνάδος ἵππου·
μοῦσα δ’ ἄυπνος ὑπ’ ἄντυγι χορδᾶν
λήξει πατρῷον ἀνὰ δόμον·
ἀστέφανοι δὲ κόρας ἀνάπαυλαι
Λατοῦς βαθεῖαν ἀνὰ χλόαν·
νυμφιδία δ’ ἀπόλωλε φυγᾷ σᾷ
λέκτρων ἅμιλλα κούραις.

Ἐγὼ δὲ σᾷ δυστυχίᾳ
δάκρυσι διοίσω πότμον
ἄποτμον·
ὦ τάλαινα μᾶ-
τερ, ἔτεκες ἀνόνατα·
φεῦ·
μανίῳ θεοῖσιν.
ἰὼ ἰώ·
συζύγιαι Χάριτες, τί τὸν τάλαν’ ἐκ πατρίας γᾶς
οὐδὲν ἄτας αἴτιον
πέμπετε τῶνδ’ ἀπ’ οἴκων;

Χορός

Καὶ μὴν ὀπαδὸν Ἱππολύτου τόνδ’ εἰσορῶ
σπουδῇ σκυθρωπὸν πρὸς δόμους ὁρμώμενον.

Ἄγγελος

Ποῖ γῆς ἄνακτα τῆσδε Θησέα μολὼν
εὕροιμ’ ἄν, ὦ γυναῖκες; Εἴπερ ἴστε μοι
σημήνατ’·
ἆρα τῶνδε δωμάτων ἔσω;

Χορός

Ὅδ’ αὐτὸς ἔξω δωμάτων πορεύεται.

Ἄγγελος

Θησεῦ, μερίμνης ἄξιον φέρω λόγον
σοὶ καὶ πολίταις οἵ τ’ Ἀθηναίων πόλιν
ναίουσι καὶ γῆς τέρμονας Τροζηνίας.

Θησεύς

Τί δ’ ἔστι; Μῶν τις συμφορὰ νεωτέρα
δισσὰς κατείληφ’ ἀστυγείτονας πόλεις;

Ἄγγελος

Ἱππόλυτος οὐκέτ’ ἔστιν, ὡς εἰπεῖν ἔπος·

Δέδορκε μέντοι φῶς ἐπὶ σμικρᾶς ῥοπῆς.

Θησεύς

Πρὸς τοῦ; Δι’ ἔχθρας μῶν τις ἦν ἀφιγμένος,
ὅτου κατῄσχυν’ ἄλοχον ὡς πατρὸς βίᾳ;

Ἄγγελος

Οἰκεῖος αὐτὸν ὤλεσ’ ἁρμάτων ὄχος
ἀραί τε τοῦ σοῦ στόματος, ἃς σὺ σῷ πατρὶ
πόντου κρέοντι παιδὸς ἠράσω πέρι.

Θησεύς

Ὦ θεοί. Πόσειδον, ὡς ἄρ’ ἦσθ’ ἐμὸς πατὴρ
ὀρθῶς, ἀκούσας τῶν ἐμῶν κατευγμάτων.
Πῶς καὶ διώλετ’; Εἰπέ, τῷ τρόπῳ Δίκης
ἔπαισεν αὐτὸν ῥόπτρον αἰσχύναντ’ ἐμέ;

Ἄγγελος

Ἡμεῖς μὲν ἀκτῆς κυμοδέγμονος πέλας
ψήκτραισιν ἵππων ἐκτενίζομεν τρίχας
κλαίοντες·
ἦλθε γάρ τις ἄγγελος λέγων
ὡς οὐκέτ’ ἐν γῇ τῇδ’ ἀναστρέψοι πόδα
Ἱππόλυτος, ἐκ σοῦ τλήμονας φυγὰς ἔχων.
Ὁ δ’ ἦλθε ταὐτὸν δακρύων ἔχων μέλος
ἡμῖν ἐπ’ ἀκτάς, μυρία δ’ ὀπισθόπους
φίλων ἅμ’ ἔστειχ’ ἡλίκων <θ’> ὁμήγυρις.
Χρόνῳ δὲ δήποτ’ εἶπ’ ἀπαλλαχθεὶς γόων·
Τί ταῦτ’ ἀλύω; Πειστέον πατρὸς λόγοις.
Ἐντύναθ’ ἵππους ἅρμασι ζυγηφόρους,
δμῶες, πόλις γὰρ οὐκέτ’ ἔστιν ἥδε μοι.
Τοὐνθένδε μέντοι πᾶς ἀνὴρ ἠπείγετο,
καὶ θᾶσσον ἢ λέγοι τις ἐξηρτυμένας
πώλους παρ’ αὐτὸν δεσπότην ἐστήσαμεν.
Μάρπτει δὲ χερσὶν ἡνίας ἀπ’ ἄντυγος,
αὐταῖσιν ἀρβύλαισιν ἁρμόσας πόδα.
Καὶ πρῶτα μὲν θεοῖς εἶπ’ ἀναπτύξας χέρας·
Ζεῦ, μηκέτ’ εἴην εἰ κακὸς πέφυκ’ ἀνήρ·
αἴσθοιτο δ’ ἡμᾶς ὡς ἀτιμάζει πατὴρ
ἤτοι θανόντας ἢ φάος δεδορκότας.
Κἀν τῷδ’ ἐπῆγε κέντρον ἐς χεῖρας λαβὼν
πώλοις ἁμαρτῇ·
πρόσπολοι δ’ ὑφ’ ἅρματος
πέλας χαλινῶν εἱπόμεσθα δεσπότῃ
τὴν εὐθὺς Ἄργους κἀπιδαυρίας ὁδόν.
Ἐπεὶ δ’ ἔρημον χῶρον εἰσεβάλλομεν,
ἀκτή τις ἔστι τοὐπέκεινα τῆσδε γῆς
πρὸς πόντον ἤδη κειμένη Σαρωνικόν.

Ἔνθεν τις ἠχὼ χθόνιος ὡς βροντὴ Διὸς
βαρὺν βρόμον μεθῆκε, φρικώδη κλύειν·
ὀρθὸν δὲ κρᾶτ' ἔστησαν οὗς τ' ἐς οὐρανὸν
ἵπποι·
παρ' ἡμῖν δ' ἦν φόβος νεανικὸς
πόθεν ποτ' εἴη φθόγγος. Ἐς δ' ἁλιρρόθους
ἀκτὰς ἀποβλέψαντες ἱερὸν εἴδομεν
κῦμ' οὐρανῷ στηρίζον, ὥστ' ἀφῃρέθη
Σκίρωνος ἀκτὰς ὄμμα τοὐμὸν εἰσορᾶν,
ἔκρυπτε δ' Ἰσθμὸν καὶ πέτραν Ἀσκληπιοῦ.
Κἄπειτ' ἀνοιδῆσάν τε καὶ πέριξ ἀφρὸν
πολὺν καχλάζον ποντίῳ φυσήματι
χωρεῖ πρὸς ἀκτὰς οὗ τέθριππος ἦν ὄχος.
Αὐτῷ δὲ σὺν κλύδωνι καὶ τρικυμίᾳ
κῦμ' ἐξέθηκε ταῦρον, ἄγριον τέρας·
οὗ πᾶσα μὲν χθὼν φθέγματος πληρουμένη
φρικῶδες ἀντεφθέγγετ', εἰσορῶσι δὲ
κρεῖσσον θέαμα δεργμάτων ἐφαίνετο.
Εὐθὺς δὲ πώλοις δεινὸς ἐμπίπτει φόβος.
Καὶ δεσπότης μὲν ἱππικοῖσιν ἤθεσιν
πολὺς ξυνοικῶν ἥρπασ' ἡνίας χεροῖν,
ἕλκει δὲ κώπην ὥστε ναυβάτης ἀνήρ,
ἱμᾶσιν ἐς τοὔπισθεν ἀρτήσας δέμας·
αἱ δ' ἐνδακοῦσαι στόμια πυριγενῆ γνάθοις
βίᾳ φέρουσιν, οὔτε ναυκλήρου χερὸς
οὔθ' ἱπποδέσμων οὔτε κολλητῶν ὄχων
μεταστρέφουσαι. Κεἰ μὲν ἐς τὰ μαλθακὰ
γαίας ἔχων οἴακας εὐθύνοι δρόμον,
προυφαίνετ' ἐς τὸ πρόσθεν, ὥστ' ἀναστρέφειν,
ταῦρος, φόβῳ τέτρωρον ἐκμαίνων ὄχον·
εἰ δ' ἐς πέτρας φέροιντο μαργῶσαι φρένας,
σιγῇ πελάζων ἄντυγι ξυνείπετο,
ἐς τοῦθ' ἕως ἔσφηλε κἀνεχαίτισεν
ἁψῖδα πέτρῳ προσβαλὼν ὀχήματος.
Σύμφυρτα δ' ἦν ἅπαντα·
σύριγγές τ' ἄνω
τροχῶν ἐπήδων ἀξόνων τ' ἐνήλατα,

αὐτὸς δ’ ὁ τλήμων ἡνίαισιν ἐμπλακεὶς
δεσμὸν δυσεξήνυστον ἕλκεται δεθείς,
σποδούμενος μὲν πρὸς πέτραις φίλον κάρα
θραύων τε σάρκας, δεινὰ δ’ ἐξαυδῶν κλύειν·
Στῆτ’, ὦ φάτναισι ταῖς ἐμαῖς τεθραμμέναι,
μή μ’ ἐξαλείψητ’·
ὦ πατρὸς τάλαιν’ ἀρά.
Τίς ἄνδρ’ ἄριστον βούλεται σῶσαι παρών;
Πολλοὶ δὲ βουληθέντες ὑστέρῳ ποδὶ
ἐλειπόμεσθα. Χὠ μὲν ἐκ δεσμῶν λυθεὶς
τμητῶν ἱμάντων οὐ κάτοιδ’ ὅτῳ τρόπῳ
πίπτει, βραχὺν δὴ βίοτον ἐμπνέων ἔτι·
ἵπποι δ’ ἔκρυφθεν καὶ τὸ δύστηνον τέρας
ταύρου λεπαίας οὐ κάτοιδ’ ὅποι χθονός.
Δοῦλος μὲν οὖν ἔγωγε σῶν δόμων, ἄναξ,
ἀτὰρ τοσοῦτόν γ’ οὐ δυνήσομαί ποτε,
τὸν σὸν πιθέσθαι παῖδ’ ὅπως ἐστὶν κακός,
οὐδ’ εἰ γυναικῶν πᾶν κρεμασθείη γένος
καὶ τὴν ἐν Ἴδῃ γραμμάτων πλήσειέ τις
πεύκην·
ἐπεί νιν ἐσθλὸν ὄντ’ ἐπίσταμαι.

Χορός

Αἰαῖ, κέκρανται συμφορὰ νέων κακῶν,
οὐδ’ ἔστι μοίρας τοῦ χρεών τ’ ἀπαλλαγή.

Θησεύς

Μίσει μὲν ἀνδρὸς τοῦ πεπονθότος τάδε
λόγοισιν ἥσθην τοῖσδε·
νῦν δ’ αἰδούμενος
θεούς τ’ ἐκεῖνόν θ’, οὕνεκ’ ἐστὶν ἐξ ἐμοῦ,
οὔθ’ ἥδομαι τοῖσδ’ οὔτ’ ἐπάχθομαι κακοῖς.

Ἄγγελος

Πῶς οὖν; Κομίζειν, ἢ τί χρὴ τὸν ἄθλιον
δράσαντας ἡμᾶς σῇ χαρίζεσθαι φρενί;
Φρόντιζ'·
ἐμοῖς δὲ χρώμενος βουλεύμασιν
οὐκ ὠμὸς ἐς σὸν παῖδα δυστυχοῦντ' ἔσῃ.

Θησεύς

[1265] Κομίζετ' αὐτόν, ὡς ἰδὼν ἐν ὄμμασιν
[1267] λόγοις τ' ἐλέγξω δαιμόνων τε συμφοραῖς.
[1266] Τὸν τἄμ' ἀπαρνηθέντα μὴ χρᾶναι λέχη

Χορός

[1268] Σὺ τὰν θεῶν ἄκαμπτον φρένα καὶ βροτῶν
ἄγεις, Κύπρι, σὺν δ'
[1270] ὁ ποικιλόπτερος ἀμφιβαλὼν
ὠκυτάτῳ πτερῷ.
Ποτᾶται δὲ γαῖαν εὐάχητόν θ'
ἁλμυρὸν ἐπὶ πόντον,
θέλγει δ' Ἔρως ᾧ μαινομένᾳ κραδίᾳ
[1275] πτανὸς ἐφορμάσῃ χρυσοφαής,
φύσιν ὀρεσκόων σκύμνων πελαγίων θ'
ὅσα τε γᾶ τρέφει
τά τ' αἰθόμενος ἅλιος δέρκεται,
[1280] ἄνδρας τε·
συμπάντων βασιληίδα τι-
μάν, Κύπρι, τῶνδε μόνα κρατύνεις.

Ἄρτεμις

[1283] Σὲ τὸν εὐπατρίδην Αἰγέως κέλομαι
παῖδ' ἐπακοῦσαι·
[1285] Λητοῦς δὲ κόρη σ' Ἄρτεμις αὐδῶ.
Θησεῦ, τί τάλας τοῖσδε συνήδῃ,
παῖδ' οὐχ ὁσίως σὸν ἀποκτείνας
ψευδέσι μύθοις ἀλόχου πεισθεὶς
ἀφανῆ; Φανερὰν δ' ἔσχεθες ἄτην.

[1290] Πῶς οὐχ ὑπὸ γῆς τάρταρα κρύπτεις
δέμας αἰσχυνθείς,
ἢ πτηνὸς ἄνω μεταβὰς βίοτον
πήματος ἔξω πόδα τοῦδ' ἀνέχεις;
Ὡς ἔν γ' ἀγαθοῖς ἀνδράσιν οὔ σοι
[1295] κτητὸν βιότου μέρος ἐστίν.
Ἄκουε, Θησεῦ, σῶν κακῶν κατάστασιν.
Καίτοι προκόψω γ' οὐδέν, ἀλγυνῶ δέ σε·
ἀλλ' ἐς τόδ' ἦλθον, παιδὸς ἐκδεῖξαι φρένα
τοῦ σοῦ δικαίαν, ὡς ὑπ' εὐκλείας θάνῃ,
[1300] καὶ σῆς γυναικὸς οἶστρον ἢ τρόπον τινὰ
γενναιότητα·
τῆς γὰρ ἐχθίστης θεῶν
ἡμῖν ὅσοισι παρθένειος ἡδονὴ
δηχθεῖσα κέντροις παιδὸς ἠράσθη σέθεν.
Γνώμῃ δὲ νικᾶν τὴν Κύπριν πειρωμένη
[1305] τροφοῦ διώλετ' οὐχ ἑκοῦσα μηχαναῖς,
ἢ σῷ δι' ὅρκων παιδὶ σημαίνει νόσον.
Ὁ δ', ὥσπερ ὢν δίκαιος, οὐκ ἐφέσπετο
λόγοισιν, οὐδ' αὖ πρὸς σέθεν κακούμενος
ὅρκων ἀφεῖλε πίστιν, εὐσεβὴς γεγώς.
[1310] Ἡ δ' εἰς ἔλεγχον μὴ πέσῃ φοβουμένη
ψευδεῖς γραφὰς ἔγραψε καὶ διώλεσεν
δόλοισι σὸν παῖδ', ἀλλ' ὅμως ἔπεισέ σε.

Θησεύς

Οἴμοι.

Ἄρτεμις

[1313] Δάκνει σε, Θησεῦ, μῦθος; Ἀλλ' ἔχ' ἥσυχος,
τοὐνθένδ' ἀκούσας ὡς ἂν οἰμώξῃς πλέον.
[1315] Ἆρ' οἶσθα πατρὸς τρεῖς ἀρὰς ἔχων σαφεῖς;
Ὧν τὴν μίαν παρεῖλες, ὦ κάκιστε σύ,
ἐς παῖδα τὸν σόν, ἐξὸν εἰς ἐχθρόν τινα.
Πατὴρ μὲν οὖν σοι πόντιος φρονῶν καλῶς
ἔδωχ' ὅσονπερ χρῆν, ἐπείπερ ᾔνεσεν·

σὺ δ’ ἔν τ’ ἐκείνῳ κἀν ἐμοὶ φαίνῃ κακός,
ὃς οὔτε πίστιν οὔτε μάντεων ὄπα
ἔμεινας, οὐκ ἤλεγξας, οὐ χρόνῳ μακρῷ
σκέψιν παρέσχες, ἀλλὰ θᾶσσον ἢ σ’ ἐχρῆν
ἀρὰς ἀφῆκας παιδὶ καὶ κατέκτανες.

Θησεύς

Δέσποιν’, ὀλοίμην.

Ἄρτεμις

Δείν’ ἔπραξας, ἀλλ’ ὅμως
ἔτ’ ἔστι καί σοι τῶνδε συγγνώμης τυχεῖν·
Κύπρις γὰρ ἤθελ’ ὥστε γίγνεσθαι τάδε,
πληροῦσα θυμόν. Θεοῖσι δ’ ὦδ’ ἔχει νόμος·
οὐδεὶς ἀπαντᾶν βούλεται προθυμίᾳ
τῇ τοῦ θέλοντος, ἀλλ’ ἀφιστάμεσθ’ ἀεί.
Ἐπεί, σάφ’ ἴσθι, Ζῆνα μὴ φοβουμένη
οὐκ ἄν ποτ’ ἦλθον ἐς τόδ’ αἰσχύνης ἐγὼ
ὥστ’ ἄνδρα πάντων φίλτατον βροτῶν ἐμοὶ
θανεῖν ἐᾶσαι. Τὴν δὲ σὴν ἁμαρτίαν
τὸ μὴ εἰδέναι μὲν πρῶτον ἐκλύει κάκης·
ἔπειτα σὴ θανοῦσ’ ἀνήλωσεν γυνὴ
λόγων ἐλέγχους, ὥστε σὴν πεῖσαι φρένα.
Μάλιστα μέν νυν σοὶ τάδ’ ἔρρωγεν κακά,
λύπη δὲ κἀμοί·
τοὺς γὰρ εὐσεβεῖς θεοὶ
θνήσκοντας οὐ χαίρουσι·
τούς γε μὴν κακοὺς
αὐτοῖς τέκνοισι καὶ δόμοις ἐξόλλυμεν.

Χορός

Καὶ μὴν ὁ τάλας ὅδε δὴ στείχει,
σάρκας νεαρὰς ξανθόν τε κάρα
διαλυμανθείς. Ὦ πόνος οἵκων,

οἷον ἐκράνθη δίδυμον μελάθροις
πένθος θεόθεν καταληπτόν.

Ἱππόλυτος

Αἰαῖ αἰαῖ·
δύστηνος ἐγώ, πατρὸς ὡς ἀδίκου
χρησμοῖς ἀδίκοις διελυμάνθην.
Ἀπόλωλα τάλας, οἴμοι μοι.
Διά μου κεφαλῆς ἄσσουσ᾽ ὀδύναι,
κατὰ δ᾽ ἐγκέφαλον πηδᾷ σφάκελος.
Σχές, ἀπειρηκὸς σῶμ᾽ ἀναπαύσω.
Ἔ ἔ·
ὦ στυγνὸν ὄχημ᾽ ἵππειον, ἐμῆς
βόσκημα χερός,
διά μ᾽ ἔφθειρας, κατὰ δ᾽ ἔκτεινας.
Φεῦ φεῦ·
πρὸς θεῶν, ἀτρέμα, δμῶες,
χροὸς ἑλκώδους ἅπτεσθε χεροῖν.
Τίς ἐφέστηκεν δεξιὰ πλευροῖς;
Πρόσφορά μ᾽ αἴρετε, σύντονα δ᾽ ἕλκετε
τὸν κακοδαίμονα καὶ κατάρατον
πατρὸς ἀμπλακίαις. Ζεῦ Ζεῦ, τάδ᾽ ὁρᾷς;
Ὅδ᾽ ὁ σεμνὸς ἐγὼ καὶ θεοσέπτωρ,
ὅδ᾽ ὁ σωφροσύνῃ πάντας ὑπερσχών,
προῦπτον ἐς Ἅιδην στείχω, κατ᾽ ἄκρας
ὀλέσας βίοτον, μόχθους δ᾽ ἄλλως
τῆς εὐσεβίας
εἰς ἀνθρώπους ἐπόνησα.
Αἰαῖ αἰαῖ·
καὶ νῦν ὀδύνα μ᾽ ὀδύνα βαίνει
μέθετέ με, τάλανες
καί μοι θάνατος Παιὰν ἔλθοι.
Προσαπόλλυτ᾽ ἀπόλλυτε τὸν δυσδαί-
μον᾽·
ὑπ᾽ ἀμφιτόμου λόγχας ἔραμαι
διαμοιρᾶσαι

διά τ᾽ εὐνᾶσαι τὸν ἐμὸν βίοτον.
Ὦ πατρὸς ἐμοῦ δύστανος ἀρά·
μιαιφόνον τι σύγγονον
[1380] παλαιῶν προγεννη-
τόρων ἐξορίζεται
κακόν, οὐδὲ μένει,
ἔμολέ τ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἐμέ τί ποτε τὸν οὐ-
δὲν ὄντ᾽ ἐπαίτιον κακῶν;
Ἰώ μοί μοι·
[1385] τί φῶ; Πῶς ἀπαλλά-
[1385β] ξω βιοτὰν ἐμὰν
τοῦδ᾽ ἀνάλγητον πάθους;
[1386β] Εἴθε με κοιμάσειε τὸν
δυσδαίμον᾽ Ἅιδα μέλαι-
να νύκτερός τ᾽ ἀνάγκα.

Ἄρτεμις

Ὦ τλῆμον, οἵᾳ συμφορᾷ συνεζύγης·
[1390] τὸ δ᾽ εὐγενές σε τῶν φρενῶν ἀπώλεσεν.

Ἱππόλυτος

Ἔα·
ὦ θεῖον ὀδμῆς πνεῦμα·
καὶ γὰρ ἐν κακοῖς
ὢν ᾐσθόμην σου κἀνεκουφίσθην δέμας·
ἔστ᾽ ἐν τόποισι τοισίδ᾽ Ἄρτεμις θεά.

Ἄρτεμις

Ὦ τλῆμον, ἔστι, σοί γε φιλτάτη θεῶν.

Ἱππόλυτος

[1395] Ὁρᾷς με, δέσποιν᾽, ὡς ἔχω, τὸν ἄθλιον;

Ἄρτεμις

Ὁρῶ·
κατ᾽ ὄσσων δ᾽ οὐ θέμις βαλεῖν δάκρυ.

Ἱππόλυτος

Οὐκ ἔστι σοι κυναγὸς οὐδ᾽ ὑπηρέτης.

Ἄρτεμις

Οὐ δῆτ᾽·
ἀτάρ μοι προσφιλής γ᾽ ἀπόλλυσαι.

Ἱππόλυτος

Οὐδ᾽ ἱπποναύμας οὐδ᾽ ἀγαλμάτων φύλαξ.

Ἄρτεμις

[1400] Κύπρις γὰρ ἡ πανοῦργος ὧδ᾽ ἐμήσατο.

Ἱππόλυτος

Ὤμοι, φρονῶ δὴ δαίμον᾽ ἥ μ᾽ ἀπώλεσεν.

Ἄρτεμις

Τιμῆς ἐμέμφθη, σωφρονοῦντι δ᾽ ἤχθετο.

Ἱππόλυτος

Τρεῖς ὄντας ἡμᾶς ὤλεσ᾽, ἦσθημαι, μία.

Ἄρτεμις

Πατέρα γε καὶ σὲ καὶ τρίτην ξυνάορον.

Ἱππόλυτος

[1405] Ὤμωξα τοίνυν καὶ πατρὸς δυσπραξίας.

Ἄρτεμις

Ἐξηπατήθη δαίμονος βουλεύμασιν.

Ἱππόλυτος

Ἆ δυστάλας σὺ τῆσδε συμφορᾶς, πάτερ.

Θησεύς

Ὄλωλα, τέκνον, οὐδέ μοι χάρις βίου.

Ἱππόλυτος

Στένω σὲ μᾶλλον ἢ ‘μὲ τῆς ἁμαρτίας.

Θησεύς

[1410] Εἰ γὰρ γενοίμην, τέκνον, ἀντὶ σοῦ νεκρός.

Ἱππόλυτος

Ἆ δῶρα πατρὸς σοῦ Ποσειδῶνος πικρά.

Θησεύς

Ὡς μήποτ’ ἐλθεῖν ὤφελ’ ἐς τοὐμὸν στόμα.

Ἱππόλυτος

Τί δ’; Ἔκτανές τἄν μ’, ὡς τότ’ ἦσθ’ ὠργισμένος.

Θησεύς

Δόξης γὰρ ἦμεν πρὸς θεῶν ἐσφαλμένοι.

Ἱππόλυτος

Φεῦ·
[1415] εἴθ’ ἦν ἀραῖον δαίμοσιν βροτῶν γένος.

Ἄρτεμις

[1416] Ἔασον·
οὐ γὰρ οὐδὲ γῆς ὑπὸ ζόφον
θεᾶς ἄτιμοι Κύπριδος ἐκ προθυμίας
ὀργαὶ κατασκήψουσιν ἐς τὸ σὸν δέμας,
σῆς εὐσεβείας κἀγαθῆς φρενὸς χάριν·
[1420] ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτῆς ἄλλον ἐξ ἐμῆς χερὸς
ὃς ἂν μάλιστα φίλτατος κυρῇ βροτῶν
τόξοις ἀφύκτοις τοῖσδε τιμωρήσομαι.
Σοὶ δ', ὦ ταλαίπωρ', ἀντὶ τῶνδε τῶν κακῶν
τιμὰς μεγίστας ἐν πόλει Τροζηνίᾳ
[1425] δώσω·
κόραι γὰρ ἄζυγες γάμων πάρος
κόμας κεροῦνταί σοι, δι' αἰῶνος μακροῦ
πένθη μέγιστα δακρύων καρπουμένῳ.
Ἀεὶ δὲ μουσοποιὸς ἐς σὲ παρθένων
ἔσται μέριμνα, κοὐκ ἀνώνυμος πεσὼν
[1430] ἔρως ὁ Φαίδρας ἐς σὲ σιγηθήσεται.
Σὺ δ', ὦ γεραιοῦ τέκνον Αἰγέως, λαβὲ
σὸν παῖδ' ἐν ἀγκάλαισι καὶ προσέλκυσαι·
ἄκων γὰρ ὤλεσάς νιν, ἀνθρώποισι δὲ
θεῶν διδόντων εἰκὸς ἐξαμαρτάνειν.
[1435] Καὶ σοὶ παραινῶ πατέρα μὴ στυγεῖν σέθεν,
Ἱππόλυτ'·
ἔχει γὰρ μοῖραν ᾗ διεφθάρης.
Καὶ χαῖρ'·
ἐμοὶ γὰρ οὐ θέμις φθιτοὺς ὁρᾶν
οὐδ' ὄμμα χραίνειν θανασίμοισιν ἐκπνοαῖς·
ὁρῶ δέ σ' ἤδη τοῦδε πλησίον κακοῦ.

Ἱππόλυτος

[1440] Χαίρουσα καὶ σὺ στεῖχε, παρθέν' ὀλβία·
μακρὰν δὲ λείπεις ῥᾳδίως ὁμιλίαν.
Λύω δὲ νεῖκος πατρὶ χρῃζούσης σέθεν·
καὶ γὰρ πάροιθε σοῖς ἐπειθόμην λόγοις.

Αἰαῖ, κατ᾽ ὄσσων κιγχάνει μ᾽ ἤδη σκότος·
[1445] Λαβοῦ, πάτερ, μου καὶ κατόρθωσον δέμας.

Θησεύς

Οἴμοι, τέκνον, τί δρᾷς με τὸν δυσδαίμονα;

Ἱππόλυτος

Ὄλωλα καὶ δὴ νερτέρων ὁρῶ πύλας.

Θησεύς

Ἦ τὴν ἐμὴν ἄναγνον ἐκλιπὼν χέρα;

Ἱππόλυτος

Οὐ δῆτ᾽, ἐπεί σε τοῦδ᾽ ἐλευθερῶ φόνου.

Θησεύς

[1450] Τί φῄς; Ἀφίης αἵματός μ᾽ ἐλεύθερον;

Ἱππόλυτος

Τὴν τοξόδαμνον Ἄρτεμιν μαρτύρομαι.

Θησεύς

Ὦ φίλταθ᾽, ὡς γενναῖος ἐκφαίνῃ πατρί.

Ἱππόλυτος

Ὦ χαῖρε καὶ σύ, χαῖρε πολλά μοι, πάτερ.

Θησεύς

Οἴμοι φρενὸς σῆς εὐσεβοῦς τε κἀγαθῆς.

Ἱππόλυτος

[1455] Τοιῶνδε παίδων γνησίων εὔχου τυχεῖν.

Θησεύς

Μή νυν προδῷς με, τέκνον, ἀλλὰ καρτέρει.

Ἱππόλυτος

Κεκαρτέρηται τἄμ'·
ὄλωλα γάρ, πάτερ.
κρύψον δέ μου πρόσωπον ὡς τάχος πέπλοις.

Θησεύς

Ὦ κλεῖν' Ἀθῆναι Παλλάδος θ' ὁρίσματα,
[1460] οἵου στερήσεσθ' ἀνδρός. ὦ τλήμων ἐγώ,
ὡς πολλά, Κύπρι, σῶν κακῶν μεμνήσομαι.

Χορός

Κοινὸν τόδ' ἄχος πᾶσι πολίταις
ἦλθεν ἀέλπτως.
Πολλῶν δακρύων ἔσται πίτυλος·
[1465] τῶν γὰρ μεγάλων ἀξιοπενθεῖς
φῆμαι μᾶλλον κατέχουσιν.

ANDROMACHE

Ἀνδρομάχη

Ἀσιάτιδος γῆς σχῆμα, Θηβαία πόλις,
ὅθεν ποθ’ ἕδνων σὺν πολυχρύσῳ χλιδῇ
Πριάμου τύραννον ἑστίαν ἀφικόμην
δάμαρ δοθεῖσα παιδοποιὸς Ἕκτορι,
ζηλωτὸς ἔν γε τῷ πρὶν Ἀνδρομάχῃ χρόνῳ,
νῦν δ’, εἴ τις ἄλλη, δυστυχεστάτη γυνή·
[ἐμοῦ πέφυκεν ἢ γενήσεταί ποτε]·
ἥτις πόσιν μὲν Ἕκτορ’ ἐξ Ἀχιλλέως
θανόντ’ ἐσεῖδον, παῖδά θ’ ὃν τίκτω πόσει
ῥιφθέντα πύργων Ἀστυάνακτ’ ἀπ’ ὀρθίων,
ἐπεὶ τὸ Τροίας εἶλον Ἕλληνες πέδον·
αὐτὴ δὲ δούλη τῶν ἐλευθερωτάτων
οἴκων νομισθεῖσ’ Ἑλλάδ’ εἰσαφικόμην
τῷ νησιώτῃ Νεοπτολέμῳ δορὸς γέρας
δοθεῖσα λείας Τρωϊ̈κῆς ἐξαίρετον.
Φθίας δὲ τῆσδε καὶ πόλεως Φαρσαλίας
σύγχορτα ναίω πεδί’, ἵν’ ἡ θαλασσία
Πηλεῖ ξυνῴκει χωρὶς ἀνθρώπων Θέτις
φεύγουσ’ ὅμιλον· Θεσσαλὸς δέ νιν λεὼς
Θετίδειον αὐδᾷ θεᾶς χάριν νυμφευμάτων.
Ἔνθ’ οἶκον ἔσχε τόνδε παῖς Ἀχιλλέως,
Πηλέα δ’ ἀνάσσειν γῆς ἐᾷ Φαρσαλίας,
ζῶντος γέροντος σκῆπτρον οὐ θέλων λαβεῖν.
Κἀγὼ δόμοις τοῖσδ’ ἄρσεν’ ἐντίκτω κόρον,
πλαθεῖσ’ Ἀχιλλέως παιδί, δεσπότῃ δ’ ἐμῷ.
Καὶ πρὶν μὲν ἐν κακοῖσι κειμένην ὅμως
ἐλπίς μ’ ἀεὶ προσῆγε σωθέντος τέκνου
ἀλκήν τιν’ εὑρεῖν κἀπικούρησιν δόμον·
ἐπεὶ δὲ τὴν Λάκαιναν Ἑρμιόνην γαμεῖ
τοὐμὸν παρώσας δεσπότης δοῦλον λέχος,
κακοῖς πρὸς αὐτῆς σχετλίοις ἐλαύνομαι.
Λέγει γὰρ ὡς νιν φαρμάκοις κεκρυμμένοις

τίθημ’ ἄπαιδα καὶ πόσει μισουμένην,
αὐτὴ δὲ ναίειν οἶκον ἀντ’ αὐτῆς θέλω
τόνδ’, ἐκβαλοῦσα λέκτρα τἀκείνης βίᾳ·
ἀγὼ τὸ πρῶτον οὐχ ἑκοῦσ’ ἐδεξάμην,
νῦν δ’ ἐκλέλοιπα· Ζεὺς τάδ’ εἰδείη μέγας,
ὡς οὐχ ἑκοῦσα τῷδ’ ἐκοινώθην λέχει.
Ἀλλ’ οὔ σφε πείθω, βούλεται δέ με κτανεῖν,
πατήρ τε θυγατρὶ Μενέλεως συνδρᾷ τάδε.
Καὶ νῦν κατ’ οἴκους ἔστ’, ἀπὸ Σπάρτης μολὼν
ἐπ’ αὐτὸ τοῦτο· δειματουμένη δ’ ἐγὼ
δόμων πάροικον Θέτιδος εἰς ἀνάκτορον
θάσσω τόδ’ ἐλθοῦσ’, ἵν με κωλύσῃ θανεῖν
Πηλεύς τε γάρ νιν ἔκγονοί τε Πηλέως
σέβουσιν, ἑρμήνευμα Νηρῇδος γάμων.
Ὃς δ’ ἔστι παῖς μοι μόνος, ὑπεκπέμπω λάθρᾳ
ἄλλους ἐς οἴκους, μὴ θάνῃ φοβουμένη.
Ὁ γὰρ φυτεύσας αὐτὸν οὔτ’ ἐμοὶ πάρα
προσωφελῆσαι, παιδί τ’ οὐδέν ἐστ’, ἀπὼν
Δελφῶν κατ’ αἶαν, ἔνθα Λοξίᾳ δίκην
δίδωσι μανίας, ᾗ ποτ’ εἰς Πυθὼ μολὼν
ἤτησε Φοῖβον πατρὸς οὗ κτείνει δίκην,
εἴ πως τὰ πρόσθε σφάλματ’ ἐξαιτούμενος
θεὸν παράσχοιτ’ εἰς τὸ λοιπὸν εὐμενῆ.

Θεράπαινα.

Δέσποιν’, ἐγώ τοι τοὔνομ’ οὐ φεύγω τόδε
καλεῖν σ’, ἐπείπερ καὶ κατ’ οἶκον ἠξίουν
τὸν σόν, τὸ Τροίας ἡνίκ’ ᾠκοῦμεν πέδον,
εὔνους δὲ καὶ σοὶ ζῶντί τ’ ἦ τῷ σῷ πόσει,
καὶ νῦν φέρουσά σοι νέους ἥκω λόγους,
φόβῳ μέν, εἴ τις δεσποτῶν αἰσθήσεται,
οἴκτῳ δὲ τῷ σῷ· δεινὰ γὰρ βουλεύεται
Μενέλαος εἰς σὲ παῖς θ’, ἅ σοι φυλακτέα.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Ὦ φιλτάτη σύνδουλε σύνδουλος γὰρ εἶ
τῇ πρόσθ’ ἀνάσσῃ τῇδε, νῦν δὲ δυστυχεῖ
τί δρῶσι; ποίας μηχανὰς πλέκουσιν αὖ,
κτεῖναι θέλοντες τὴν παναθλίαν ἐμέ;

Θεράπαινα

Τὸν παῖδά σου μέλλουσιν, ὦ δύστηνε σύ,
κτείνειν, ὃν ἔξω δωμάτων ὑπεξέθου.
φροῦδος δ’ ἐπ’ αὐτὸν Μενέλεως δόμων ἄπο.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Οἴμοι· πέπυσται τὸν ἐμὸν ἔκθετον γόνον;
πόθεν ποτ’; ὦ δύστηνος, ὡς ἀπωλόμην.

Θεράπαινα

Οὐκ οἶδ’, ἐκείνων δ’ ᾐσθόμην ἐγὼ τάδε·

Ἀνδρομάχη

Ἀπωλόμην ἄρ’. Ὦ τέκνον, κτενοῦσί σε
δισσοὶ λαβόντες γῦπες· ὁ δὲ κεκλημένος
πατὴρ ἔτ’ ἐν Δελφοῖσι τυγχάνει μένων.

Θεράπαινα

Δοκῶ γὰρ οὐκ ἂν ὧδέ σ’ ἂν πράσσειν κακῶς
κείνου παρόντος· νῦν δ’ ἔρημος εἶ φίλων.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Οὐδ’ ἀμφὶ Πηλέως ἦλθεν ὡς ἥξοι φάτις;

Θεράπαινα

Γέρων ἐκεῖνος ὥστε σ’ ὠφελεῖν παρών.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Καὶ μὴν ἔπεμψ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν οὐχ ἅπαξ μόνον.

Θεράπαινα

Μῶν οὖν δοκεῖς σου φροντίσαι τιν᾽ ἀγγέλων;

Ἀνδρομάχη

Πόθεν; θέλεις οὖν ἄγγελος σύ μοι μολεῖν;

Θεράπαινα

Τί δῆτα φήσω χρόνιος οὖσ᾽ ἐκ δωμάτων;

Ἀνδρομάχη

Πολλὰς ἂν εὕροις μηχανάς· γυνὴ γὰρ εἶ.

Θεράπαινα

Κίνδυνος· Ἑρμιόνη γὰρ οὐ σμικρὸν φύλαξ.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Ὁρᾷς; ἀπαυδᾷς ἐν κακοῖς φίλοισι σοῖς.

Θεράπαινα

Οὐ δῆτα· μηδὲν τοῦτ᾽ ὀνειδίσῃς ἐμοί.
Ἀλλ᾽ εἶμ᾽, ἐπεί τοι κοὐ περίβλεπτος βίος
δούλης γυναικός, ἤν τι καὶ πάθω κακόν.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Χώρει νυν· ἡμεῖς δ᾽, οἷσπερ ἐγκείμεσθ᾽ ἀεὶ
θρήνοισι καὶ γόοισι καὶ δακρύμασι,
πρὸς αἰθέρ᾽ ἐκτενοῦμεν· ἐμπέφυκε γὰρ

γυναιξὶ τέρψις τῶν παρεστώτων κακῶν
ἀνὰ στόμ᾽ ἀεὶ καὶ διὰ γλώσσης ἔχειν.
Πάρεστι δ᾽ οὐχ ἓν ἀλλὰ πολλά μοι στένειν,
πόλιν πατρῴαν τὸν θανόντα θ᾽ Ἕκτορα
στερρόν τε τὸν ἐμὸν δαίμον᾽ ᾧ συνεζύγην
δούλειον ἦμαρ εἰσπεσοῦσ᾽ ἀναξίως.
Χρὴ δ᾽ οὔποτ᾽ εἰπεῖν οὐδέν᾽ ὄλβιον βροτῶν,
πρὶν ἂν θανόντος τὴν τελευταίαν ἴδῃς
ὅπως περάσας ἡμέραν ἥξει κάτω.

Ἰλίῳ αἰπεινᾷ Πάρις οὐ γάμον ἀλλά τιν᾽ ἄταν
ἀγάγετ᾽ εὐναίαν εἰς θαλάμους Ἑλέναν.
Ἃς ἕνεκ᾽, ὦ Τροία, δορὶ καὶ πυρὶ δηιάλωτον
εἶλέ σ᾽ ὁ χιλιόναυς Ἑλλάδος ὀξὺς Ἄρης
καὶ τὸν ἐμὸν μελέας πόσιν Ἕκτορα, τὸν περὶ τείχη
εἵλκυσε διφρεύων παῖς ἁλίας Θέτιδος·
αὐτὰ δ᾽ ἐκ θαλάμων ἀγόμαν ἐπὶ θῖνα θαλάσσας,
δουλοσύναν στυγερὰν ἀμφιβαλοῦσα κάρᾳ.
Πολλὰ δὲ δάκρυά μοι κατέβα χροός, ἀνίκ᾽ ἔλειπον
ἄστυ τε καὶ θαλάμους καὶ πόσιν ἐν κονίαις.
Ὤμοι ἐγὼ μελέα, τί μ᾽ ἐχρῆν ἔτι φέγγος ὁρᾶσθαι
Ἑρμιόνας δούλαν; ἃς ὕπο τειρομένα
πρὸς τόδ᾽ ἄγαλμα θεᾶς ἱκέτις περὶ χεῖρε βαλοῦσα
τάκομαι ὡς πετρίνα πιδακόεσσα λιβάς.

Χορός

Ὦ γύναι, ἃ Θέτιδος δάπεδον καὶ ἀνάκτορα θάσσεις
δαρὸν οὐδὲ λείπεις,
Φθιὰς ὅμως ἔμολον ποτὶ σὰν Ἀσιήτιδα γένναν,
εἴ τί σοι δυναίμαν
ἄκος τῶν δυσλύτων πόνων τεμεῖν,
οἳ σὲ καὶ Ἑρμιόναν ἔριδι στυγερᾷ συνέκλῃσαν,
τλᾶμον, ἀμφὶ λέκτρων
διδύμων, ἐπίκοινον ἔχουσαν
ἄνδρα, παῖδ᾽ Ἀχιλλέως.

Γνῶθι τύχαν, λόγισαι τὸ παρὸν κακὸν εἰς ὅπερ ἥκεις.
Δεσπόταις ἁμιλλᾷ
Ἰλιὰς οὖσα κόρα Λακεδαίμονος ἐγγενέτῃσιν;
λεῖπε δεξίμηλον
δόμον τᾶς ποντίας θεοῦ. Τί σοι
καιρὸς ἀτυζομένᾳ δέμας αἰκέλιον καταλείβειν
δεσποτᾶν ἀνάγκαις;
τὸ κρατοῦν δέ σ' ἔπεισι. τί μόχθον
οὐδὲν οὖσα μοχθεῖς;

Ἀλλ' ἴθι λεῖπε θεᾶς Νηρηίδος ἀγλαὸν ἕδραν,
γνῶθι δ' οὖσ' ἐπὶ ξένας
δμωὶς ἐπ' ἀλλοτρίας
πόλεος, ἔνθ' οὐ φίλων τιν' εἰσορᾷς
σῶν, ὦ δυστυχεστάτα,
< ὦ> παντάλαινα νύμφα.

Οἰκτροτάτα γὰρ ἔμοιγ' ἔμολες, γύναι Ἰλιάς, οἴκους
δεσποτᾶν ἐμῶν· φόβῳ δ'
ἡσυχίαν ἄγομεν
Τὸ δὲ σὸν οἴκτῳ φέρουσα τυγχάνω'
μὴ παῖς τᾶς Διὸς κόρας
σοί μ' εὖ φρονοῦσαν εἰδῇ.

Ἑρμιόνη

κόσμον μὲν ἀμφὶ κρατὶ χρυσέας χλιδῆς
στολμόν τε χρωτὸς τόνδε ποικίλων πέπλων
οὐ τῶν Ἀχιλλέως οὐδὲ Πηλέως ἄπο
δόμων ἀπαρχὰς δεῦρ' ἔχουσ' ἀφικόμην,
ἀλλ' ἐκ Λακαίνης Σπαρτιάτιδος χθονὸς
Μενέλαος ἡμῖν ταῦτα δωρεῖται πατὴρ
πολλοῖς σὺν ἕδνοις, ὥστ' ἐλευθεροστομεῖν.
[ὑμᾶς μὲν οὖν τοῖσδ' ἀνταμείβομαι λόγοις.]
σὺ δ' οὖσα δούλη καὶ δορίκτητος γυνὴ
δόμους κατασχεῖν ἐκβαλοῦσ' ἡμᾶς θέλεις
τούσδε, στυγοῦμαι δ' ἀνδρὶ φαρμάκοισι σοῖς,

νηδὺς δ’ ἀκύμων διὰ σέ μοι διόλλυται·
δεινὴ γὰρ ἠπειρῶτις εἰς τὰ τοιάδε
ψυχὴ γυναικῶν· ὧν ἐπισχήσω σ’ ἐγώ,
κοὐδέν σ’ ὀνήσει δῶμα Νηρῇδος τόδε,
οὐ βωμὸς οὐδὲ ναός, ἀλλὰ κατθανῇ.
ἢν δ’ οὖν βροτῶν τίς σ’ ἢ θεῶν σῷσαι θέλῃ,
δεῖ σ’ ἀντὶ τῶν πρὶν ὀλβίων φρονημάτων
πτῆξαι ταπεινὴν προσπεσεῖν τ’ ἐμὸν γόνυ,
σαίρειν τε δῶμα τοὐμὸν ἐκ χρυσηλάτων
τευχέων χερὶ σπείρουσαν Ἀχελῴου δρόσον,
γνῶναί θ’ ἵν’ εἶ γῆς. οὐ γάρ ἐσθ’ Ἕκτωρ τάδε,
οὐ Πρίαμος οὐδὲ χρυσός, ἀλλ’ Ἑλλὰς πόλις.
εἰς τοῦτο δ’ ἥκεις ἀμαθίας, δύστηνε σύ,
ἢ παιδὶ πατρός, ὃς σὸν ὤλεσεν πόσιν,
τολμᾷς ξυνεύδειν καὶ τέκν’ αὐθεντῶν πάρα
τίκτειν. τοιοῦτον πᾶν τὸ βάρβαρον γένος·
πατήρ τε θυγατρὶ παῖς τε μητρὶ μείγνυται
κόρη τ’ ἀδελφῷ, διὰ φόνου δ’ οἱ φίλτατοι
χωροῦσι, καὶ τῶνδ’ οὐδὲν ἐξείργει νόμος.
ἃ μὴ παρ’ ἡμᾶς εἴσφερ’· οὐδὲ γὰρ καλὸν
δυοῖν γυναικοῖν ἄνδρ’ ἕν’ ἡνίας ἔχειν,
ἀλλ’ εἰς μίαν βλέποντες εὐναίαν Κύπριν
στέργουσιν, ὅστις μὴ κακῶς οἰκεῖν θέλει.

Χορός

Ἐπίφθονόν τοι χρῆμα θηλείας φρενὸς
καὶ ξυγγάμοισι δυσμενὲς μάλιστ’ ἀεί.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Φεῦ φεῦ·
κακόν γε θνητοῖς τὸ νέον ἔν τε τῷ νέῳ
τὸ μὴ δίκαιον ὅστις ἀνθρώπων ἔχει.
Ἐγὼ δὲ ταρβῶ μὴ τὸ δουλεύειν μέ σοι
λόγων ἀπώσῃ πόλλ’ ἔχουσαν ἔνδικα,
ἢν δ’ αὖ κρατήσω, μὴ ‘πὶ τῷδ’ ὄφλω βλάβην·

οἱ γὰρ πνέοντες μεγάλα τοὺς κρείσσους λόγους
πικρῶς φέρουσι τῶν ἐλασσόνων ὕπο·
ὅμως δ᾽ ἐμαυτὴν οὐ προδοῦσ᾽ ἁλώσομαι.
Εἶπ᾽, ὦ νεᾶνι, τῷ σ᾽ ἐχεγγύῳ λόγῳ
πεισθεῖσ᾽ ἀπωθῶ γνησίων νυμφευμάτων;
[ὡς ἡ Λάκαινα τῶν Φρυγῶν μείων πόλις,
τύχῃ θ᾽ ὑπερθεῖ, κἄμ᾽ ἐλευθέραν ὁρᾷς;]
Ποτερον ἵν᾽ αὐτὴ παῖδας ἀντὶ σοῦ τέκω
δούλους ἐμαυτῇ τ᾽ ἀθλίαν ἐφολκίδα;
ἢ τῷ νέῳ τε καὶ σφριγῶντι σώματι
πόλεως τε μεγέθει καὶ φίλοις ἐπηρμένη
οἶκον κατασχεῖν τὸν σὸν ἀντὶ σοῦ θέλω;
Ἢ τοὺς ἐμούς τις παῖδας ἐξανέξεται
Φθίας τυράννους ὄντας, ἢν σὺ μὴ τέκῃς;
φιλοῦσι γάρ μ᾽ Ἕλληνες Ἕκτορός τ᾽ ἄπο
< Πάριδός τε, κείνων τοῦ τ᾽ ἐμοῦ κηδεύματος,>
αὐτή τ᾽ ἀμαυρὰ κοὐ τύραννος ἢ Φρυγῶν;
οὐκ ἐξ ἐμῶν σε φαρμάκων στυγεῖ πόσις,
ἀλλ᾽ εἰ ξυνεῖναι μὴ ‘πιτηδεία κυρεῖς.
Φίλτρον δὲ καὶ τόδ᾽· οὐ τὸ κάλλος, ὦ γύναι,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀρεταὶ τέρπουσι τοὺς ξυνευνέτας.
Σὺ δ᾽ ἤν τι κνισθῇς, ἡ Λάκαινα μὲν πόλις
μέγ᾽ ἐστί, τὴν δὲ Σκῦρον οὐδαμοῦ τίθης·
πλουτεῖς δ᾽ ἐν οὐ πλουτοῦσι· Μενέλεως δέ σοι
μείζων Ἀχιλλέως. Ταῦτά τοί σ᾽ ἔχθει πόσις.
Χρὴ γὰρ γυναῖκα, κἂν κακῷ πόσει δοθῇ,
στέργειν, ἄμιλλάν τ᾽ οὐκ ἔχειν φρονήματος.
Εἰ δ᾽ ἀμφὶ Θρῄκην τὴν χιόνι κατάρρυτον
τύραννον ἔσχες ἄνδρ᾽, ἵν᾽ ἐν μέρει λέχος
δίδωσι πολλαῖς εἷς ἀνὴρ κοινούμενος,
ἔκτεινας ἂν τάσδ᾽; εἶτ᾽ ἀπληστίαν λέχους
πάσαις γυναιξὶ προστιθεῖσ᾽ ἂν ηὑρέθης.
Αἰσχρόν γε· καίτοι χείρον᾽ ἀρσένων νόσον
ταύτην νοσοῦμεν, ἀλλὰ προστῶμεν καλῶς.
Ὦ φίλταθ᾽ Ἕκτορ, ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ τὴν σὴν χάριν
σοὶ καὶ ξυνήρων, εἴ τί σε σφάλλοι Κύπρις,
καὶ μαστὸν ἤδη πολλάκις νόθοισι σοῖς

ἐπέσχον, ἵνα σοι μηδὲν ἐνδοίην πικρόν.
Καὶ ταῦτα δρῶσα τῇ ἀρετῇ προσηγόμην
πόσιν· σὺ δ᾽ οὐδὲ ῥανίδ᾽ ὑπαιθρίας δρόσου
τῷ σῷ προσίζειν ἀνδρὶ δειμαίνουσ᾽ ἐᾷς.
Μὴ τὴν τεκοῦσαν τῇ φιλανδρίᾳ, γύναι,
ζήτει παρελθεῖν· τῶν κακῶν γὰρ μητέρων
φεύγειν τρόπους χρὴ τέκν᾽, ὅσοις ἔνεστι νοῦς.

Χορός

Δέσποιν᾽, ὅσον σοι ῥᾳδίως παρίσταται,
τοσόνδε πείθου τῇδε συμβῆναι λόγοις.

Ἑρμιόνη

Τί σεμνομυθεῖς κἀς ἀγῶν᾽ ἔρχῃ λόγων,
ὡς δὴ σὺ σώφρων, τἀμὰ δ᾽ οὐχὶ σώφρονα;

Ἀνδρομάχη

Οὔκουν ἐφ᾽ οἷς γε νῦν καθέστηκας λόγοις;

Ἑρμιόνη

Ὁ νοῦς ὁ σός μοι μὴ ξυνοικοίη, γύναι.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Νέα πέφυκας καὶ λέγεις αἰσχρῶν πέρι.

Ἑρμιόνη

Σὺ δ᾽ οὐ λέγεις γε, δρᾷς δέ μ᾽ εἰς ὅσον δύνᾳ.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Οὐκ αὖ σιωπῇ Κύπριδος ἀλγήσεις πέρι;

Ἑρμιόνη

Τί δ’; Οὐ γυναιξὶ ταῦτα πρῶτα πανταχοῦ;

Ἀνδρομάχη

< >

Ἑρμιόνη

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Ἀνδρομάχη

Καλῶς γε χρωμέναισιν· εἰ δὲ μή, οὐ καλά.

Ἑρμιόνη

Οὐ βαρβάρων νόμοισιν οἰκοῦμεν πόλιν.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Κἀκεῖ τά γ’ αἰσχρὰ κἀνθάδ’ αἰσχύνην ἔχει.

Ἑρμιόνη

Σοφὴ σοφὴ σύ· κατθανεῖν δ’ ὅμως σε δεῖ.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Ὁρᾷς ἄγαλμα Θέτιδος εἰς σ’ ἀποβλέπον;

Ἑρμιόνη

Μισοῦν γε πατρίδα σὴν Ἀχιλλέως φόνῳ.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Ἑλένη νιν ὤλεσ’, οὐκ ἐγώ, μήτηρ γε σή.

Ἑρμιόνη

῏Η καὶ πρόσω γὰρ τῶν ἐμῶν ψαύσεις κακῶν;

Ἀνδρομάχη

Ἰδοὺ σιωπῶ κἀπιλάζυμαι στόμα.

Ἑρμιόνη

Ἐκεῖνο λέξον, οὗπερ εἵνεκ᾽ ἐστάλην.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Λέγω σ᾽ ἐγὼ νοῦν οὐκ ἔχειν ὅσον σε δεῖ.

Ἑρμιόνη

Λείψεις τόδ᾽ ἁγνὸν τέμενος ἐναλίας θεοῦ;

Ἀνδρομάχη

Εἰ μὴ θανοῦμαί γ᾽· εἰ δὲ μή, οὐ λείψω ποτέ.

Ἑρμιόνη

Ὡς τοῦτ᾽ ἄραρε, κοὐ μενῶ πόσιν μολεῖν.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Ἀλλ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἐγὼ μὴν πρόσθεν ἐκδώσω μέ σοι.

Ἑρμιόνη

Πῦρ σοι προσοίσω, κοὐ τὸ σὸν προσκέψομαι.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Σὺ δ᾽ οὖν κάταιθε· θεοὶ γὰρ εἴσονται τάδε.

Ἑρμιόνη

Καὶ χρωτὶ δεινῶν τραυμάτων ἀλγηδόνας.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Σφάζ’, αἱμάτου θεᾶς βωμόν, ἢ μέτεισί σε.

Ἑρμιόνη

Ὦ βάρβαρον σὺ θρέμμα καὶ σκληρὸν θράσος,
ἐγκαρτερεῖς δὴ θάνατον; ἀλλ’ ἐγώ σ’ ἕδρας
ἐκ τῆσδ’ ἑκοῦσαν ἐξαναστήσω τάχα·
τοιόνδ’ ἔχω σου δέλεαρ. Ἀλλὰ γὰρ λόγους
κρύψω, τὸ δ’ ἔργον αὐτὸ σημανεῖ τάχα.
Κάθησ’ ἑδραία· καὶ γὰρ εἰ πέριξ σ’ ἔχοι
τηκτὸς μόλυβδος, ἐξαναστήσω σ’ ἐγὼ
πρὶν ᾧ πέποιθας παῖδ’ Ἀχιλλέως μολεῖν.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Πέποιθα. Δεινὸν δ’ ἑρπετῶν μὲν ἀγρίων
ἄκη βροτοῖσι θεῶν καταστῆσαί τινα·
ὃ δ’ ἔστ’ ἐχίδνης καὶ πυρὸς περαιτέρω
οὐδεὶς γυναικὸς φάρμακ’ ἐξηύρηκέ πω
[κακῆς· τοσοῦτόν ἐσμεν ἀνθρώποις κακόν].

Χορός

Ἦ μεγάλων ἀχέων ἄρ’ ὑπῆρξεν, ὅτ’ Ἰδαίαν
ἐς νάπαν ἦλθ’ ὁ Μαί-
ας τε καὶ Διὸς τόκος,
τρίπωλον ἅρμα δαιμόνων
ἄγων τὸ καλλιζυγές,
ἔριδι στυγερᾷ κεκορυθμένον εὐμορφίας
σταθμοὺς ἔπι βούτας,
βοτῆρά τ’ ἀμφὶ μονότροπον νεανίαν
ἔρημόν θ’ ἑστιοῦχον αὐλάν.

Ταὶ δ’ ἐπεὶ ὑλόκομον νάπος ἦλυθον οὐρειᾶν
πιδάκων νίψαν αἰ-
γλᾶντα σώματα ῥοαῖς,
ἔβαν δὲ Πριαμίδαν ὑπερ-
βολαῖς λόγων δυσφρόνων
παραβαλλόμεναι, δολίοις δ’ ἔλε Κύπρις λόγοις,
τερπνοῖς μὲν ἀκοῦσαι,
πικρὰν δὲ σύγχυσιν βίου Φρυγῶν πόλει
ταλαίνᾳ περγάμοις τε Τροίας.

Ἀλλ’ εἴθ’ ὑπὲρ κεφαλὰν ἔβαλεν κακὸν
ἁ τεκοῦσά νιν μόρον
πρὶν Ἰδαῖον κατοικίσαι λέπας,
ὅτε νιν παρὰ θεσπεσίῳ δάφνᾳ
βόασε Κασάνδρα κτανεῖν,
μεγάλαν Πριάμου πόλεως λώβαν.
τίν’ οὐκ ἐπῆλθε, ποῖον οὐκ ἐλίσσετο
δαμογερόντων βρέφος φονεύειν;

Οὔτ’ ἂν ἐπ’ Ἰλιάσι ζυγὸν ἦλυθε
δούλιον, σύ τ’ ἂν γύναι,
τυράννων ἔσχες ἂν δόμων ἕδρας·
παρέλυσε δ’ ἂν Ἑλλάδος ἀλγεινοὺς
οὓς ἀμφὶ Τρωίαν πόνους
δεκέτεις ἀλάληντο νέοι λόγχαις.
Λέχη τ’ ἔρημ’ ἂν οὔποτ’ ἐξελείπετο,
καὶ τεκέων ὀρφανοὶ γέροντες.

Μενέλαος

ἥκω λαβὼν σὸν παῖδ’, ὃν εἰς ἄλλους δόμους
λάθρᾳ θυγατρὸς τῆς ἐμῆς ὑπεξέθου.
Σὲ μὲν γὰρ ηὔχεις θεᾶς βρέτας σῴσειν τόδε,
τοῦτον δὲ τοὺς κρύψαντας· ἀλλ’ ἐφηυρέθης
ἧσσον φρονοῦσα τοῦδε Μενέλεω, γύναι.
Κεἰ μὴ τόδ’ ἐκλιποῦσ’ ἐρημώσεις πέδον,
ὅδ’ ἀντὶ τοῦ σοῦ σώματος σφαγήσεται.
Ταῦτ’ οὖν λογίζου, πότερα κατθανεῖν θέλεις

ἢ τόνδ᾽ ὀλέσθαι σῆς ἁμαρτίας ὕπερ,
ἣν εἰς ἔμ᾽ εἴς τε παῖδ᾽ ἐμὴν ἁμαρτάνεις.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Ὦ δόξα δόξα, μυρίοισι δὴ βροτῶν
οὐδὲν γεγῶσι βίοτον ὤγκωσας μέγαν.
[Εὔκλεια δ᾽ οἷς μὲν ἔστ᾽ ἀληθείας ὕπο,
εὐδαιμονίζω· τοὺς δ᾽ ὑπὸ ψευδῶν, ἔχειν
οὐκ ἀξιώσω, πλὴν τύχῃ φρονεῖν δοκεῖν.]
Σὺ δὴ στρατηγῶν λογάσιν Ἑλλήνων ποτὲ
Τροίαν ἀφείλου Πρίαμον, ὧδε φαῦλος ὤν;
ὅστις θυγατρὸς ἀντίπαιδος ἐκ λόγων
τοσόνδ᾽ ἔπνευσας, καὶ γυναικὶ δυστυχεῖ
δούλῃ κατέστης εἰς ἀγῶν᾽; οὐκ ἀξιῶ
οὔτ᾽ οὖν σὲ Τροίας οὔτε σοῦ Τροίαν ἔτι.
[Ἔξωθέν εἰσιν οἱ δοκοῦντες εὖ φρονεῖν
λαμπροί, τὰ δ᾽ ἔνδον πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἴσοι,
πλὴν εἴ τι πλούτῳ· τοῦτο δ᾽ ἰσχύει μέγα.
Μενέλαε, φέρε δὴ διαπεράνωμεν λόγους·
τέθνηκα τῇ σῇ θυγατρὶ καί μ᾽ ἀπώλεσε·
μιαιφόνον μὲν οὐκέτ᾽ ἂν φύγοι μύσος.
Ἐν τοῖς δὲ πολλοῖς καὶ σὺ τόνδ᾽ ἀγωνιῇ
φόνον· τὸ συνδρῶν γάρ σ᾽ ἀναγκάσει χερός.
Ἦν δ᾽ οὖν ἐγὼ μὲν μὴ θανεῖν ὑπεκδράμω,
τὸν παῖδά μου κτενεῖτε; κᾆτα πῶς πατὴρ
τέκνου θανόντος ῥᾳδίως ἀνέξεται;
οὐχ ὧδ᾽ ἄνανδρον αὐτὸν ἡ Τροία καλεῖ·
ἀλλ᾽ εἶσιν οἷ χρή, Πηλέως γὰρ ἄξια
πατρός τ᾽ Ἀχιλλέως ἔργα δρῶν φανήσεται
ὥσει δὲ σὴν παῖδ᾽ ἐκ δόμων· σὺ δ᾽ ἐκδιδοὺς
ἄλλῳ τί λέξεις; πότερον ὡς κακὸν πόσιν
φεύγει τὸ ταύτης σῶφρον; ἀλλ᾽ οὐ πείσεται.
Γαμεῖ δὲ τίς νιν; ἤ σφ᾽ ἄνανδρον ἐν δόμοις
χήραν καθέξεις πολιόν; ὦ τλήμων ἀνήρ,
κακῶν τοσούτων οὐχ ὁρᾷς ἐπιρροάς;

πόσας ἂν εὐνὰς θυγατέρ᾽ ἠδικημένην
βούλοι᾽ ἂν εὑρεῖν ἢ παθεῖν ἀγὼ λέγω;]

Οὐ χρὴ ‘πὶ μικροῖς μεγάλα πορσύνειν κακὰ
οὐδ᾽, εἰ γυναῖκές ἐσμεν ἀτηρὸν κακόν,
ἄνδρας γυναιξὶν ἐξομοιοῦσθαι φύσιν.
Ἡμεῖς γὰρ εἰ σὴν παῖδα φαρμακεύομεν
καὶ νηδὺν ἐξαμβλοῦμεν, ὡς αὕτη λέγει,
— κόντες οὐκ ἄκοντες, οὐδὲ βώμιοι
πίτνοντες, αὐτοὶ τὴν δίκην ὑφέξομεν
ἐν σοῖσι γαμβροῖς, οἷσιν οὐκ ἐλάσσονα
βλάβην ὀφείλω προστιθεῖσ᾽ ἀπαιδίαν.
Ἡμεῖς μὲν οὖν τοιοίδε· τῆς δὲ σῆς φρενὸς
ἕν σου δέδοικα· διὰ γυναικείαν ἔριν
καὶ τὴν τάλαιναν ὤλεσας Φρυγῶν πόλιν.

Χορός

Ἄγαν ἔλεξας ὡς γυνὴ πρὸς ἄρσενας,
< τὸ δ᾽ ὀξύθυμον τὴν διάγνωσιν κρατεῖ>
καί σου τὸ σῶφρον ἐξετόξευσεν φρενός.

Μενέλαος

Γύναι, τάδ᾽ ἐστὶ σμικρὰ καὶ μοναρχίας
οὐκ ἄξι᾽, ὡς φῄς, τῆς ἐμῆς οὐδ᾽ Ἑλλάδος.
Εὖ δ᾽ ἴσθ᾽, ὅτου τις τυγχάνει χρείαν ἔχων,
τοῦτ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ἑκάστῳ μεῖζον ἢ Τροίαν ἑλεῖν.
Κἀγὼ θυγατρί — μεγάλα γὰρ κρίνω τάδε,
λέχους στέρεσθαι — σύμμαχος καθίσταμαι.
Τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλα δεύτερ᾽ ἂν πάσχοι γυνή,
ἀνδρὸς δ᾽ ἁμαρτάνουσ᾽ ἁμαρτάνει βίου.
Δούλων δ᾽ ἐκεῖνον τῶν ἐμῶν ἄρχειν χρεὼν
καὶ τῶν ἐκείνου τοὺς ἐμούς, ἡμᾶς τε πρός·
φίλων γὰρ οὐδὲν ἴδιον, οἵτινες φίλοι
ὀρθῶς πεφύκασ᾽, ἀλλὰ κοινὰ χρήματα.
Μένων δὲ τοὺς ἀπόντας, εἰ μὴ θήσομαι
τἄμ᾽ ὡς ἄριστα, φαῦλός εἰμι κοὐ σοφός.

Ἀλλ’ ἐξανίστω τῶνδ’ ἀνακτόρων θεᾶς·
ὡς, ἢν θάνῃς σύ, παῖς ὅδ’ ἐκφεύγει μόρον,
σοῦ δ’ οὐ θελούσης κατθανεῖν, τόνδε κτενῶ.
Δυοῖν δ’ ἀνάγκη θατέρῳ λιπεῖν βίον.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Οἴμοι, πικρὰν κλήρωσιν αἵρεσίν τέ μοι
βίου καθίστης· καὶ λαχοῦσά γ’ ἀθλία
καὶ μὴ λαχοῦσα δυστυχὴς καθίσταμαι.
Μεγάλα πράσσων αἰτίας μικρᾶς πέρι,
πιθοῦ· τί καίνεις μ’; ἀντὶ τοῦ; ποίαν πόλιν
προύδωκα; τίνα σῶν ἔκτανον παίδων ἐγώ;
ποῖον δ’ ἔπρησα δῶμ’; ἐκοιμήθην βίᾳ
σὺν δεσπόταισι· κᾆτ’ ἔμ’, οὐ κεῖνον κτενεῖς,
τὸν αἴτιον τῶνδ’, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀφεὶς
πρὸς τὴν τελευτὴν ὑστέραν οὖσαν φέρῃ;
οἴμοι κακῶν τῶνδ’, ὦ τάλαιν’ ἐμὴ πατρίς,
ὡς δεινὰ πάσχω. Τί δέ με καὶ τεκεῖν ἐχρῆν
ἄχθος τ’ ἐπ’ ἄχθει τῷδε προσθέσθαι διπλοῦν;
[ἀτὰρ τί ταῦτα δύρομαι, τὰ δ’ ἐν ποσὶν
οὐκ ἐξικμάζω καὶ λογίζομαι κακά;]
ἥτις σφαγὰς μὲν Ἕκτορος τροχηλάτους
κατεῖδον οἰκτρῶς τ’ Ἴλιον πυρούμενον,
αὐτὴ δὲ δούλη ναῦς ἐπ’ Ἀργείων ἔβην
κόμης ἐπισπασθεῖσ’· ἐπεὶ δ’ ἀφικόμην
Φθίαν, φονεῦσιν Ἕκτορος νυμφεύομαι.
Τί δῆτ’ ἐμοὶ ζῆν ἡδύ; πρὸς τί χρὴ βλέπειν;
πρὸς τὰς παρούσας ἢ παρελθούσας τύχας;
Εἷς παῖς ὅδ’ ἦν μοι λοιπὸς ὀφθαλμὸς βίου·
τοῦτον κτενεῖν μέλλουσιν οἷς δοκεῖ τάδε.
Οὐ δῆτα τοὐμοῦ γ’ εἵνεκ’ ἀθλίου βίου·
ἐν τῷδε μὲν γὰρ ἐλπίς, εἰ σωθήσεται,
ἐμοὶ δ’ ὄνειδος μὴ θανεῖν ὑπὲρ τέκνου.
Ἰδοὺ προλείπω βωμὸν ἥδε χειρία
σφάζειν φονεύειν, δεῖν, ἀπαρτῆσαι δέρην.
Ὦ τέκνον, ἡ τεκοῦσά σ’, ὡς σὺ μὴ θάνῃς,

στείχω πρὸς Ἅιδην· ἢν δ’ ὑπεκδράμῃς μόρον,
μέμνησο μητρός, οἷα τλᾶσ’ ἀπωλόμην,
καὶ πατρὶ τῷ σῷ διὰ φιλημάτων ἰὼν
δάκρυά τε λείβων καὶ περιπτύσσων χέρας
λέγ’ οἷ’ ἔπραξα. Πᾶσι δ’ ἀνθρώποις ἄρ’ ἦν
ψυχὴ τέκν’· ὅστις δ’ αὖτ’ ἄπειρος ὢν ψέγει,
ἧσσον μὲν ἀλγεῖ, δυστυχῶν δ’ εὐδαιμονεῖ.

Χορός

Ὤκτιρ’ ἀκούσασ’· οἰκτρὰ γὰρ τὰ δυστυχῆ
βροτοῖς ἅπασι, κἂν θυραῖος ὢν κυρῇ.
Εἰς ξύμβασιν δὲ χρῆν σε παῖδα σὴν ἄγειν,
Μενέλαε, καὶ τήνδ’, ὡς ἀπαλλαχθῇ πόνων.

Μενέλαος

Λάβεσθέ μοι τῆσδ’, ἀμφελίξαντες χέρας,
δμῶες· λόγους γὰρ οὐ φίλους ἀκούσεται.
Ἔχω σ’· ἵν’ ἁγνὸν βωμὸν ἐκλίποις θεᾶς,
προύτεινα παιδὸς θάνατον, ᾧ σ’ ὑπήγαγον
εἰς χεῖρας ἐλθεῖν τὰς ἐμὰς ἐπὶ σφαγήν.
Καὶ τἀμφὶ σοῦ μὲν ὧδ’ ἔχοντ’ ἐπίστασο·
τὰ δ’ ἀμφὶ παιδὸς τοῦδε παῖς ἐμὴ κρινεῖ,
ἤν τε κτανεῖν νιν ἤν τε μὴ κτανεῖν θέλῃ.
Ἀλλ’ ἔρπ’ ἐς οἴκους τούσδ’, ἵν’ εἰς ἐλευθέρους
δούλη γεγῶσα μηκέθ’ ὑβρίζειν μάθῃς.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Οἴμοι· δόλῳ μ’ ὑπῆλθες, ἠπατήμεθα.

Μενέλαος

Κήρυσσ’ ἅπασιν· οὐ γὰρ ἐξαρνούμεθα.

Ἀνδρομάχη

῏Η ταῦτ’ ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς παρ’ Εὐρώτᾳ σοφά;

Μενέλαος

Κἀν τοῖς γε Τροίᾳ, τοὺς παθόντας ἀντιδρᾶν.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Τὰ θεῖα δ’ οὐ θεῖ’ οὐδ’ ἔχειν ἡγῇ δίκην;

Μενέλαος

Ὅταν τάδ’ ᾖ, τότ’ οἴσομεν· σὲ δὲ κτενῶ.

Ἀνδρομάχη

῏Η καὶ νεοσσὸν τόνδ’, ὑπὸ πτερῶν σπάσας;

Μενέλαος

Οὐ δῆτα· θυγατρὶ δ’, ἢν θέλῃ, δώσω κτανεῖν.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Οἴμοι· τί δῆτά σ’ οὐ καταστένω, τέκνον;

Μενέλαος

Οὔκουν θρασεῖά γ’ αὐτὸν ἐλπὶς ἀμμένει.

Ἀνδρομάχη

῍Ω πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποισιν ἔχθιστοι βροτῶν
Σπάρτης ἔνοικοι, δόλια βουλευτήρια,
ψευδῶν ἄνακτες, μηχανορράφοι κακῶν,
— λικτὰ κοὐδὲν ὑγιές, ἀλλὰ πᾶν πέριξ
φρονοῦντες, ἀδίκως εὐτυχεῖτ’ ἀν’ Ἑλλάδα.
Τί δ’ οὐκ ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστιν; οὐ πλεῖστοι φόνοι;
οὐκ αἰσχροκερδεῖς, οὐ λέγοντες ἄλλα μὲν

γλώσσῃ, φρονοῦντες δ’ ἄλλ’ ἐφευρίσκεσθ’ ἀεί;
ὅλοισθ’. Ἐμοὶ μὲν θάνατος οὐχ οὕτω βαρὺς
ὃς σοὶ δέδοκται· κεῖνα γάρ μ’ ἀπώλεσεν,
ὅθ’ ἡ τάλαινα πόλις ἀνηλώθη Φρυγῶν
πόσις θ’ ὁ κλεινός, ὅς σε πολλάκις δορὶ
ναύτην ἔθηκεν ἀντὶ χερσαίου κακόν.
Νῦν δ’ εἰς γυναῖκα γοργὸς ὁπλίτης φανεὶς
κτείνεις μ’. Ἀπόκτειν’· ὡς ἀθώπευτόν γέ σε
γλώσσης ἀφήσω τῆς ἐμῆς καὶ παῖδα σήν.
Ἐπεὶ σὺ μὲν πέφυκας ἐν Σπάρτῃ μέγας,
ἡμεῖς δὲ Τροίᾳ γ’. Εἰ δ’ ἐγὼ πράσσω κακῶς,
μηδὲν τόδ’ αὔχει· καὶ σὺ γὰρ πράξειας ἄν.

Χορός

Οὐδέποτε δίδυμα λέκτρ’ ἐπαινέσω βροτῶν
οὐδ’ ἀμφιμάτορας κόρους,
ἔριν μελάθρων δυσμενεῖς τε λύπας.
Μίαν μοι στεργέτω πόσις γάμοις
ἀκοινώνητον ἀμὸς εὐνάν.

Οὐδέ γ’ ἐνὶ πόλεσι δίπτυχοι τυραννίδες
μιᾶς ἀμείνονες φέρειν,
ἄχθος ἐπ’ ἄχθει καὶ στάσιν πολίταις·
τεκόντοιν θ’ ὕμνον ἐργάταιν δυοῖν
ἔριν Μοῦσαι φιλοῦσι κραίνειν.

Πνοαὶ δ’ ὅταν φέρωσι ναυτίλους θοαί,
κατὰ πηδαλίων δίδυμαι πραπίδων γνῶμαι,
σοφῶν τε πλῆθος ἀθρόον ἀσθενέστερον
φαυλοτέρας φρενὸς αὐτοκρατοῦς.
Ἑνὸς ἄρ’ ἄνυσις ἀνά τε μέλαθρα
κατά τε πόλιας, ὁπόταν εὑ-
ρεῖν θέλωσι καιρόν.

Ἔδειξεν ἡ Λάκαινα τοῦ στρατηλάτα
Μενέλα· διὰ γὰρ πυρὸς ἦλθ’ ἑτέρῳ λέχει,
κτείνει δὲ τὰν τάλαιναν Ἰλιάδα κόραν

παῖδά τε δύσφρονος ἔριδος ὕπερ.
Ἄθεος ἄνομος ἄχαρις ὁ φόνος·
ἔτι σε, πότνια, μετατροπὰ
τῶνδ᾽ ἔπεισιν ἔργων.

— Καὶ μὴν ἐσορῶ τόδε σύγκρατον
ζεῦγος πρὸ δόμων ψήφῳ θανάτου
κατακεκριμένον.
Δύστηνε γύναι, τλῆμον δὲ σὺ παῖ,
μητρὸς λεχέων ὃς ὑπερθνῄσκεις
οὐδὲν μετέχων
οὐδ᾽ αἴτιος ὢν βασιλεῦσιν.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Ἄδ᾽ ἐγὼ χέρας αἱματη-
ρὰς βρόχοισι κεκλημένα
πέμπομαι κατὰ γαίας.

Παῖς

Μᾶτερ μᾶτερ, ἐγὼ δὲ σᾷ
πτέρυγι συγκαταβαίνω.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Θῦμα δάιον, ὦ χθονὸς
Φθίας κράντορες.

Παῖς

Ὦ πάτερ,
μόλε φίλοις ἐπίκουρος.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Κείσῃ δή, τέκνον ὦ φίλος,
μαστοῖς ματέρος ἀμφὶ σᾶς
νεκρὸς ὑπὸ χθονί, σὺν νεκρῷ <τε>.

Παῖς

Ὤμοι μοι, τί πάθω; τάλας
δῆτ᾽ ἐγὼ σύ τε, μᾶτερ.

Μενέλαος

Ἴθ᾽ ὑποχθόνιοι· καὶ γὰρ ἀπ᾽ ἐχθρῶν
ἥκετε πύργων· δύο δ᾽ ἐκ δισσαῖν
θνήσκετ᾽ ἀνάγκαιν· σὲ μὲν ἡμετέρα
ψῆφος ἀναιρεῖ, παῖδα δ᾽ ἐμὴ παῖς
τόνδ᾽ Ἑρμιόνη· καὶ γὰρ ἀνοία
μεγάλη λείπειν ἐχθροὺς ἐχθρῶν,
ἐξὸν κτείνειν
καὶ φόβον οἴκων ἀφελέσθαι.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Ὦ πόσις πόσις, εἴθε σὰν
χεῖρα καὶ δόρυ σύμμαχον
κτησαίμαν, Πριάμου παῖ.

Παῖς

Δύστανος, τί δ᾽ ἐγὼ μόρου
παράτροπον μέλος εὕρω;

Ἀνδρομάχη

Λίσσου, γούνασι δεσπότου
χρίμπτων, ὦ τέκνον.

Παῖς

Ὦ φίλος,
φίλος, ἄνες θάνατόν μοι.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Λείβομαι δάκρυσιν κόρας,
στάζω λισσάδος ὡς πέτρας
λιβὰς ἀνήλιος, ἁ τάλαινα.

Παῖς

Ὤμοι μοι, τί δ᾽ ἐγὼ κακῶν
μῆχος ἐξανύσωμαι;

Μενέλαος

Τί με προσπίτνεις, ἁλίαν πέτραν
ἢ κῦμα λιταῖς ὡς ἱκετεύων;
τοῖς γὰρ ἐμοῖσιν γέγον᾽ ὠφελία,
σοὶ δ᾽ οὐδὲν ἔχω φίλτρον, ἐπεί τοι
μέγ᾽ ἀναλώσας ψυχῆς μόριον
Τροίαν εἶλον καὶ μητέρα σήν·
ἧς ἀπολαύων
Ἅιδην χθόνιον καταβήσῃ.

Χορός

Καὶ μὴν δέδορκα τόνδε Πηλέα πέλας,
σπουδῇ τιθέντα δεῦρο γηραιὸν πόδα.

Πηλεύς

Ὑμᾶς ἐρωτῶ τόν τ᾽ ἐφεστῶτα σφαγῇ,
τί ταῦτα; πῶς ταῦτ᾽; ἐκ τίνος λόγου νοσεῖ
δόμος; τί πράσσετ᾽ ἄκριτα μηχανώμενοι;
Μενέλα᾽, ἐπίσχες· μὴ τάχυν᾽ ἄνευ δίκης.
Ἡγοῦ σὺ θᾶσσον, οὐ γὰρ ὡς ἔοικέ μοι
σχολῆς τόδ᾽ ἔργον, ἀλλ᾽ ἀνηβητηρίαν
ῥώμην με καὶ νῦν λαμβάνειν, εἴπερ ποτέ.
Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν κατ᾽ οὖρον ὥσπερ ἱστίοις
ἐμπνεύσομαι τῇδ᾽· εἰπέ, τίνι δίκῃ χέρας
βρόχοισιν ἐκδήσαντες οἴδ᾽ ἄγουσί σε

καὶ παῖδ’; ὕπαρνος γάρ τις οἷς ἀπόλλυσαι,
ἡμῶν ἀπόντων τοῦ τε κυρίου σέθεν.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Οἶδ’, ὦ γεραιέ, σὺν τέκνῳ θανουμένην
ἄγουσί μ’ οὕτως ὡς ὁρᾷς. Τί σοι λέγω;
οὐ γὰρ μιᾶς σε κληδόνος προθυμίᾳ
μετῆλθον, ἀλλὰ μυρίων ὑπ’ ἀγγέλων.
Ἔριν δὲ τὴν κατ’ οἶκον οἶσθά που κλύων
τῆς τοῦδε θυγατρός, ὧν τ’ ἀπόλλυμαι χάριν.
Καὶ νῦν με βωμοῦ Θέτιδος, ἣ τὸν εὐγενῆ
ἔτικτέ σοι παῖδ’, ἣν σὺ θαυμαστὴν σέβεις,
ἄγουσ’ ἀποσπάσαντες, οὔτε τῳ δίκῃ
κρίναντες οὔτε τοὺς ἀπόντας ἐκ δόμων
μείναντες, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐμὴν ἐρημίαν
γνόντες τέκνου τε τοῦδ’, ὃν οὐδὲν αἴτιον
μέλλουσι σὺν ἐμοὶ τῇ ταλαιπώρῳ κτανεῖν.
Ἀλλ’ ἀντιάζω σ’, ὦ γέρον, τῶν σῶν πάρος
πίτνουσα γονάτων — χειρὶ δ’ οὐκ ἔξεστί μοι
τῆς σῆς λαβέσθαι φιλτάτης γενειάδος —
ῥῦσαί με πρὸς θεῶν· εἰ δὲ μή, θανούμεθα
αἰσχρῶς μὲν ὑμῖν, δυστυχῶς δ’ ἐμοί, γέρον.

Πηλεύς

Χαλᾶν κελεύω δεσμὰ πρὶν κλαίειν τινά,
καὶ τῆσδε χεῖρας διπτύχους ἀνιέναι.

Μενέλαος

Ἐγὼ δ’ ἀπαυδῶ τἄλλα τ’ οὐχ ἥσσων σέθεν
καὶ τῆσδε πολλῷ κυριώτερος γεγώς.

Πηλεύς

Πῶς; ἦ τὸν ἀμὸν οἶκον οἰκήσεις μολὼν
δεῦρ’; Οὐχ ἅλις σοι τῶν κατὰ Σπάρτην κρατεῖν;

Μενέλαος

Εἶλόν νιν αἰχμάλωτον ἐκ Τροίας ἐγώ.

Πηλεύς

Οὑμὸς δέ γ’ αὐτὴν ἔλαβε παῖς παιδὸς γέρας.

Μενέλαος

Οὔκουν ἐκείνου τἀμὰ τἀκείνου τ’ ἐμά;

Πηλεύς

[Ναί,]
δρᾶν εὖ, κακῶς δ’ οὔ, μηδ’ ἀποκτείνειν βίᾳ.

Μενέλαος

Ὡς τήνδ’ ἀπάξεις οὔποτ’ ἐξ ἐμῆς χερός.

Πηλεύς

Σκήπτρῳ γε τῷδε σὸν καθαιμάξας κάρα.

Μενέλαος

Ψαῦσόν θ’, ἵν’ εἰδῇς, καὶ πέλας πρόσελθέ μου.

Πηλεύς

Σὺ γὰρ μετ’ ἀνδρῶν, ὦ κάκιστε κἀκ κακῶν;
[σοὶ ποῦ μέτεστιν ὡς ἐν ἀνδράσιν λόγου;]
ὅστις πρὸς ἀνδρὸς Φρυγὸς ἀπηλλάγης λέχος,
ἄκλῃστ’ ἄδουλα δώμαθ’ ἑστίας λιπών,
ὡς δὴ γυναῖκα σώφρον’ ἐν δόμοις ἔχων
πασῶν κακίστην. Οὐδ’ ἂν εἰ βούλοιτό τις
σώφρων γένοιτο Σπαρτιατίδων κόρη,
αἳ ξὺν νέοισιν ἐξερημοῦσαι δόμους

γυμνοῖσι μηροῖς καὶ πέπλοις ἀνειμένοις
δρόμους παλαίστρας τ’ οὐκ ἀνασχετοὺς ἐμοὶ
κοινὰς ἔχουσι. Κᾆτα θαυμάζειν χρεὼν
εἰ μὴ γυναῖκας σώφρονας παιδεύετε;
Ἑλένην ἐρέσθαι χρῆν τάδ’, ἥτις ἐκ δόμων
τὸν σὸν λιποῦσα Φίλιον ἐξεκώμασε
νεανίου μετ’ ἀνδρὸς εἰς ἄλλην χθόνα.
Κἄπειτ’ ἐκείνης οὕνεχ’ Ἑλλήνων ὄχλον
τοσόνδ’ ἀθροίσας ἦγαγες πρὸς Ἴλιον;
ἣν χρῆν σ’ ἀποπτύσαντα μὴ κινεῖν δόρυ,
κακὴν ἐφευρόντ’, ἀλλ’ ἐᾶν αὐτοῦ μένειν
μισθόν διδόντα μήποτ’ εἰς οἴκους λαβεῖν.
Ἀλλ’ οὔτι ταύτῃ σὸν φρόνημ’ ἐπούρισας,
ψυχὰς δὲ πολλὰς κἀγαθὰς ἀπώλεσας,
παίδων τ’ ἄπαιδας γραῦς ἔθηκας ἐν δόμοις,
πολιούς τ’ ἀφείλου πατέρας εὐγενῆ τέκνα.
Ὧν εἷς ἐγὼ δύστηνος· αὐθέντην δὲ σὲ
μιάστορ’ ὥς τιν’ εἰσδέδορκ’ Ἀχιλλέως.
Ὃς οὐδὲ τρωθεὶς ἦλθες ἐκ Τροίας μόνος,
κάλλιστα τεύχη δ’ ἐν καλοῖσι σάγμασιν
ὅμοι’ ἐκεῖσε δεῦρό τ’ ἤγαγες πάλιν.
Κἀγὼ μὲν ηὔδων τῷ γαμοῦντι μήτε σοὶ
κῆδος ξυνάψαι μήτε δώμασιν λαβεῖν
κακῆς γυναικὸς πῶλον· ἐκφέρουσι γὰρ
μητρῷ’ ὀνείδη. Τοῦτο καὶ σκοπεῖτέ μοι,
μνηστῆρες, ἐσθλῆς θυγατέρ’ ἐκ μητρὸς λαβεῖν.
Πρὸς τοῖσδε δ’ εἰς ἀδελφὸν οἷ’ ἐφύβρισας,
σφάξαι κελεύσας θυγατέρ’ εὐηθέστατα;
Οὕτως ἔδεισας μὴ οὐ κακὴν δάμαρτ’ ἔχῃς.
Ἑλὼν δὲ Τροίαν — εἶμι γὰρ κἀνταῦθά σοι
οὐκ ἔκτανες γυναῖκα χειρίαν λαβών,
ἀλλ’, ὡς ἐσεῖδες μαστόν, ἐκβαλὼν ξίφος
φίλημ’ ἐδέξω, προδότιν αἰκάλλων κύνα,
ἥσσων πεφυκὼς Κύπριδος, ὦ κάκιστε σύ.
Κἄπειτ’ ἐς οἴκους τῶν ἐμῶν ἐλθὼν τέκνων
πορθεῖς ἀπόντων, καὶ γυναῖκα δυστυχῆ
κτείνεις ἀτίμως παῖδά θ’, ὃς κλαίοντά σε

καὶ τὴν ἐν οἴκοις σὴν καταστήσει κόρην,
κεἰ τρὶς νόθος πέφυκε. Πολλάκις δέ τοι
ξηρὰ βαθεῖαν γῆν ἐνίκησε σπορᾷ,
νόθοι τε πολλοὶ γνησίων ἀμείνονες.
Ἀλλ' ἐκκομίζου παῖδα. Κύδιον βροτοῖς
πένητα χρηστὸν ἢ κακὸν καὶ πλούσιον
γαμβρὸν πεπᾶσθαι καὶ φίλον· σὺ δ' οὐδὲν εἶ.

Χορός

Σμικρᾶς ἀπ' ἀρχῆς νεῖκος ἀνθρώποις μέγα
γλῶσσ' ἐκπορίζει· τοῦτο δ' οἱ σοφοὶ βροτῶν
ἐξευλαβοῦνται, μὴ φίλοις τεύχειν ἔριν.

Μενέλαος

Τί δῆτ' ἂν εἴποις τοὺς γέροντας, ὡς σοφοί,
ὅτ' ὢν σὺ Πηλεὺς καὶ πατρὸς κλεινοῦ γεγώς,
κἀς τοὺς φρονεῖν δοκοῦντας Ἕλλησίν ποτε
κῆδος συνάψας, αἰσχρὰ μὲν σαυτῷ λέγεις
ἡμῖν δ' ὀνείδη διὰ γυναῖκα βάρβαρον,
ἣν χρῆν σ' ἐλαύνειν τήνδ' ὑπὲρ Νείλου ῥοὰς
ὑπέρ τε Φᾶσιν, κἀμὲ παρακαλεῖν ἅμα,
οὖσαν μὲν ἠπειρῶτιν, οὖ πεσήματα
πλεῖσθ' Ἑλλάδος πέπτωκε δοριπετῆ νεκρῶν,
τοῦ σοῦ δὲ παιδὸς αἵματος κοινουμένην.
[Πάρις γάρ, ὃς σὸν παῖδ' ἔπεφν' Ἀχιλλέα,
Ἕκτορος ἀδελφὸς ἦν, δάμαρ δ' ἥδ' Ἕκτορος.]
Καὶ τῇδέ γ' εἰσέρχῃ σὺ ταὐτὸν εἰς στέγος
καὶ ξυντράπεζον ἀξιοῖς ἔχειν βίον,
τίκτειν δ' ἐν οἴκοις παῖδας ἐχθίστους ἐᾷς.
Ἀγὼ προνοίᾳ τῇ τε σῇ κἀμῇ, γέρον,
κτανεῖν θέλων τήνδ' ἐκ χερῶν ἁρπάζομαι.
Καίτοι φέρ'· ἅψασθαι γὰρ οὐκ αἰσχρὸν λόγου·
ἦν παῖς μὲν ἡμὴ μὴ τέκῃ, ταύτης δ' ἄπο
βλάστωσι παῖδες, τῆσδε γῆς Φθιώτιδος
στήσεις τυράννους, βάρβαροι δ' ὄντες γένος
Ἕλλησιν ἄρξουσ'; εἶτ' ἐγὼ μὲν οὐ φρονῶ

μισῶν τὰ μὴ δίκαια, σοὶ δ᾽ ἔνεστι νοῦς;
[κἀκεῖνο νῦν ἄθρησον· εἰ σὺ παῖδα σὴν
δούς τῳ πολιτῶν, εἶτ᾽ ἔπασχε τοιάδε,
σιγῇ καθῆσ᾽ ἄν; οὐ δοκῶ· ξένης δ᾽ ὕπερ
τοιαῦτα λάσκεις τοὺς ἀναγκαίους φίλους;
καὶ μὴν ἴσον γ᾽ ἀνήρ τε καὶ γυνὴ στένει
ἀδικουμένη πρὸς ἀνδρός· ὡς δ᾽ αὕτως ἀνὴρ
γυναῖκα μωραίνουσαν ἐν δόμοις ἔχων.
Καὶ τῷ μὲν ἔστιν ἐν χεροῖν μέγα σθένος,
τῇ δ᾽ ἐν γονεῦσι καὶ φίλοις τὰ πράγματα.
Οὔκουν δίκαιον τοῖς γ᾽ ἐμοῖς ἐπωφελεῖν;]
γέρων γέρων εἶ. Τὴν δ᾽ ἐμὴν στρατηγίαν
λέγων ἔμ᾽ ὠφελοῖς ἂν ἢ σιγῶν πλέον.
Ἑλένη δ᾽ ἐμόχθησ᾽ οὐχ ἑκοῦσ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ θεῶν,
καὶ τοῦτο πλεῖστον ὠφέλησεν Ἑλλάδα·
ὅπλων γὰρ ὄντες καὶ μάχης ἀίστορες
ἔβησαν εἰς τἀνδρεῖον· ἡ δ᾽ ὁμιλία
πάντων βροτοῖσι γίγνεται διδάσκαλος.
Εἰ δ᾽ εἰς πρόσοψιν τῆς ἐμῆς ἐλθὼν ἐγὼ
γυναικὸς ἔσχον μὴ κτανεῖν, ἐσωφρόνουν.
Οὐδ᾽ ἂν σὲ Φῶκον ἤθελον κατακτανεῖν.
Ταῦτ᾽ εὖ φρονῶν σ᾽ ἐπῆλθον, οὐκ ὀργῆς χάριν·
ἢν δ᾽ ὀξυθυμῇς, σοὶ μὲν ἡ γλωσσαλγία
μείζων, ἐμοὶ δὲ κέρδος ἡ προμηθία.

Χορός

Παύσασθον ἤδη — λῷστα γὰρ μακρῷ τάδε —
λόγων ματαίων, μὴ δύο σφαλῆθ᾽ ἅμα.

Πηλεύς

Οἴμοι, καθ᾽ Ἑλλάδ᾽ ὡς κακῶς νομίζεται·
ὅταν τροπαῖα πολεμίων στήσῃ στρατός,
οὐ τῶν πονούντων τοὔργον ἡγοῦνται τόδε,
ἀλλ᾽ ὁ στρατηγὸς τὴν δόκησιν ἄρνυται,
ὃς εἷς μετ᾽ ἄλλων μυρίων πάλλων δόρυ,
οὐδὲν πλέον δρῶν ἑνὸς ἔχει πλείω λόγον.

[Σεμνοὶ δ’ ἐν ἀρχαῖς ἥμενοι κατὰ πτόλιν
φρονοῦσι δήμου μεῖζον, ὄντες οὐδένες·
οἱ δ’ εἰσὶν αὐτῶν μυρίῳ σοφώτεροι,
εἰ τόλμα προσγένοιτο βούλησίς θ’ ἅμα.]
Ὡς καὶ σὺ σός τ’ ἀδελφὸς ἐξωγκωμένοι
Τροίᾳ κάθησθε τῇ τ’ ἐκεῖ στρατηγίᾳ,
μόχθοισιν ἄλλων καὶ πόνοις ἐπηρμένοι.
Δείξω δ’ ἐγώ σοι μὴ τὸν Ἰδαῖον Πάριν
μείζω νομίζειν Πηλέως ἐχθρόν ποτε,
εἰ μὴ φθερῇ τῆσδ’ ὡς τάχιστ’ ἀπὸ στέγης
καὶ παῖς ἄτεκνος, ἣν ὅ γ’ ἐξ ἡμῶν γεγὼς
ἐλᾷ δι’ οἴκων τῶνδ’ ἐπισπάσας κόμης
εἰ στερρὸς οὖσα μόσχος οὐκ ἀνέξεται
τίκτοντας ἄλλους, οὐκ ἔχουσ’ αὐτὴ τέκνα.
Ἀλλ’, εἰ τὸ κείνης δυστυχεῖ παίδων πέρι,
ἄπαιδας ἡμᾶς δεῖ καταστῆναι τέκνων;
φθείρεσθε τῆσδε, δμῶες, ὡς ἂν ἐκμάθω
εἴ τίς με λύειν τῆσδε κωλύσει χέρας.
Ἔπαιρε σαυτήν· ὡς ἐγὼ καίπερ τρέμων
πλεκτὰς ἱμάντων στροφίδας ἐξανήσομαι.
Ὧδ’, ὦ κάκιστε, τῆσδ’ ἐλυμήνω χέρας;
βοῦν ἢ λέοντ’ ἤλπιζες ἐντείνειν βρόχοις;
ἢ μὴ ξίφος λαβοῦσ’ ἀμυνάθοιτό σε
ἔδεισας; ἕρπε δεῦρ’ ὑπ’ ἀγκάλας, βρέφος,
ξύλλυε μητρὸς δεσμόν· ἐν Φθίᾳ σ’ ἐγὼ
θρέψω μέγαν τοῖσδ’ ἐχθρόν. Εἰ δ’ ἀπῆν δορὸς
τοῖς Σπαρτιάταις δόξα καὶ μάχης ἀγών,
τἄλλ’ ὄντες ἴστε μηδενὸς βελτίονες.

Χορός

Ἀνειμένον τι χρῆμα πρεσβυτῶν γένος
καὶ δυσφύλακτον ὀξυθυμίας ὕπο.

Μενέλαος

Ἄγαν προνωπὴς εἰς τὸ λοιδορεῖν φέρῃ·
ἐγὼ δὲ πρὸς βίαν μὲν εἰς Φθίαν μολὼν

οὔτ᾽ οὖν τι δράσω φλαῦρον οὔτε πείσομαι.
Καὶ νῦν μέν — οὐ γὰρ ἄφθονον σχολὴν ἔχω
ἄπειμ᾽ ἐς οἴκους· ἔστι γάρ τις οὐ πρόσω
Σπάρτης πόλις τις, ἣ πρὸ τοῦ μὲν ἦν φίλη,
νῦν δ᾽ ἐχθρὰ ποιεῖ· τήνδ᾽ ἐπεξελθεῖν θέλω
στρατηλατήσας χὐποχείριον λαβεῖν.
Ὅταν δὲ τἀκεῖ θῶ κατὰ γνώμην ἐμήν,
ἥξω· παρὼν δὲ πρὸς παρόντας ἐμφανῶς
γαμβροὺς διδάξω καὶ διδάξομαι λόγους.
Κἂν μὲν κολάζῃ τήνδε καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν ᾖ
σώφρων καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς, σώφρον᾽ ἀντιλήψεται·
θυμούμενος δὲ τεύξεται θυμουμένων
[ἔργοισι δ᾽ ἔργα διάδοχ᾽ ἀντιλήψεται].
Τοὺς σοὺς δὲ μύθους ῥᾳδίως ἐγὼ φέρω·
σκιὰ γὰρ ἀντίστοιχος ὣς φωνὴν ἔχεις,
ἀδύνατος, οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν λέγειν μόνον.

Πηλεύς

Ἠγοῦ, τέκνον μοι, δεῦρ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἀγκάλαις σταθείς,
σύ τ᾽, ὦ τάλαινα· χείματος γὰρ ἀγρίου
τυχοῦσα λιμένας ἦλθες εἰς εὐηνέμους.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Ὦ πρέσβυ, θεοί σοι δοῖεν εὖ καὶ τοῖσι σοῖς,
σῴσαντι παῖδα κἀμὲ τὴν δυσδαίμονα.
Ὅρα δὲ μὴ νῷν εἰς ἐρημίαν ὁδοῦ
πτήξαντες οἵδε πρὸς βίαν ἄγωσί με,
γέροντα μὲν σ᾽ ὁρῶντες, ἀσθενῆ δ᾽ ἐμὲ
καὶ παῖδα τόνδε νήπιον· σκόπει τάδε,
μὴ νῦν φυγόντες εἶθ᾽ ἁλῶμεν ὕστερον.

Πηλεύς

Οὐ μὴ γυναικῶν δειλὸν εἰσοίσεις λόγον·
χώρει· τίς ὑμῶν ἅψεται; κλαίων ἄρα
ψαύσει. Θεῶν γὰρ οὕνεχ᾽ ἱππικοῦ τ᾽ ὄχλου

πολλῶν θ’ ὁπλιτῶν ἄρχομεν Φθίαν κάτα·
ἡμεῖς δ’ ἔτ’ ὀρθοὶ κοὐ γέροντες, ὡς δοκεῖς,
ἀλλ’ εἴς γε τοιόνδ’ ἄνδρ’ ἀποβλέψας μόνον
τροπαῖον αὐτοῦ στήσομαι, πρέσβυς περ ὤν.
Πολλῶν νέων γὰρ κἂν γέρων εὔψυχος ὢν
κρείσσων· τί γὰρ δεῖ δειλὸν ὄντ’ εὐσωματεῖν;

Χορός

Ἢ μὴ γενοίμαν ἢ πατέρων ἀγαθῶν
εἴην πολυκτήτων τε δόμων μέτοχος.

Εἴ τι γὰρ πάσχοι τις ἀμήχανον, ἀλκᾶς
οὐ σπάνις εὐγενέταις,
κηρυσσομένοισι δ’ ἀπ’ ἐσθλῶν δωμάτων
τιμὰ καὶ κλέος· οὗτοι λείψανα τῶν ἀγαθῶν
ἀνδρῶν ἀφαιρεῖται χρόνος· ἁ δ’ ἀρετὰ
καὶ θανοῦσι λάμπει.

Κρεῖσσον δὲ νίκαν μὴ κακόδοξον ἔχειν

ἢ ξὺν φθόνῳ σφάλλειν δυνάμει τε δίκαν.
Ἡδὺ μὲν γὰρ αὐτίκα τοῦτο βροτοῖσιν,
ἐν δὲ χρόνῳ τελέθει
ξηρὸν καὶ ὀνείδεσιν ἔγκειται δόμος.
Ταύταν ᾔνεσα ταύταν καὶ φέρομαι βιοτάν,
μηδὲν δίκας ἔξω κράτος ἐν θαλάμοις
καὶ πόλει δύνασθαι.

Ὦ γέρον Αἰακίδα,
πείθομαι καὶ σὺν Λαπίθαισί σε Κενταύ-
ροις ὁμιλῆσαι δορὶ
κλεινοτάτῳ· καὶ ἐπ’ Ἀργῴου δορὸς ἄξενον ὑγρὰ

ἐκπερᾶσαι ποντιᾶν Ξυμπληγάδων
κλεινὰν ἐπὶ ναυστολίαν,
Ἰλιάδα τε πόλιν ὅτε <τὸ> πάρος
εὐδόκιμος [ὁ] Διὸς ἶνις ἀμφέβαλλεν φόνῳ,

κοινὰν τὰν εὔκλειαν ἔχοντ’
Εὐρώπαν ἀφικέσθαι.

Τροφός

Ὦ φίλταται γυναῖκες, ὡς κακὸν κακῷ
διάδοχον ἐν τῇδ’ ἡμέρᾳ πορσύνεται.
Δέσποινα γὰρ κατ’ οἶκον, Ἑρμιόνην λέγω,
πατρός τ’ ἐρημωθεῖσα συννοίᾳ θ’ ἅμα,
οἷον δέδρακεν ἔργον Ἀνδρομάχην κτανεῖν
καὶ παῖδα βουλεύσασα, κατθανεῖν θέλει,
πόσιν τρέμουσα, μὴ ἀντὶ τῶν δεδραμένων
ἐκ τῶνδ’ ἀτίμως δωμάτων ἀποσταλῇ
[ἢ κατθάνῃ κτείνουσα τοὺς οὐ χρὴ κτανεῖν].
Μόλις δέ νιν θέλουσαν ἀρτῆσαι δέρην
εἴργουσι φύλακες δμῶες ἔκ τε δεξιᾶς
ξίφη καθαρπάζουσιν ἐξαιρούμενοι.
Οὕτω μεταλγεῖ καὶ τὰ πρὶν δεδραμένα
ἔγνωκε πράξασ’ οὐ καλῶς. Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν
δέσποιναν εἴργουσ’ ἀγχόνης κάμνω, φίλαι·
ὑμεῖς δὲ βᾶσαι τῶνδε δωμάτων ἔσω
θανάτου νιν ἐκλύσασθε· τῶν γὰρ ἠθάδων
φίλων νέοι μολόντες εὐπιθέστεροι.

Χορός

Καὶ μὴν ἐν οἴκοις προσπόλων ἀκούομεν
βοὴν ἐφ’ οἷσιν ἦλθες ἀγγέλλουσα σύ.
Δείξειν δ’ ἔοικεν ἡ τάλαιν’ ὅσον στένει
πράξασα δεινά· δωμάτων γὰρ ἐκπερᾷ
φεύγουσα χεῖρας προσπόλων πόθῳ θανεῖν.

Ἑρμιόνη

Ἰώ μοί μοι·
σπάραγμα κόμας ὀνύχων τε
δάι’ ἀμύγματα θήσομαι.

Τροφός

Ὦ παῖ, τί δράσεις; σῶμα σὸν καταικιῇ;

Ἑρμιόνη

Αἰαῖ αἰαῖ·
ἔρρ᾽ αἰθέριον πλοκάμων ἐ-
μῶν ἄπο, λεπτόμιτον φάρος.

Τροφός

Τέκνον, κάλυπτε στέρνα, σύνδησον πέπλους.

Ἑρμιόνη

Τί δὲ στέρνα δεῖ καλύπτειν πέπλοις;
δῆλα καὶ ἀμφιφανῆ καὶ ἄκρυπτα δε-
δράκαμεν πόσιν.

Τροφός

Ἀλγεῖς φόνον ῥάψασα συγγάμῳ σέθεν;
Ἑρμιόνη κατὰ μὲν οὖν στένω τόλμαν δαΐ¨αν,
ἂν ἔρξ᾽ ἁ κατάρατος ἐγὼ κατά-
ρατος ἀνθρώποις.

Τροφός

Συγγνώσεταί σοι τήνδ᾽ ἁμαρτίαν πόσις.

Ἑρμιόνη

Τί μοι ξίφος
ἐκ χερὸς ἠγρεύσω;
ἀπόδος, ὦ φίλος, ἀπόδος, ἵν᾽ ἀνταίαν
ἐρείσω πλαγάν· τί με βρόχων εἴργεις;

Τροφός

Ἀλλ᾽ εἴ σ᾽ ἀφείην μὴ φρονοῦσαν, ὡς θάνῃς;

Ἑρμιόνη

Οἴμοι πότμου.
Ποῦ μοι πυρὸς φίλα φλόξ;
ποῦ δ᾽ ἐκ πέτρας ἀερθῶ,
ἢ κατὰ πόντον ἢ καθ᾽ ὕλαν ὀρέων,
ἵνα θανοῦσα νερτέροισιν μέλω;

Τροφός

Τί ταῦτα μοχθεῖς; συμφοραὶ θεήλατοι
πᾶσιν βροτοῖσιν ἢ τότ᾽ ἦλθον ἢ τότε.

Ἑρμιόνη

Ἔλιπες ἔλιπες, ὦ πάτερ, ἐπακτίαν

[ὡσεὶ] μονάδ᾽ ἔρημον οὖσαν ἐνάλου κώπας.
Ὀλεῖ ὀλεῖ με [δηλαδὴ πόσις]· τᾷδ᾽ οὐκέτ᾽ ἐνοικήσω
νυμφιδίῳ στέγᾳ.
Τίνος ἀγαλμάτων ἱκέτις ὁρμαθῶ;

ἢ δούλα δούλας γόνασι προσπέσω;
Φθιάδος ἐκ γᾶς
κυανόπτερος ὄρνις ἀρθείην,
πευκᾶεν σκάφος ᾇ διὰ Κυανέας ἐπέρασεν ἀκτάς,

πρωτόπλοος πλάτα.

Τροφός

Ὦ παῖ, τὸ λίαν οὔτ᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽ ἐπῄνεσα,
ὅτ᾽ εἰς γυναῖκα Τρῳάδ᾽ ἐξημάρτανες,
οὔτ᾽ αὖ τὸ νῦν σου δεῖμ᾽ ὃ δειμαίνεις ἄγαν.
Οὐχ ὧδε κῆδος σὸν διώσεται πόσις
φαύλοις γυναικὸς βαρβάρου πεισθεὶς λόγοις.
Οὐ γάρ τί σ᾽ αἰχμάλωτον ἐκ Τροίας ἔχει,

ἀλλ᾽ ἀνδρὸς ἐσθλοῦ παῖδα σὺν πολλοῖς λαβὼν
ἔδνοισι, πόλεώς τ᾽ οὐ μέσως εὐδαίμονος.
Πατὴρ δέ σ᾽ οὐχ ὧδ᾽ ὡς σὺ δειμαίνεις, τέκνον,
προδοὺς ἐάσει δωμάτων τῶνδ᾽ ἐκπεσεῖν.
Ἀλλ᾽ εἴσιθ᾽ εἴσω μηδὲ φαντάζου δόμων
πάροιθε τῶνδε, μή τιν᾽ αἰσχύνην λάβῃς
[πρόσθεν μελάθρων τῶνδ᾽ ὁρωμένη, τέκνον].

Χορός

Καὶ μὴν ὅδ᾽ ἀλλόχρως τις ἔκδημος ξένος
σπουδῇ πρὸς ἡμᾶς βημάτων πορεύεται.

Ὀρέστης

Ξέναι γυναῖκες, ἦ τάδ᾽ ἔστ᾽ Ἀχιλλέως
παιδὸς μέλαθρα καὶ τυραννικαὶ στέγαι;

Χορός

Ἔγνως· ἀτὰρ δὴ τίς σὺ πυνθάνῃ τάδε;

Ὀρέστης

Ἀγαμέμνονός τε καὶ Κλυταιμήστρας τόκος,
ὄνομα δ᾽ Ὀρέστης· ἔρχομαι δὲ πρὸς Διὸς
μαντεῖα Δωδωναῖ᾽. Ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἀφικόμην
Φθίαν, δοκεῖ μοι ξυγγενοῦς μαθεῖν πέρι
γυναικός, εἰ ζῇ κεὐτυχοῦσα τυγχάνει
ἡ Σπαρτιᾶτις Ἑρμιόνη· τηλουρὰ γὰρ
ναίουσ᾽ ἀφ᾽ ἡμῶν πεδί᾽ ὅμως ἐστὶν φίλη.

Ἑρμιόνη

Ὦ ναυτίλοισι χείματος λιμὴν φανεὶς
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖ, πρός σε τῶνδε γουνάτων,
οἴκτιρον ἡμᾶς ὧν ἐπισκοπεῖς τύχας,

πράσσοντας οὐκ εὖ. Στεμμάτων δ’ οὐχ ἥσσονας
σοῖς προστίθημι γόνασιν ὠλένας ἐμάς.

Ὀρέστης

Ἔα· τί χρῆμα; μῶν ἐσφάλμεθ’ ἢ σαφῶς ὁρῶ
δόμων ἄνασσαν τῶνδε Μενέλεω κόρην;

Ἑρμιόνη

Ἥνπερ μόνην γε Τυνδαρὶς τίκτει γυνὴ

Ἑλένη

Κατ’ οἴκους πατρί· μηδὲν ἀγνόει.

Ὀρέστης

Ὦ Φοῖβ’ ἀκέστορ, πημάτων δοίης λύσιν.
Τί χρῆμα; πρὸς θεῶν ἢ βροτῶν πάσχεις κακά;

Ἑρμιόνη

Τὰ μὲν πρὸς ἡμῶν, τὰ δὲ πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ὅς μ’ ἔχει,
τὰ δ’ ἐκ θεῶν του· πανταχῇ δ’ ὀλώλαμεν.

Ὀρέστης

Τίς οὖν ἂν εἴη μὴ πεφυκότων γέ πω
παίδων γυναικὶ συμφορὰ πλὴν εἰς λέχος;

Ἑρμιόνη

Τοῦτ’ αὐτὸ καὶ νοσοῦμεν· εὖ μ’ ὑπηγάγου.

Ὀρέστης

Ἄλλην τιν’ εὐνὴν ἀντὶ σοῦ στέργει πόσις;

Ἑρμιόνη

Τὴν αἰχμάλωτον Ἕκτορος ξυνευνέτιν.

Ὀρέστης

Κακόν γ᾽ ἔλεξας, ἄνδρα δίσσ᾽ ἔχειν λέχη.

Ἑρμιόνη

Τοιαῦτα ταῦτα. Κᾆτ᾽ ἔγωγ᾽ ἠμυνάμην.

Ὀρέστης

Μῶν εἰς γυναῖκ᾽ ἔρραψας οἷα δὴ γυνή;

Ἑρμιόνη

Φόνον γ᾽ ἐκείνῃ καὶ τέκνῳ νοθαγενεῖ.

Ὀρέστης

Κἄκτεινας, ἤ τις συμφορά σ᾽ ἀφείλετο;

Ἑρμιόνη

Γέρων γε Πηλεύς, τοὺς κακίονας σέβων.

Ὀρέστης

Σοὶ δ᾽ ἦν τις ὅστις τοῦδ᾽ ἐκοινώνει φόνου;

Ἑρμιόνη

Πατήρ γ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸ τοῦτ᾽ ἀπὸ Σπάρτης μολών.

Ὀρέστης

Κἄπειτα τοῦ γέροντος ἡσσήθη χερί;

Ἑρμιόνη

Αἰδοῖ γε· καί μ’ ἔρημον οἴχεται λιπών.

Ὀρέστης

Συνῆκα· ταρβεῖς τοῖς δεδραμένοις πόσιν.

Ἑρμιόνη

Ἔγνως· ὀλεῖ γάρ μ’ ἐνδίκως. Τί δεῖ λέγειν;
Ἀλλ’ ἄντομαί σε Δία καλοῦσ’ ὁμόγνιον,
πέμψον με χώρας τῆσδ’ ὅποι προσωτάτω
ἢ πρὸς πατρῷον μέλαθρον· ὡς δοκοῦσί γε
δόμοι τ’ ἐλαύνειν φθέγμ’ ἔχοντες οἵδε με,
μισεῖ τε γαῖα Φθιάς. Εἰ δ’ ἥξει πάρος
Φοίβου λιπὼν μαντεῖον εἰς δόμους πόσις,
κτενεῖ μ’ ἐπ’ αἰσχίστοισιν· ἢ δουλεύσομεν
νόθοισι λέκτροις ὧν ἐδέσποζον πρὸ τοῦ.

Ὀρέστης

Πῶς οὖν τάδ’, ὡς εἴποι τις, ἐξημάρτανες;

Ἑρμιόνη

Κακῶν γυναικῶν εἴσοδοί μ’ ἀπώλεσαν,
αἵ μοι λέγουσαι τούσδ’ ἐχαύνωσαν λόγους·
Σὺ τὴν κακίστην αἰχμάλωτον ἐν δόμοις
δούλην ἀνέξῃ σοὶ λέχους κοινουμένην;
μὰ τὴν ἄνασσαν, οὐκ ἂν ἔν γ’ ἐμοῖς δόμοις
βλέπουσ’ ἂν αὐγὰς τἄμ’ ἐκαρποῦτ’ ἂν λέχη.
Κἀγὼ κλύουσα τούσδε Σειρήνων λόγους,
[σοφῶν πανούργων ποικίλων λαλημάτων,]
ἐξηνεμώθην μωρίᾳ. Τί γάρ μ’ ἐχρῆν
πόσιν φυλάσσειν, ᾗ παρῆν ὅσων ἔδει;
πολὺς μὲν ὄλβος· δωμάτων δ’ ἠνάσσομεν·
παῖδας δ’ ἐγὼ μὲν γνησίους ἔτικτον ἄν,

ἡ δ' ἡμιδούλους τοῖς ἐμοῖς νοθαγενεῖς.
Ἀλλ' οὔποτ' οὔποτ' οὐ γὰρ εἰσάπαξ ἐρῶ
χρὴ τούς γε νοῦν ἔχοντας, οἷς ἔστιν γυνή,
πρὸς τὴν ἐν οἴκοις ἄλοχον ἐσφοιτᾶν ἐᾶν
γυναῖκας· αὗται γὰρ διδάσκαλοι κακῶν·
ἡ μέν τι κερδαίνουσα συμφθείρει λέχος,
ἡ δ' ἀμπλακοῦσα συννοσεῖν αὐτῇ θέλει,
πολλαὶ δὲ μαργότητι. Κἀντεῦθεν δόμοι
νοσοῦσιν ἀνδρῶν. Πρὸς τάδ' εὖ φυλάσσετε
κλῄθροισι καὶ μοχλοῖσι δωμάτων πύλας·
ὑγιὲς γὰρ οὐδὲν αἱ θύραθεν εἴσοδοι
δρῶσιν γυναικῶν, ἀλλὰ πολλὰ καὶ κακά.

Χορός

Ἄγαν ἐφῆκας γλῶσσαν εἰς τὸ σύμφυτον.
Συγγνωστὰ μέν νυν σοὶ τάδ', ἀλλ' ὅμως χρεὼν
κοσμεῖν γυναῖκας τὰς γυναικείας νόσους.

Ὀρέστης

Σοφόν τι χρῆμα τοῦ διδάξαντος βροτοὺς
λόγους ἀκούειν τῶν ἐναντίων πάρα.
Ἐγὼ γὰρ εἰδὼς τῶνδε σύγχυσιν δόμων
ἔριν τε τὴν σὴν καὶ γυναικὸς Ἕκτορος,
φυλακὰς ἔχων ἔμιμνον, εἴτ' αὐτοῦ μενεῖς
εἴτ' ἐκφοβηθεῖσ' αἰχμαλωτίδος φόνῳ
γυναικὸς οἴκων τῶνδ' ἀπηλλάχθαι θέλεις.
Ἦλθον δὲ σὰς μὲν οὐ σέβων ἐπιστολάς,
εἰ δ' ἐνδιδοίης, ὥσπερ ἐνδίδως, λόγον,
πέμψων σ' ἀπ' οἴκων τῶνδ'. Ἐμὴ γὰρ οὖσα πρὶν
σὺν τῷδε ναίεις ἀνδρὶ σοῦ πατρὸς κάκῃ,
ὃς πρὶν τὰ Τροίας ἐσβαλεῖν ὁρίσματα
γυναῖκ' ἐμοί σε δοὺς ὑπέσχεθ' ὕστερον
τῷ νῦν σ' ἔχοντι, Τρῳάδ' εἰ πέρσοι πόλιν.
Ἐπεὶ δ' Ἀχιλλέως δεῦρ' ἐνόστησεν γόνος,
σῷ μὲν συνέγνων πατρί, τὸν δ' ἐλισσόμην
γάμους ἀφεῖναι σούς, ἐμὰς λέγων τύχας

καὶ τὸν παρόντα δαίμον’, ὡς φίλων μὲν ἂν
γήμαιμ’ ἀπ’ ἀνδρῶν, ἔκτοθεν δ’ οὐ ῥᾳδίως,
φεύγων ἀπ’ οἴκων ἃς ἐγὼ φεύγω φυγάς.
Ὁ δ’ ἦν ὑβριστὴς ἐς τ’ ἐμῆς μητρὸς φόνον
τάς θ’ αἱματωποὺς θεὰς ὀνειδίζων ἐμοί.
Κἀγὼ ταπεινὸς ὢν τύχαις ταῖς οἴκοθεν
ἤλγουν μὲν ἤλγουν, συμφορὰς δ’ ἠνειχόμην,
σῶν δὲ στερηθεὶς ᾠχόμην ἄκων γάμων.
Νῦν οὖν, ἐπειδὴ περιπετεῖς ἔχεις τύχας
καὶ ξυμφορὰν τήνδ’ ἐσπεσοῦσ’ ἀμηχανεῖς,
ἄξω σ’ ἀπ’ οἴκων καὶ πατρὸς δώσω χερί.
Τὸ συγγενὲς γὰρ δεινόν, ἔν τε τοῖς κακοῖς
οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν κρεῖσσον οἰκείου φίλου.

Ἑρμιόνη

Νυμφευμάτων μὲν τῶν ἐμῶν πατὴρ ἐμὸς
μέριμναν ἕξει, κοὐκ ἐμὸν κρίνειν τόδε.
Ἀλλ’ ὡς τάχιστα τῶνδέ μ’ ἔκπεμψον δόμων
μὴ φθῇ σε προσβὰς δῶμα καὶ μ’ ἑλὼν πόσις,
ἢ πρέσβυς οἴκους μ’ ἐξερημοῦσαν μαθὼν
Πηλεὺς μετέλθῃ πωλικοῖς διώγμασιν.

Ὀρέστης

Θάρσει γέροντος χεῖρα· τὸν δ’ Ἀχιλλέως
μηδὲν φοβηθῇς παῖδ’, ὅσ’ εἰς ἔμ’ ὕβρισε.
Τοία γὰρ αὐτῷ μηχανὴ πεπλεγμένη
βρόχοις ἀκινήτοισιν ἕστηκεν φόνου
πρὸς τῆσδε χειρός· ἢν πάρος μὲν οὐκ ἐρῶ,
τελουμένων δὲ Δελφὶς εἴσεται πέτρα.
Ὁ μητροφόντης δ’, ἢν δορυξένων ἐμῶν
μείνωσιν ὅρκοι Πυθικὴν ἀνὰ χθόνα,
δείξω γαμεῖν σφε μηδέν’ ὧν ἐχρῆν ἐμέ.
Πικρῶς δὲ πατρὸς φόνιον αἰτήσει δίκην
ἄνακτα Φοῖβον· οὐδέ νιν μετάστασις
γνώμης ὀνήσει θεῷ διδόντα νῦν δίκας,
ἀλλ’ ἔκ τ’ ἐκείνου διαβολαῖς τε ταῖς ἐμαῖς

κακῶς ὀλεῖται· γνώσεται δ᾽ ἔχθραν θεοῦ.
Ἐχθρῶν γὰρ ἀνδρῶν μοῖραν εἰς ἀναστροφὴν
δαίμων δίδωσι κοὐκ ἐᾷ φρονεῖν μέγα.

Χορός

Ὦ Φοῖβε πυργώσας τὸν ἐν Ἰλίῳ εὐτειχῆ πάγον
καὶ πόντιε κυανέαις ἵπποις διφρεύ-
ων ἅλιον πέλαγος,

τίνος οὕνεκ᾽ ἄτιμον ὀργά-
ας χέρα τεκτοσύνας Ἐ-
νυαλίῳ δοριμήστορι προσθέν-
τες τάλαιναν τάλαι-
ναν μεθεῖτε Τροίαν;

Πλείστους δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀκταῖσιν Σιμοεντίσιν εὐίππους ὄχους
ἐζεύξατε καὶ φονίους ἀνδρῶν ἀμίλ-
λας ἔθετ᾽ ἀστεφάνους·
ἀπὸ δὲ φθίμενοι βεβᾶσιν
Ἰλιάδαι βασιλῆες,

οὐδ᾽ ἔτι πῦρ ἐπιβώμιον ἐν Τροί-
ᾳ θεοῖσιν λέλαμ-
πεν καπνῷ θυώδει.

Βέβακε δ᾽ Ἀτρείδας ἀλόχου παλάμαις,
αὐτά τ᾽ ἐναλλάξασα φόνῳ θάνατον
πρὸς τέκνων ἀπηύρα.
Θεοῦ θεοῦ νῦν κέλευμ᾽ ἐπεστράφη
μαντόσυνον, ὅτε νιν Ἀργόθεν πορευθεὶς
Ἀγαμεμνόνιος κέλωρ, ἀδύτων ἐπιβὰς

κτήσατ᾽, ὢν ματρὸς φονεὺς
ὦ δαῖμον, ὦ Φοῖβε, πῶς πείθομαι;

πολλαὶ δ᾽ ἀν᾽ Ἑλλάνων ἀγόρους στοναχὰς
μέλποντο δυστάνων λεχέων ἄλοχοι,

ἐκ δ’ ἔλειπον οἴκους
πρὸς ἄλλον εὐνάτορ’. Οὐχὶ σοὶ μόνᾳ
δύσφρονες ἐπέπεσον, οὐ φίλοισι, λῦπαι·
νόσον Ἑλλὰς ἔτλα, νόσον· διέβα δὲ Φρυγῶν

καὶ πρὸς εὐκάρπους γύας
σκηπτὸς σταλάσσων †Ἅιδα† φόνον.

Πηλεύς

Φθιώτιδες γυναῖκες, ἱστοροῦντί μοι
σημήνατ’· ᾐσθόμην γὰρ οὐ σαφῆ λόγον
ὡς δώματ’ ἐκλιποῦσα Μενέλεω κόρη
φρούδη τάδ’· ἥκω δ’ ἐκμαθεῖν σπουδὴν ἔχων
εἰ ταῦτ’ ἀληθῆ· τῶν γὰρ ἐκδήμων φίλων
δεῖ τοὺς κατ’ οἶκον ὄντας ἐκπονεῖν τύχας.

Χορός

Πηλεῦ, σαφῶς ἤκουσας· οὐδ’ ἐμοὶ καλὸν
κρύπτειν ἐν οἷς παροῦσα τυγχάνω κακοῖς·
βασίλεια γὰρ τῶνδ’ οἴχεται φυγὰς δόμων.

Πηλεύς

Τίνος φόβου τυχοῦσα; διαπέραινέ μοι.

Χορός

Πόσιν τρέμουσα, μὴ δόμων νιν ἐκβάλῃ.

Πηλεύς

Μῶν ἀντὶ παιδὸς θανασίμων βουλευμάτων;

Χορός

Ναί, καὶ γυναικὸς αἰχμαλωτίδος φόβῳ.

Πηλεύς

Σὺν πατρὶ δ’ οἴκους ἢ τίνος λείπει μέτα;

Χορός

Ἀγαμέμνονός νιν παῖς βέβηκ’ ἄγων χθονός.

Πηλεύς

Ποίαν περαίνων ἐλπίδ’; ἦ γῆμαι θέλων;

Χορός

Καὶ σῷ γε παιδὸς παιδὶ πορσύνων μόρον.

Πηλεύς

Κρυπτὸς καταστὰς ἢ κατ’ ὄμμ’ ἐλθὼν μάχῃ;

Χορός

Ἀγνοῖς ἐν ἱεροῖς Λοξίου Δελφῶν μέτα.

Πηλεύς

Οἴμοι· τόδ’ ἤδη δεινόν. οὐχ ὅσον τάχος
χωρήσεταί τις Πυθικὴν πρὸς ἑστίαν
καὶ τἀνθάδ’ ὄντα τοῖς ἐκεῖ λέξει φίλοις,
πρὶν παῖδ’ Ἀχιλλέως κατθανεῖν ἐχθρῶν ὕπο;

Ἄγγελος

Ὤμοι μοι· οἵας ὁ τλήμων ἀγγελῶν ἥκω τύχας
σοί τ’, ὦ γεραιέ, καὶ φίλοισι δεσπότου.

Πηλεύς

Αἰαῖ· πρόμαντις θυμὸς ὥς τι προσδοκᾷ.

Ἄγγελος

Οὐκ ἔστι σοι παῖς παιδός, ὡς μάθῃς, γέρον
Πηλεῦ· τοιάσδε φασγάνων πληγὰς ἔχει
Δελφῶν ὑπ᾽ ἀνδρῶν καὶ Μυκηναίου ξένου.

Χορός

Ἆ ἆ, τί δράσεις, ὦ γεραιέ; μὴ πέσῃς· ἔπαιρε σαυτόν.

Πηλεύς

Οὐδέν εἰμ᾽· ἀπωλόμην.
Φρούδη μὲν αὐδή, φροῦδα δ᾽ ἄρθρα μου κάτω.

Ἄγγελος

Ἄκουσον, εἰ σοὶ καὶ φίλοις ἀμυναθεῖν
χρῄζεις, τὸ πραχθέν, σὸν κατορθώσας δέμας.

Πηλεύς

Ὦ μοῖρα, γήρως ἐσχάτοις πρὸς τέρμασιν
οἵα με τὸν δύστηνον ἀμφιβᾶσ᾽ ἔχεις.
πῶς δ᾽ οἴχεταί μοι παῖς μόνου παιδὸς μόνος;
σήμαιν᾽· ἀκοῦσαι δ᾽ οὐκ ἀκούσθ᾽ ὅμως θέλω.

Ἄγγελος

Ἐπεὶ τὸ κλεινὸν ἤλθομεν Φοίβου πέδον,
τρεῖς μὲν φαεννὰς ἡλίου διεξόδους
θέᾳ διδόντες ὄμματ᾽ ἐξεπίμπλαμεν.
Καὶ τοῦθ᾽ ὕποπτον ἦν ἄρ᾽· ἐς δὲ συστάσεις
κύκλους τ᾽ ἐχώρει λαὸς οἰκήτωρ θεοῦ.
Ἀγαμέμνονος δὲ παῖς διαστείχων πόλιν
ἐς οὓς ἑκάστῳ δυσμενεῖς ηὔδα λόγους·
Ὁρᾶτε τοῦτον, ὃς διαστείχει θεοῦ
χρυσοῦ γέμοντα γύαλα, θησαυροὺς βροτῶν,
τὸ δεύτερον παρόντ᾽ ἐφ᾽ οἷσι καὶ πάρος

δεῦρ’ ἦλθε, Φοίβου ναὸν ἐκπέρσαι θέλων;
Κἀκ τοῦδ’ ἐχώρει ῥόθιον ἐν πόλει κακόν·
ἀρχαὶ δ’ ἐπληροῦντ’ ἐς τὰ βουλευτήρια,
ἰδίᾳ θ’ ὅσοι θεοῦ χρημάτων ἐφέστασαν,
φρουρὰν ἐτάξαντ’ ἐν περιστύλοις δόμοις.
Ἡμεῖς δὲ μῆλα, φυλλάδος Παρνασίας
παιδεύματ’, οὐδὲν τῶνδέ πω πεπυσμένοι,
λαβόντες ἦμεν ἐσχάραις τ’ ἐφέσταμεν
σὺν προξένοισι μάντεσίν τε Πυθικοῖς.
Καί τις τόδ’ εἶπεν· “Ὦ” νεανία, τί σοι
θεῷ κατευξώμεσθα; τίνος ἥκεις χάριν;
Ὁ δ’ εἶπε· Φοίβῳ τῆς πάροιθ’ ἁμαρτίας
δίκας παρασχεῖν βουλόμεσθ’· ἠτησα γὰρ
πατρός ποτ’ αὐτὸν αἵματος δοῦναι δίκην.
Κἀνταῦθ’ Ὀρέστου μῦθος ἰσχύων μέγα
ἐφαίνεθ’, ὡς ψεύδοιτο δεσπότης ἐμός,
ἥκων ἐπ’ αἰσχροῖς. Ἔρχεται δ’ ἀνακτόρων
κρηπῖδος ἐντός, ὡς πάρος χρηστηρίων
εὔξαιτο Φοίβῳ· τυγχάνει δ’ ἐν ἐμπύροις·
τῷ δὲ ξιφήρης ἦρ’ ὑφειστήκει λόχος
δάφνῃ σκιασθείς· ὧν Κλυταιμήστρας τόκος
εἷς ἦν ἁπάντων τῶνδε μηχανορράφος.

Χὠ μὲν κατ’ ὄμμα στὰς προσεύχεται θεῷ:
οἱ δ’ ὀξυθήκτοις φασγάνοις ὡπλισμένοι
κεντοῦσ’ ἀτευχῆ παῖδ’ Ἀχιλλέως λάθρᾳ.
Χωρεῖ δὲ πρύμναν: οὐ γὰρ εἰς καιρὸν τυπεὶς
ἐτύγχαν’: ἐξέλκει δὲ κἀκ παραστάδος
κρεμαστὰ τεύχη πασσάλων καθαρπάσας
ἔστη ‘πὶ βωμοῦ γοργὸς ὁπλίτης ἰδεῖν,
βοᾷ δὲ Δελφῶν παῖδας ἱστορῶν τάδε·
Τίνος μ’ ἔκατι κτείνετ’ εὐσεβεῖς ὁδοὺς
ἥκοντα; ποίας ὄλλυμαι πρὸς αἰτίας;
τῶν δ’ οὐδὲν οὐδεὶς μυρίων ὄντων πέλας
ἐφθέγξατ’, ἀλλ’ ἔβαλλον ἐκ χερῶν πέτροις.
Πυκνῇ δὲ νιφάδι πάντοθεν σποδούμενος
προύτεινε τεύχη κἀφυλάσσετ’ ἐμβολὰς

ἐκεῖσε κἀκεῖσ᾽ ἀσπίδ᾽ ἐκτείνων χερί.
Ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν ἦνον· ἀλλὰ πόλλ᾽ ὁμοῦ βέλη,
οἰστοί, μεσάγκυλ᾽ ἔκλυτοί τ᾽ ἀμφώβολοι
σφαγῆς ἐχώρουν βουπόροι ποδῶν πάρος.
Δεινὰς δ᾽ ἂν εἶδες πυρρίχας φρουρουμένου
βέλεμνα παιδός. Ὡς δέ νιν περισταδὸν
κύκλῳ κατεῖχον οὐ διδόντες ἀμπνοάς,
βωμοῦ κενώσας δεξίμηλον ἐσχάραν,
τὸ Τρωικὸν πήδημα πηδήσας ποδοῖν
χωρεῖ πρὸς αὐτούς· οἱ δ᾽ ὅπως πελειάδες
ἱέρακ᾽ ἰδοῦσαι πρὸς φυγὴν ἐνώτισαν.
Πολλοὶ δ᾽ ἔπιπτον μιγάδες ἔκ τε τραυμάτων
αὐτοί θ᾽ ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν στενοπόρους κατ᾽ ἐξόδους,
κραυγὴ δ᾽ ἐν εὐφήμοισι δύσφημος δόμοις
πέτραισιν ἀντέκλαγξ᾽· ἐν εὐδίᾳ δέ πως
ἔστη φαεννοῖς δεσπότης στίλβων ὅπλοις·
πρὶν δή τις ἀδύτων ἐκ μέσων ἐφθέγξατο
δεινόν τι καὶ φρικῶδες, ὦρσε δὲ στρατὸν
στρέψας πρὸς ἀλκήν. Ἔνθ᾽ Ἀχιλλέως πίτνει
παῖς ὀξυθήκτῳ πλευρὰ φασγάνῳ τυπεὶς
[Δελφοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρός, ὅσπερ αὐτὸν ὤλεσε]
πολλῶν μετ᾽ ἄλλων· ὡς δὲ πρὸς γαῖαν πίτνει,
τίς οὐ σίδηρον προσφέρει, τίς οὐ πέτρον,
βάλλων ἀράσσων; πᾶν δ᾽ ἀνήλωται δέμας
τὸ καλλίμορφον τραυμάτων ὕπ᾽ ἀγρίων.
Νεκρὸν δὲ δή νιν κείμενον βωμοῦ πέλας
ἐξέβαλον ἐκτὸς θυοδόκων ἀνακτόρων.
Ἡμεῖς δ᾽ ἀναρπάσαντες ὡς τάχος χεροῖν
κομίζομέν νίν σοι κατοιμῶξαι γόοις
κλαῦσαί τε, πρέσβυ, γῆς τε κοσμῆσαι τάφῳ.
Τοιαῦθ᾽ ὁ τοῖς ἄλλοισι θεσπίζων ἄναξ,
ὁ τῶν δικαίων πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις κριτής,
δίκας διδόντα παῖδ᾽ ἔδρασ᾽ Ἀχιλλέως.
Ἐμνημόνευσε δ᾽, ὥσπερ ἄνθρωπος κακός,
παλαιὰ νείκη· πῶς ἂν οὖν εἴη σοφός;

Πηλεύς

Ὤμοι ἐγώ, κακὸν οἷον ὁρῶ τόδε
καὶ δέχομαι χερὶ δώμασί τ᾽ ἀμοῖς.
Ἰώ μοί μοι, αἰαῖ,
ὦ πόλι Θεσσαλία, διολώλαμεν,
οἰχόμεθ᾽: οὐκέτι μοι γένος, οὐκέτι μοι τέκνα λείπεται οἴκοις:
ὦ σχέτλιος παθέων ἐγώ: †εἰς τίνα
δὴ φίλον αὐγὰς βαλὼν τέρψομαι;†
ὦ φίλιον στόμα καὶ γένυ καὶ χέρες,
εἴθε σ᾽ ὑπ᾽ Ἰλίῳ ἤναρε δαίμων
Σιμοεντίδα παρ᾽ ἀκτάν.

Χορός

Οὗτός γ᾽ ἂν ὡς ἐκ τῶνδ᾽ ἐτιμᾶτ᾽ ἄν, γέρον,
θανών, τὸ σὸν δ᾽ ἦν ὧδ᾽ ἂν εὐτυχέστερον.

Πηλεύς

Ὦ γάμος, ὦ γάμος, ὃς τάδε δώματα
καὶ πόλιν ὤλεσας ὤλεσας ἀμάν.
Αἰαῖ, ἔ ἔ, ὦ παῖ:
†μήποτε σῶν λεχέων τὸ δυσώνυμον
ὤφελ᾽ ἐμὸν γένος εἰς τέκνα καὶ δόμον ἀμφιβαλέσθαι
Ἑρμιόνας Ἀίδαν ἐπὶ σοί, τέκνον,†
ἀλλὰ κεραυνῷ πρόσθεν ὀλέσθαι:
μηδ᾽ ἐπὶ τοξοσύνᾳ φονίῳ πατρὸς
αἷμα τὸ διογενές ποτε Φοῖβον
βροτὸς εἰς θεὸν ἀνάψαι.

Χορός

Ὀττοτοτοτοῖ, θανόντα δεσπόταν γόοις
νόμῳ τῷ νερτέρων κατάρξω.

Πηλεύς

Ὀττοτοτοτοῖ, διάδοχά <σοι> τάλας ἐγὼ
γέρων καὶ δυστυχὴς δακρύω.

Χορός

Θεοῦ γὰρ αἶσα, θεὸς ἔκρανε συμφοράν.

Πηλεύς

Ὦ φίλος, δόμον ἔλιπες ἔρημον,
[ὤμοι μοι, ταλαίπωρον ἐμὲ]
γέροντ᾽ ἄπαιδα νοσφίσας.

Χορός

Θανεῖν θανεῖν σε, πρέσβυ, χρῆν πάρος τέκνων.

Πηλεύς

Οὐ σπαράξομαι κόμαν,
οὐκ ἐμῷ ‘πιθήσομαι
κάρᾳ κτύπημα χειρὸς ὀλοόν; ὦ πόλις,
διπλῶν τέκνων
μ᾽ ἐστέρησε Φοῖβος.

Χορός

Ὦ κακὰ παθὼν ἰδών τε δυστυχὲς γέρον,
τίν᾽ αἰῶν᾽ ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν ἕξεις;

Πηλεύς

Ἄτεκνος ἔρημος, οὐκ ἔχων πέρας κακῶν
διαντλήσω πόνους ἐς Ἅιδαν.

Χορός

Μάτην δέ σ᾽ ἐν γάμοισιν ὤλβισαν θεοί.

Πηλεύς

Ἀμπτάμενα φροῦδα πάντ᾽ ἐκεῖνα
κόμπων μεταρσίων πρόσω.

Χορός

Μόνος μόνοισιν ἐν δόμοις ἀναστρέφῃ.

Πηλεύς

Οὐκέτ᾽ εἴμ᾽, οἴμοι, πόλις,
σκῆπτρά τ᾽ ἐρρέτω τάδε [ἐπὶ γαῖαν]·
σύ τ᾽, ὦ κατ᾽ ἄντρα νύχια Νηρέως κόρη,
πανώλεθρόν μ᾽ ὄψεαι πίτνοντα [πρὸς γᾶν].

Χορός

Ἰὼ ἰώ·
τί κεκίνηται; τίνος αἰσθάνομαι
θείου; κοῦραι, λεύσσετ᾽ ἀθρήσατε·
δαίμων ὅδε τις λευκὴν αἰθέρα
πορθμευόμενος τῶν ἱπποβότων
Φθίας πεδίων ἐπιβαίνει.

Θέτις

Πηλεῦ, χάριν σοι τῶν πάρος νυμφευμάτων
ἥκω Θέτις λιποῦσα Νηρέως δόμους.
Καὶ πρῶτα μέν σοι τοῖς παρεστῶσιν κακοῖς
μηδέν τι λίαν δυσφορεῖν παρῄνεσα:
κἀγὼ γάρ, ἣν ἄκλαυτα χρῆν τίκτειν τέκνα,
θεὰν γεγῶσαν καὶ θεοῦ πατρὸς τέκος,
ἀπώλεσ᾽ ἐκ σοῦ παῖδα τὸν ταχὺν πόδας
Ἀχιλλέα τεκοῦσα πρῶτον Ἑλλάδος.
Ὧν δ᾽ οὕνεκ᾽ ἦλθον σημανῶ, σὺ δ᾽ ἐνδέχου.
Τὸν μὲν θανόντα τόνδ᾽ Ἀχιλλέως γόνον
θάψον πορεύσας Πυθικὴν πρὸς ἐσχάραν,
Δελφοῖς ὄνειδος, ὡς ἀπαγγέλλῃ τάφος
φόνον βίαιον τῆς Ὀρεστείας χερός·

γυναῖκα δ’ αἰχμάλωτον, Ἀνδρομάχην λέγω,
Μολοσσίαν γῆν χρὴ κατοικῆσαι, γέρον,
Ἑλένῳ συναλλαχθεῖσαν εὐναίοις γάμοις,
καὶ παῖδα τόνδε, τῶν ἀπ’ Αἰακοῦ μόνον
λελειμμένον δή. Βασιλέα δ’ ἐκ τοῦδε χρὴ
ἄλλον δι’ ἄλλου διαπερᾶν Μολοσσίας
εὐδαιμονοῦντας· οὐ γὰρ ὧδ’ ἀνάστατον
γένος γενέσθαι δεῖ τὸ σὸν κἀμόν, γέρον,
Τροίας τε· καὶ γὰρ θεοῖσι κἀκείνης μέλει,
καίπερ πεσούσης Παλλάδος προθυμίᾳ.
Σὲ δ’, ὡς ἂν εἰδῇς τῆς ἐμῆς εὐνῆς χάριν,
κακῶν ἀπαλλάξασα τῶν βροτησίων
ἀθάνατον ἄφθιτόν τε ποιήσω θεόν.
Κἄπειτα Νηρέως ἐν δόμοις ἐμοῦ μέτα
τὸ λοιπὸν ἤδη θεὸς συνοικήσεις θεᾷ·
ἔνθεν κομίζων ξηρὸν ἐκ πόντου πόδα
τὸν φίλτατον σοὶ παῖδ’ ἐμοί τ’ Ἀχιλλέα
ὄψῃ δόμους ναίοντα νησιωτικοὺς
Λευκὴν κατ’ ἀκτὴν ἐντὸς ἀξένου πόρου.
Ἀλλ’ ἕρπε Δελφῶν εἰς θεόδμητον πόλιν
νεκρὸν κομίζων τόνδε, καὶ κρύψας χθονὶ
ἐλθὼν παλαιᾶς χοιράδος κοῖλον μυχὸν
Σηπιάδος ἴζου· μίμνε δ’, ἔστ’ ἂν ἐξ ἁλὸς
λαβοῦσα πεντήκοντα Νηρῄδων χορὸν
ἔλθω κομιστήν σου· τὸ γὰρ πεπρωμένον
δεῖ σ’ ἐκκομίζειν· Ζηνὶ γὰρ δοκεῖ τάδε.
Παῦσαι δὲ λύπης τῶν τεθνηκότων ὕπερ·
πᾶσιν γὰρ ἀνθρώποισιν ἥδε πρὸς θεῶν
ψῆφος κέκρανται κατθανεῖν τ’ ὀφείλεται.

Πηλεύς

Ὦ πότνι’, ὦ γενναῖα συγκοιμήματα,
Νηρέως γένεθλον, χαῖρε· ταῦτα δ’ ἀξίως
σαυτῆς τε ποιεῖς καὶ τέκνων τῶν ἐκ σέθεν.
Παύω δὲ λύπην σοῦ κελευούσης, θεά,
καὶ τόνδε θάψας εἶμι Πηλίου πτυχάς,

οὗπερ σὸν εἶλον χερσὶ κάλλιστον δέμας.
[Κᾆτ’ οὐ γαμεῖν δῆτ’ ἔκ τε γενναίων χρεὼν
δοῦναί τ’ ἐς ἐσθλούς, ὅστις εὖ βουλεύεται,
κακῶν δὲ λέκτρων μὴ ‘πιθυμίαν ἔχειν,
μηδ’ εἰ ζαπλούτους οἴσεται φερνὰς δόμοις;
οὐ γάρ ποτ’ ἂν πράξειαν ἐκ θεῶν κακῶς.]

Χορός

Πολλαὶ μορφαὶ τῶν δαιμονίων,
πολλὰ δ’ ἀέλπτως κραίνουσι θεοί·
καὶ τὰ δοκηθέντ’ οὐκ ἐτελέσθη,
τῶν δ’ ἀδοκήτων πόρον ηὗρε θεός.
Τοιόνδ’ ἀπέβη τόδε πρᾶγμα.

HECUBA

Πολυδώρου εἴδωλον

Ἥκω νεκρῶν κευθμῶνα καὶ σκότου πύλας
λιπών, ἵν’ Ἅιδης χωρὶς ᾤκισται θεῶν,
Πολύδωρος, Ἑκάβης παῖς γεγὼς τῆς Κισσέως
Πριάμου τε πατρός, ὅς μ’, ἐπεὶ Φρυγῶν πόλιν
[5] κίνδυνος ἔσχε δορὶ πεσεῖν Ἑλληνικῷ,
δείσας ὑπεξέπεμψε Τρωικῆς χθονὸς
Πολυμήστορος πρὸς δῶμα Θρῃκίου ξένου,
ὃς τήν<δ’> ἀρίστην Χερσονησίαν πλάκα
σπείρει, φίλιππον λαὸν εὐθύνων δορί.
[10] Πολὺν δὲ σὺν ἐμοὶ χρυσὸν ἐκπέμπει λάθρᾳ
πατήρ, ἵν’, εἴ ποτ’ Ἰλίου τείχη πέσοι,
τοῖς ζῶσιν εἴη παισὶ μὴ σπάνις βίου.
Νεώτατος δ’ ἦ Πριαμιδῶν, ὃ καί με γῆς
ὑπεξέπεμψεν· οὔτε γὰρ φέρειν ὅπλα
[15] οὔτ’ ἔγχος οἷός τ’ ἦ νέῳ βραχίονι.
[16] Ἕως μὲν οὖν γῆς ὄρθ’ ἔκειθ’ ὁρίσματα
πύργοι τ’ ἄθραυστοι Τρωικῆς ἦσαν χθονὸς
Ἕκτωρ τ’ ἀδελφὸς οὐμὸς εὐτύχει δορί,
καλῶς παρ’ ἀνδρὶ Θρῃκὶ πατρῴῳ ξένῳ
[20] τροφαῖσιν ὥς τις πτόρθος ηὐξόμην, τάλας·
ἐπεὶ δὲ Τροία θ’ Ἕκτορός τ’ ἀπόλλυται
ψυχή, πατρῴα θ’ ἑστία κατεσκάφη,
αὐτὸς δὲ βωμῷ πρὸς θεοδμήτῳ πίτνει
σφαγεὶς Ἀχιλλέως παιδὸς ἐκ μιαιφόνου,
[25] κτείνει με χρυσοῦ τὸν ταλαίπωρον χάριν
ξένος πατρῷος καὶ κτανὼν ἐς οἶδμ’ ἁλὸς
μεθῆχ’, ἵν’ αὐτὸς χρυσὸν ἐν δόμοις ἔχῃ.
[28] Κεῖμαι δ’ ἐπ’ ἀκταῖς, ἄλλοτ’ ἐν πόντου σάλῳ,
πολλοῖς διαύλοις κυμάτων φορούμενος,
[30] ἄκλαυτος ἄταφος· νῦν δ’ ὑπὲρ μητρὸς φίλης
Ἑκάβης ἀίσσω, σῶμ’ ἐρημώσας ἐμόν,
τριταῖον ἤδη φέγγος αἰωρούμενος,

ὅσονπερ ἐν γῇ τῇδε Χερσονησίᾳ
μήτηρ ἐμὴ δύστηνος ἐκ Τροίας πάρα.
[35] Πάντες δ’ Ἀχαιοὶ ναῦς ἔχοντες ἥσυχοι
θάσσουσ’ ἐπ’ ἀκταῖς τῆσδε Θρῃκίας χθονός·
ὁ Πηλέως γὰρ παῖς ὑπὲρ τύμβου φανεὶς
κατέσχ’ Ἀχιλλεὺς πᾶν στράτευμ’ Ἑλληνικόν,
πρὸς οἶκον εὐθύνοντας ἐναλίαν πλάτην·
[40] αἰτεῖ δ’ ἀδελφὴν τὴν ἐμὴν Πολυξένην
τύμβῳ φίλον πρόσφαγμα καὶ γέρας λαβεῖν.
Καὶ τεύξεται τοῦδ’, οὐδ’ ἀδώρητος φίλων
ἔσται πρὸς ἀνδρῶν· ἡ πεπρωμένη δ’ ἄγει
θανεῖν ἀδελφὴν τῷδ’ ἐμὴν ἐν ἥματι.
[45] Δυοῖν δὲ παίδοιν δύο νεκρὼ κατόψεται
μήτηρ, ἐμοῦ τε τῆς τε δυστήνου κόρης.
Φανήσομαι γάρ, ὡς τάφου τλήμων τύχω,
δούλης ποδῶν πάροιθεν ἐν κλυδωνίῳ.
Τοὺς γὰρ κάτω σθένοντας ἐξῃτησάμην
[50] τύμβου κυρῆσαι κἀς χέρας μητρὸς πεσεῖν.
Τοὐμὸν μὲν οὖν ὅσονπερ ἤθελον τυχεῖν
ἔσται· γεραιᾷ δ’ ἐκποδὼν χωρήσομαι
Ἑκάβῃ· περᾷ γὰρ ἥδ’ ὑπὸ σκηνῆς πόδα
Ἀγαμέμνονος, φάντασμα δειμαίνουσ’ ἐμόν.
[54β] Φεῦ·
[55] ὦ μῆτερ ἥτις ἐκ τυραννικῶν δόμων
δούλειον ἦμαρ εἶδες, ὡς πράσσεις κακῶς
ὅσονπερ εὖ ποτ’· ἀντισηκώσας δέ σε
φθείρει θεῶν τις τῆς πάροιθ’ εὐπραξίας.

Ἑκάβη

[59] ἄγετ’, ὦ παῖδες, τὴν γραῦν πρὸ δόμων,
[60] ἄγετ’ ὀρθοῦσαι τὴν ὁμόδουλον,
Τρῳάδες, ὑμῖν, πρόσθε δ’ ἄνασσαν·
λάβετε φέρετε πέμπετ’ ἀείρετέ μου
γεραιᾶς χειρὸς προσλαζύμεναι·
[65] κἀγὼ σκολιῷ σκίπωνι χερὸς
διερειδομένα σπεύσω βραδύπουν

ἤλυσιν ἄρθρων προτιθεῖσα.
Ὦ στεροπὰ Διός, ὦ σκοτία νύξ,
τί ποτ᾽ αἴρομαι ἔννυχος οὕτω
[70] δείμασι, φάσμασιν; Ὦ πότνια Χθών,
μελανοπτερύγων μῆτερ ὀνείρων,
ἀποπέμπομαι ἔννυχον ὄψιν,
ἣν περὶ παιδὸς ἐμοῦ τοῦ σῳζομένου κατὰ Θρῄκην
[75] ἀμφὶ Πολυξείνης τε φίλης θυγατρὸς δι᾽ ὀνείρων
εἶδον γὰρ φοβερὰν ὄψιν ἔμαθον ἐδάην.
Ὦ χθόνιοι θεοί, σώσατε παῖδ᾽ ἐμόν,
[80] ὃς μόνος οἴκων ἄγκυρ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἐμῶν
τὴν χιονώδη Θρῄκην κατέχει
ξείνου πατρίου φυλακαῖσιν.

[83] Ἔσται τι νέον·
ἥξει τι μέλος γοερὸν γοεραῖς.
[85] Οὔποτ᾽ ἐμὰ φρὴν ὧδ᾽ ἀλίαστος
φρίσσει, ταρβεῖ.
Ποῦ ποτε θείαν Ἑλένου ψυχὰν
καὶ Κασάνδραν ἐσίδω, Τρῳάδες,
ὥς μοι κρίνωσιν ὀνείρους;
[90] Εἶδον γὰρ βαλιὰν ἔλαφον λύκου αἵμονι χαλᾷ
σφαζομέναν, ἀπ᾽ ἐμῶν γονάτων σπασθεῖσαν ἀνοίκτως.
Καὶ τόδε δεῖμά μοι· ἦλθ᾽ ὑπὲρ ἄκρας
τύμβου κορυφᾶς
φάνταμ᾽ Ἀχιλέως· ἦτει δὲ γέρας
[95] τῶν πολυμόχθων τινὰ Τρωιάδων.
Ἀπ᾽ ἐμᾶς ἀπ᾽ ἐμᾶς οὖν τόδε παιδὸς
πέμψατε, δαίμονες, ἱκετεύω.

Χορός

[98] Ἑκάβη, σπουδῇ πρός σ᾽ ἐλιάσθην
τὰς δεσποσύνους σκηνὰς προλιποῦσ᾽,
[100] ἵν᾽ ἐκληρώθην καὶ προσετάχθην
δούλη, πόλεως ἀπελαυνομένη
τῆς Ἰλιάδος, λόγχης αἰχμῇ

δοριθήρατος πρὸς Ἀχαιῶν,
οὐδὲν παθέων ἀποκουφίζουσ’,
ἀλλ’ ἀγγελίας βάρος ἀραμένη
μέγα σοί τε, γύναι, κῆρυξ ἀχέων.
Ἐν γὰρ Ἀχαιῶν πλήρει ξυνόδῳ
λέγεται δόξαι σὴν παῖδ’ Ἀχιλεῖ
σφάγιον θέσθαι· τύμβου δ’ ἐπιβὰς
οἶσθ’ ὅτε χρυσέοις ἐφάνη σὺν ὅπλοις,
τὰς ποντοπόρους δ’ ἔσχε σχεδίας
λαίφη προτόνοις ἐπερειδομένας,
τάδε θωύ¨σσων·
Ποῖ δή, Δαναοί, τὸν ἐμὸν τύμβον
στέλλεσθ’ ἀγέραστον ἀφέντες;
Πολλῆς δ’ ἔριδος συνέπαισε κλύδων,
δόξα δ’ ἐχώρει δίχ’ ἀν’ Ἑλλήνων
στρατὸν αἰχμητήν, τοῖς μὲν διδόναι
τύμβῳ σφάγιον, τοῖς δ’ οὐχὶ δοκοῦν.
Ἦν δ’ ὁ τὸ μὲν σὸν σπεύδων ἀγαθὸν
τῆς μαντιπόλου Βάκχης ἀνέχων
λέκτρ’ Ἀγαμέμνων·
τὼ Θησείδα δ’, ὄζω Ἀθηνῶν,
δισσῶν μύθων ῥήτορες ἦσαν·
γνώμῃ δὲ μιᾷ συνεχωρείτην,
τὸν Ἀχίλλειον τύμβον στεφανοῦν
αἵματι χλωρῷ, τὰ δὲ Κασάνδρας
λέκτρ’ οὐκ ἐφάτην τῆς Ἀχιλείας
πρόσθεν θήσειν ποτὲ λόγχης.
Σπουδαὶ δὲ λόγων κατατεινομένων
ἦσαν ἴσαι πως, πρὶν ὁ ποικιλόφρων
κόπις ἡδυλόγος δημοχαριστὴς
Λαερτιάδης πείθει στρατιὰν
μὴ τὸν ἄριστον Δαναῶν πάντων
δούλων σφαγίων εἵνεκ’ ἀπωθεῖν,
μηδέ τιν’ εἰπεῖν παρὰ Φερσεφόνῃ
στάντα φθιμένων
ὡς ἀχάριστοι Δαναοὶ Δαναοῖς
τοῖς οἰχομένοις ὑπὲρ Ἑλλήνων

Τροίας πεδίων ἀπέβησαν.
Ἦξει δ᾽ Ὀδυσεὺς ὅσον οὐκ ἤδη,
πῶλον ἀφέλξων σῶν ἀπὸ μαστῶν
ἔκ τε γεραιᾶς χερὸς ὁρμήσων.
Ἀλλ᾽ ἴθι ναούς, ἴθι πρὸς βωμούς,
ἵζ᾽ Ἀγαμέμνονος ἱκέτις γονάτων,
κήρυσσε θεοὺς τούς τ᾽ οὐρανίδας
τούς θ᾽ ὑπὸ γαῖαν.
Ἦ γάρ σε λιταὶ διακωλύσουσ᾽
ὀρφανὸν εἶναι παιδὸς μελέας,
ἢ δεῖ σ᾽ ἐπιδεῖν τύμβου προπετῆ
φοινισσομένην αἵματι παρθένον
ἐκ χρυσοφόρου
δειρῆς νασμῷ μελαναυγεῖ.

Ἑκάβη

Οἳ ἐγὼ μελέα, τί ποτ᾽ ἀπύσω;
Ποίαν ἀχώ, ποῖον ὀδυρμόν,
δειλαία δειλαίου γήρως,
δουλείας τᾶς οὐ τλατᾶς,
τᾶς οὐ φερτᾶς; Οἴμοι.
Τίς ἀμύνει μοι; Ποία γέννα,
ποία δὲ πόλις; Φροῦδος πρέσβυς,
φροῦδοι παῖδες.
Ποίαν ἢ ταύταν ἢ κείναν
στείχω; Ποῖ δ᾽ ἥσω; Ποῦ τις θεῶν
ἢ δαιμόνων ἐπαρωγός;
Ὦ κάκ᾽ ἐνεγκοῦσαι,
Τρῳάδες ὦ κάκ᾽ ἐνεγκοῦσαι
πήματ᾽, ἀπωλέσατ᾽ ὠλέσατ᾽· οὐκέτι μοι βίος
ἀγαστὸς ἐν φάει.
Ὦ τλάμων ἄγησαί μοι πούς,
ἄγησαι τᾷ γηραιᾷ
πρὸς τάνδ᾽ αὐλάν· ὦ τέκνον, ὦ παῖ,
δυστανοτάτας ματέρος ἔξελθ᾽ ἔξελθ᾽
οἴκων ἄιε ματέρος αὐδάν.

[175] Ὦ τέκνον ὡς εἰδῇς οἵαν οἵαν
ἀίω φάμαν περὶ σᾶς ψυχᾶς.

Πολυξένη

[177] Ἰώ·
μᾶτερ μᾶτερ τί βοᾷς; Τί νέον
καρύξασ᾽ οἴκων μ᾽ ὥστ᾽ ὄρνιν
θάμβει τῷδ᾽ ἐξέπταξας;

Ἑκάβη

[180] οἴμοι τέκνον.

Πολυξένη

Τί με δυσφημεῖς; Φροίμιά μοι κακά.

Ἑκάβη

Αἰαῖ σᾶς ψυχᾶς.

Πολυξένη

Ἐξαύδα· μὴ κρύψῃς δαρόν.
Δειμαίνω δειμαίνω, μᾶτερ,
[185] τί ποτ᾽ ἀναστένεις . . .

Ἑκάβη

Ὦ τέκνον τέκνον μελέας ματρὸς . . .

Πολυξένη

Τί <δὲ> τόδ᾽ ἀγγελεῖς;

Ἑκάβη

σφάξαι σ’ Ἀργείων κοινὰ
συντείνει πρὸς τύμβον γνώμα
Πηλείᾳ γέννᾳ.

Πολυξένη

Οἴμοι μᾶτερ, πῶς φθέγγῃ
ἀμέγαρτα κακῶν; Μάνυσόν μοι,
μάνυσον, μᾶτερ.

Ἑκάβη

Αὐδῶ, παῖ, δυσφήμους φήμας·
ἀγγέλλουσ’ Ἀργείων δόξαι
ψήφῳ τᾶς σᾶς περί μοι ψυχᾶς.

Πολυξένη

Ὦ δεινὰ παθοῦσ’, ὦ παντλάμων,
ὦ δυστάνου μᾶτερ βιοτᾶς
οἵαν οἵαν αὖ σοι λώβαν
ἐχθίσταν ἀρρήταν τ’
ὤρσέν τις δαίμων;
Οὐκέτι σοι παῖς ἄδ’ οὐκέτι δὴ
γήρᾳ δειλαίῳ δειλαία
συνδουλεύσω.
Σκύμνον γάρ μ’ ὥστ’ οὐριθρέπταν
μόσχον δειλαία δειλαίαν
. . . . . ἐσόψῃ,
χειρὸς ἀναρπαστὰν
σᾶς ἄπο λαιμότομόν τ’ Ἀίδᾳ
γᾶς ὑποπεμπομέναν σκότον, ἔνθα νεκρῶν μέτα
τάλαινα κείσομαι.
Καὶ σοῦ μέν, μᾶτερ, δυστάνου
κλαίω πανδύρτοις θρήνοις,
τὸν ἐμὸν δὲ βίον λώβαν λύμαν τ’
οὐ μετακλαίομαι, ἀλλὰ θανεῖν μοι
ξυντυχία κρείσσων ἐκύρησεν.

Χορός

Καὶ μὴν Ὀδυσσεὺς ἔρχεται σπουδῇ ποδός,
Ἑκάβη, νέον τι πρὸς σὲ σημανῶν ἔπος.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Γύναι, δοκῶ μέν σ' εἰδέναι γνώμην στρατοῦ
ψῆφόν τε τὴν κρανθεῖσαν· ἀλλ' ὅμως φράσω.
Ἔδοξ' Ἀχαιοῖς παῖδα σὴν Πολυξένην
σφάξαι πρὸς ὀρθὸν χῶμ' Ἀχιλλείου τάφου.
Ἡμᾶς δὲ πομποὺς καὶ κομιστῆρας κόρης
τάσσουσιν εἶναι· θύματος δ' ἐπιστάτης
ἱερεύς τ' ἐπέσται τοῦδε παῖς Ἀχιλλέως.
Οἶσθ' οὖν ὃ δρᾶσον; Μήτ' ἀποσπασθῇς βίᾳ
μήτ' ἐς χερῶν ἅμιλλαν ἐξέλθῃς ἐμοί·
γίγνωσκε δ' ἀλκὴν καὶ παρουσίαν κακῶν
τῶν σῶν. Σοφόν τοι κἀν κακοῖς ἃ δεῖ φρονεῖν.

Ἑκάβη

Αἰαῖ· παρέστηχ', ὡς ἔοικ', ἀγὼν μέγας,
πλήρης στεναγμῶν οὐδὲ δακρύων κενός.
Κἄγωγ' ἄρ' οὐκ ἔθνῃσκον οὗ μ' ἐχρῆν θανεῖν,
οὐδ' ὤλεσέν με Ζεύς, τρέφει δ', ὅπως ὁρῶ
κακῶν κάκ' ἄλλα μείζον' ἢ τάλαιν' ἐγώ.
Εἰ δ' ἔστι τοῖς δούλοισι τοὺς ἐλευθέρους
μὴ λυπρὰ μηδὲ καρδίας δηκτήρια
ἐξιστορῆσαι, σοὶ μὲν εἰρῆσθαι χρεών,
ἡμᾶς δ' ἀκοῦσαι τοὺς ἐρωτῶντας τάδε.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἔξεστ', ἐρώτα· τοῦ χρόνου γὰρ οὐ φθονῶ.

Ἑκάβη

Οἶσθ’ ἡνίκ’ ἦλθες Ἰλίου κατάσκοπος,
φόνου σταλαγμοὶ σὴν κατέσταζον γένυν;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Οἶδ’· οὐ γὰρ ἄκρας καρδίας ἔψαυσέ μου.

Ἑκάβη

Ἔγνω δέ σ’ Ἑλένη καὶ μόνῃ κατεῖπ’ ἐμοί;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Μεμνήμεθ’ ἐς κίνδυνον ἐλθόντες μέγαν.

Ἑκάβη

Ἥψω δὲ γονάτων τῶν ἐμῶν ταπεινὸς ὤν;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ὥστ’ ἐνθανεῖν γε σοῖς πέπλοισι χεῖρ’ ἐμήν.

Ἑκάβη

Ἔσωσα δῆτά σ’ ἐξέπεμψά τε χθονός;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ὥστ’ εἰσορᾶν γε φέγγος ἡλίου τόδε.

Ἑκάβη

Τί δῆτ’ ἔλεξας δοῦλος ὢν ἐμὸς τότε;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Πολλῶν λόγων εὑρήμαθ’, ὥστε μὴ θανεῖν.

Ἑκάβη

Οὔκουν κακύνῃ τοῖσδε τοῖς βουλεύμασιν,
ὃς ἐξ ἐμοῦ μὲν ἔπαθες οἷα φῄς παθεῖν,
δρᾷς δ’ οὐδὲν ἡμᾶς εὖ, κακῶς δ’ ὅσον δύνῃ;
Ἀχάριστον ὑμῶν σπέρμ’, ὅσοι δημηγόρους
ζηλοῦτε τιμάς· μηδὲ γιγνώσκοισθέ μοι,
οἳ τοὺς φίλους βλάπτοντες οὐ φροντίζετε,
ἢν τοῖσι πολλοῖς πρὸς χάριν λέγητέ τι.
Ἀτὰρ τί δὴ σόφισμα τοῦθ’ ἡγούμενοι
ἐς τήνδε παῖδα ψῆφον ὥρισαν φόνου;
Πότερα τὸ χρῆν σφ’ ἐπήγαγ’ ἀνθρωποσφαγεῖν
πρὸς τύμβον, ἔνθα βουθυτεῖν μᾶλλον πρέπει;
Ἢ τοὺς κτανόντας ἀνταποκτεῖναι θέλων
ἐς τήνδ’ Ἀχιλλεὺς ἐνδίκως τείνει φόνον;
Ἀλλ’ οὐδὲν αὐτὸν ἥδε γ’ εἴργασται κακόν.
Ἑλένην νιν αἰτεῖν χρῆν τάφῳ προσφάγματα·
κείνη γὰρ ὤλεσέν νιν ἐς Τροίαν τ’ ἄγει.
Εἰ δ’ αἰχμαλώτων χρή τιν’ ἔκκριτον θανεῖν
κάλλει θ’ ὑπερφέρουσαν, οὐχ ἡμῶν τόδε·
ἡ Τυνδαρὶς γὰρ εἶδος ἐκπρεπεστάτη,
ἀδικοῦσά θ’ ἡμῶν οὐδὲν ἧσσον ηὑρέθη.
Τῷ μὲν δικαίῳ τόνδ’ ἀμιλλῶμαι λόγον·
ἃ δ’ ἀντιδοῦναι δεῖ σ’ ἀπαιτούσης ἐμοῦ,
ἄκουσον. Ἥψω τῆς ἐμῆς, ὡς φῄς, χερὸς
καὶ τῆσδε γραίας προσπίτνων παρηίδος·
ἀνθάπτομαί σου τῶνδε τῶν αὐτῶν ἐγὼ
χάριν τ’ ἀπαιτῶ τὴν τόθ’ ἱκετεύω τέ σε,
μή μου τὸ τέκνον ἐκ χερῶν ἀποσπάσῃς,
μηδὲ κτάνητε· τῶν τεθνηκότων ἅλις.
Ταύτῃ γέγηθα κἀπιλήθομαι κακῶν·
ἥδ’ ἀντὶ πολλῶν ἐστί μοι παραψυχή,
πόλις, τιθήνη, βάκτρον, ἡγεμὼν ὁδοῦ.
Οὐ τοὺς κρατοῦντας χρὴ κρατεῖν ἃ μὴ χρεών,
οὐδ’ εὐτυχοῦντας εὖ δοκεῖν πράξειν ἀεί·
κἀγὼ γὰρ ἦ ποτ’, ἀλλὰ νῦν οὐκ εἴμ’ ἔτι,
τὸν πάντα δ’ ὄλβον ἦμαρ ἕν μ’ ἀφείλετο.

Ἀλλ’, ὦ φίλον γένειον, αἰδέσθητί με,
οἴκτιρον· ἐλθὼν δ’ εἰς Ἀχαιικὸν στρατὸν
παρηγόρησον, ὡς ἀποκτείνειν φθόνος
γυναῖκας, ἃς τὸ πρῶτον οὐκ ἐκτείνατε
βωμῶν ἀποσπάσαντες, ἀλλ’ ᾠκτίρατε.
Νόμος δ’ ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς τ’ ἐλευθέροις ἴσος
καὶ τοῖσι δούλοις αἵματος κεῖται πέρι.
Τὸ δ’ ἀξίωμα, κἂν κακῶς λέγῃ, τὸ σὸν
πείσει· λόγος γὰρ ἔκ τ’ ἀδοξούντων ἰὼν
κἀκ τῶν δοκούντων αὐτὸς οὐ ταὐτὸν σθένει.

Χορός

Οὐκ ἔστιν οὕτω στερρὸς ἀνθρώπου φύσις,
ἥτις γόων σῶν καὶ μακρῶν ὀδυρμάτων
κλύουσα θρήνους οὐκ ἂν ἐκβάλοι δάκρυ.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἑκάβη, διδάσκου, μηδὲ τῷ θυμουμένῳ
τὸν εὖ λέγοντα δυσμενῆ ποιοῦ φρενός.
Ἐγὼ τὸ μὲν σὸν σῶμ’ ὑφ’ οὗπερ εὐτύχουν
σῴζειν ἕτοιμός εἰμι κοὐκ ἄλλως λέγω·
ἃ δ’ εἶπον εἰς ἅπαντας οὐκ ἀρνήσομαι,
Τροίας ἁλούσης ἀνδρὶ τῷ πρώτῳ στρατοῦ
σὴν παῖδα δοῦναι σφάγιον ἐξαιτουμένῳ.
Ἐν τῷδε γὰρ κάμνουσιν αἱ πολλαὶ πόλεις,
ὅταν τις ἐσθλὸς καὶ πρόθυμος ὢν ἀνὴρ
μηδὲν φέρηται τῶν κακιόνων πλέον.
Ἡμῖν δ’ Ἀχιλλεὺς ἄξιος τιμῆς, γύναι,
θανὼν ὑπὲρ γῆς Ἑλλάδος κάλλιστ’ ἀνήρ.
Οὔκουν τόδ’ αἰσχρόν, εἰ βλέποντι μὲν φίλῳ
χρώμεσθ’, ἐπεὶ δ’ ὄλωλε, μὴ χρώμεσθ’ ἔτι;
Εἶεν· τί δῆτ’ ἐρεῖ τις, ἤν τις αὖ φανῇ
στρατοῦ τ’ ἄθροισις πολεμίων τ’ ἀγωνία;
Πότερα μαχούμεθ’ ἢ φιλοψυχήσομεν,
τὸν κατθανόνθ’ ὁρῶντες οὐ τιμώμενον;
Καὶ μὴν ἔμοιγε ζῶντι μέν, καθ’ ἡμέραν

κεἰ σμίκρ᾽ ἔχοιμι, πάντ᾽ ἂν ἀρκούντως ἔχοι·
τύμβον δὲ βουλοίμην ἂν ἀξιούμενον
τὸν ἐμὸν ὁρᾶσθαι· διὰ μακροῦ γὰρ ἡ χάρις.
Εἰ δ᾽ οἰκτρὰ πάσχειν φῄς, τάδ᾽ ἀντάκουέ μου·
εἰσὶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν οὐδὲν ἧσσον ἄθλιαι
γραῖαι γυναῖκες ἠδὲ πρεσβῦται σέθεν,
νύμφαι τ᾽ ἀρίστων νυμφίων τητώμεναι,
ὧν ἥδε κεύθει σώματ᾽ Ἰδαία κόνις.
Τόλμα τάδ᾽. Ἡμεῖς δ᾽, εἰ κακῶς νομίζομεν
τιμᾶν τὸν ἐσθλόν, ἀμαθίαν ὀφλήσομεν·
οἱ βάρβαροι δὲ μήτε τοὺς φίλους φίλους
ἡγεῖσθε, μήτε τοὺς καλῶς τεθνηκότας
θαυμάζεθ᾽, ὡς ἂν ἡ μὲν Ἑλλὰς εὐτυχῇ,
ὑμεῖς δ᾽ ἔχηθ᾽ ὅμοια τοῖς βουλεύμασιν.

Χορός

Αἰαῖ· τὸ δοῦλον ὡς κακὸν πέφυκ᾽ ἀεὶ
τολμᾷ θ᾽ ἃ μὴ χρή, τῇ βίᾳ νικώμενον.

Ἑκάβη

Ὦ θύγατερ, οὐμοὶ μὲν λόγοι πρὸς αἰθέρα
φροῦδοι μάτην ῥιφέντες ἀμφὶ σοῦ φόνου·
σὺ δ᾽, εἴ τι μείζω δύναμιν ἢ μήτηρ ἔχεις,
σπούδαζε πάσας ὥστ᾽ ἀηδόνος στόμα
φθογγὰς ἰεῖσα, μὴ στερηθῆναι βίου.
Πρόσπιπτε δ᾽ οἰκτρῶς τοῦδ᾽ Ὀδυσσέως γόνυ
καὶ πεῖθ᾽ ἔχεις δὲ πρόφασιν· ἔστι γὰρ τέκνα
καὶ τῷδε τὴν σὴν ὥστ᾽ ἐποικτῖραι τύχην.

Πολυξένη

Ὁρῶ σ᾽, Ὀδυσσεῦ, δεξιὰν ὑφ᾽ εἵματος
κρύπτοντα χεῖρα καὶ πρόσωπον ἔμπαλιν
στρέφοντα, μή σου προσθίγω γενειάδος.
Θάρσει· πέφευγας τὸν ἐμὸν Ἱκέσιον Δία·
ὡς ἔψομαί γε τοῦ τ᾽ ἀναγκαίου χάριν

θανεῖν τε χρῄζουσ᾽· εἰ δὲ μὴ βουλήσομαι,
κακὴ φανοῦμαι καὶ φιλόψυχος γυνή.
Τί γάρ με δεῖ ζῆν; Ἦ πατὴρ μὲν ἦν ἄναξ
Φρυγῶν ἁπάντων· τοῦτό μοι πρῶτον βίου·
ἔπειτ᾽ ἐθρέφθην ἐλπίδων καλῶν ὕπο
βασιλεῦσι νύμφη, ζῆλον οὐ σμικρὸν γάμων
ἔχουσ᾽, ὅτου δῶμ᾽ ἑστίαν τ᾽ ἀφίξομαι·
δέσποινα δ᾽ ἡ δύστηνος Ἰδαίαισιν ἦ
γυναιξὶ παρθένοις τ᾽ ἀπόβλεπτος μέτα,
ἴση θεοῖσι πλὴν τὸ κατθανεῖν μόνον·
νῦν δ᾽ εἰμὶ δούλη. Πρῶτα μέν με τοὔνομα
θανεῖν ἐρᾶν τίθησιν οὐκ εἰωθὸς ὄν·
ἔπειτ᾽ ἴσως ἂν δεσποτῶν ὠμῶν φρένας
τύχοιμ᾽ ἄν, ὅστις ἀργύρου μ᾽ ὠνήσεται,
τὴν Ἕκτορός τε χἀτέρων πολλῶν κάσιν,
προσθεὶς δ᾽ ἀνάγκην σιτοποιὸν ἐν δόμοις,
σαίρειν τε δῶμα κερκίσιν τ᾽ ἐφεστάναι
λυπρὰν ἄγουσαν ἡμέραν μ᾽ ἀναγκάσει·
λέχη δὲ τἀμὰ δοῦλος ὠνητός ποθεν
χρανεῖ, τυράννων πρόσθεν ἠξιωμένα.
Οὐ δῆτ᾽· ἀφίημ᾽ ὀμμάτων ἐλευθέρων
φέγγος τόδ᾽, Ἅιδῃ προστιθεῖσ᾽ ἐμὸν δέμας.
Ἄγου μ᾽, Ὀδυσσεῦ, καὶ διέργασαί μ᾽ ἄγων·
οὔτ᾽ ἐλπίδος γὰρ οὔτε του δόξης ὁρῶ
θάρσος παρ᾽ ἡμῖν ὥς ποτ᾽ εὖ πρᾶξαί με χρή.
Μῆτερ, σὺ δ᾽ ἡμῖν μηδὲν ἐμποδὼν γένῃ,
λέγουσα μηδὲ δρῶσα· συμβούλου δέ μοι
θανεῖν πρὶν αἰσχρῶν μὴ κατ᾽ ἀξίαν τυχεῖν.
Ὅστις γὰρ οὐκ εἴωθε γεύεσθαι κακῶν,
φέρει μέν, ἀλγεῖ δ᾽ αὐχέν᾽ ἐντιθεὶς ζυγῷ·
θανὼν δ᾽ ἂν εἴη μᾶλλον εὐτυχέστερος
ἢ ζῶν· τὸ γὰρ ζῆν μὴ καλῶς μέγας πόνος.

Χορός

Δεινὸς χαρακτὴρ κἀπίσημος ἐν βροτοῖς
ἐσθλῶν γενέσθαι, κἀπὶ μεῖζον ἔρχεται

τῆς εὐγενείας ὄνομα τοῖσιν ἀξίοις.

Ἑκάβη

Καλῶς μὲν εἶπας, θύγατερ, ἀλλὰ τῷ καλῷ
λύπη πρόσεστιν. Εἰ δὲ δεῖ τῷ Πηλέως
χάριν γενέσθαι παιδὶ καὶ ψόγον φυγεῖν
[385] ὑμᾶς, Ὀδυσσεῦ, τήνδε μὲν μὴ κτείνετε,
ἡμᾶς δ' ἄγοντες πρὸς πυρὰν Ἀχιλλέως
κεντεῖτε, μὴ φείδεσθ'· ἐγὼ ˝τεκον Πάριν,
ὃς παῖδα Θέτιδος ὤλεσεν τόξοις βαλών.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Οὐ σ', ὦ γεραιά, κατθανεῖν Ἀχιλλέως
[390] φάντασμ' Ἀχαιούς, ἀλλὰ τήνδ', ᾐτήσατο.

Ἑκάβη

[391] Ὑμεῖς δέ μ' ἀλλὰ θυγατρὶ συμφονεύσατε,
καὶ δὶς τόσον πῶμ' αἵματος γενήσεται
γαίᾳ νεκρῷ τε τῷ τάδ' ἐξαιτουμένῳ.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἅλις κόρης σῆς θάνατος, οὐ προσοιστέος
[395] ἄλλος πρὸς ἄλλῳ· μηδὲ τόνδ' ὠφείλομεν.

Ἑκάβη

Πολλή γ' ἀνάγκη θυγατρὶ συνθανεῖν ἐμέ.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Πῶς; Οὐ γὰρ οἶδα δεσπότας κεκτημένος.

Ἑκάβη

Ὁποῖα κισσὸς δρυός, ὅπως τῆσδ' ἔξομαι.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Οὔκ, ἤν γε πείθῃ τοῖσι σοῦ σοφωτέροις.

Ἑκάβη

Ὡς τῆσδ’ ἑκοῦσα παιδὸς οὐ μεθήσομαι.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ ἐγὼ μὴν τήνδ’ ἄπειμ’ αὐτοῦ λιπών.

Πολυξένη

Μῆτερ, πιθοῦ μοι· καὶ σύ, παῖ Λαερτίου,
χάλα τοκεῦσιν εἰκότως θυμουμένοις,
σύ τ’, ὦ τάλαινα, τοῖς κρατοῦσι μὴ μάχου.
Βούλῃ πεσεῖν πρὸς οὗδας ἑλκῶσαί τε σὸν
γέροντα χρῶτα πρὸς βίαν ὠθουμένη,
ἀσχημονῆσαί τ’ ἐκ νέου βραχίονος
σπασθεῖσ’, ἃ πείσῃ; Μὴ σύ γ’· οὐ γὰρ ἄξιον.
Ἀλλ’, ὦ φίλη μοι μῆτερ, ἡδίστην χέρα
δὸς καὶ παρειὰν προσβαλεῖν παρηίδι·
ὡς οὔποτ’ αὖθις, ἀλλὰ νῦν πανύστατον
ἀκτῖνα κύκλον θ’ ἡλίου προσόψομαι.
Τέλος δέχῃ δὴ τῶν ἐμῶν προσφθεγμάτων.
Ὦ μῆτερ, ὦ τεκοῦσ’, ἄπειμι δὴ κάτω.

Ἑκάβη

Ὦ θύγατερ, ἡμεῖς δ’ ἐν φάει δουλεύσομεν.

Πολυξένη

Ἄνυμφος ἀνυμέναιος ὧν μ’ ἐχρῆν τυχεῖν.

Ἑκάβη

Οἰκτρὰ σύ, τέκνον, ἀθλία δ’ ἐγὼ γυνή.

Πολυξένη

[418] Ἐκεῖ δ’ ἐν Ἅιδου κείσομαι χωρὶς σέθεν.

Ἑκάβη

Οἴμοι· τί δράσω; Ποῖ τελευτήσω βίον;

Πολυξένη

[420] Δούλη θανοῦμαι, πατρὸς οὖσ’ ἐλευθέρου.

Ἑκάβη

Ἡμεῖς δὲ πεντήκοντά γ’ ἄμμοροι τέκνων.

Πολυξένη

Τί σοι πρὸς Ἕκτορ’ ἢ γέροντ’ εἴπω πόσιν;

Ἑκάβη

Ἀγγελλε πασῶν ἀθλιωτάτην ἐμέ.

Πολυξένη

Ὦ στέρνα μαστοί θ’, οἵ μ’ ἐθρέψαθ’ ἡδέως.

Ἑκάβη

[425] Ὦ τῆς ἀώρου θύγατερ ἀθλίας τύχης.

Πολυξένη

Χαῖρ’, ὦ τεκοῦσα, χαῖρε Κασάνδρα τ’ ἐμοί,

Ἑκάβη

χαίρουσιν ἄλλοι, μητρὶ δ’ οὐκ ἔστιν τόδε.

Πολυξένη

Ὅ τ’ ἐν φιλίπποις Θρῃξὶ Πολύδωρος κάσις.

Ἑκάβη

Εἰ ζῇ γ’· ἀπιστῶ δ’· ὧδε πάντα δυστυχῶ.

Πολυξένη

Ζῇ καὶ θανούσης ὄμμα συγκλῄσει τὸ σόν.

Ἑκάβη

Τέθνηκ’ ἔγωγε πρὶν θανεῖν κακῶν ὕπο.

Πολυξένη

Κόμιζ’, Ὀδυσσεῦ, μ’ ἀμφιθεὶς κάρα πέπλοις
ὡς πρὶν σφαγῆναί γ’ ἐκτέτηκα καρδίαν
θρήνοισι μητρὸς τήνδε τ’ ἐκτήκω γόοις.
)Ὦ φῶς· προσειπεῖν γὰρ σὸν ὄνομ’ ἔξεστί μοι,
μέτεστι δ’ οὐδὲν πλὴν ὅσον χρόνον ξίφους
βαίνω μεταξὺ καὶ πυρᾶς Ἀχιλλέως.

Ἑκάβη

Οἵ ‘γώ, προλείπω· λύεται δέ μου μέλη.
Ὦ θύγατερ, ἅψαι μητρός, ἔκτεινον χέρα,
δός· μὴ λίπῃς μ’ ἄπαιδ’. Ἀπωλόμην, φίλαι. . . .
Ὡς τὴν Λάκαιναν σύγγονον Διοσκόροιν
Ἑλένην ἴδοιμι· διὰ καλῶν γὰρ ὀμμάτων
αἴσχιστα Τροίαν εἶλε τὴν εὐδαίμονα.

Χορός

Αὔρα, ποντιὰς αὔρα,
ἅτε ποντοπόρους κομί-
ζεις θοὰς ἀκάτους ἐπ’ οἶδμα λίμνας,

ποῖ με τὰν μελέαν πορεύ-
σεις; Τῷ δουλόσυνος πρὸς οἶ-
κον κτηθεῖσ᾽ ἀφίξομαι; Ἢ
[450] Δωρίδος ὅρμον αἴας;
Ἢ Φθιάδος, ἔνθα τὸν
καλλίστων ὑδάτων πατέρα
[454] φασὶν Ἀπιδανὸν πεδία λιπαίνειν;
[455] Ἢ νάσων, ἁλιήρει
κώπᾳ πεμπομέναν τάλαι-
ναν, οἰκτρὰν βιοτὰν ἔχουσαν οἴκοις,
ἔνθα πρωτόγονός τε φοῖ-
νιξ δάφνα θ᾽ ἱεροὺς ἀνέ-
[460] σχε πτόρθους Λατοῖ φίλᾳ ὠ-
δῖνος ἄγαλμα Δίας;
[463] Σὺν Δηλιάσιν τε κού-
ραισιν Ἀρτέμιδος θεᾶς
[465] χρυσέαν ἄμπυκα τόξα τ᾽ εὐλογήσω;
Ἢ Παλλάδος ἐν πόλει
τὰς καλλιδίφρους Ἀθα-
ναίας ἐν κροκέῳ πέπλῳ
ζεύξομαι ἆρα πώλους ἐν
[470] δαιδαλέαισι ποικίλλουσ᾽
ἀνθοκρόκοισι πήναις, ἢ
Τιτάνων γενεὰν
τὰν Ζεὺς ἀμφιπύρῳ κοιμί-
ζει φλογμῷ Κρονίδας;
[475] Ὤ μοι τεκέων ἐμῶν,
ὤ μοι πατέρων χθονός θ᾽,
ἃ καπνῷ κατερείπεται,
τυφομένα, δορίκτητος
Ἀργεί¨ων· ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐν ξεί-
[480] να χθονὶ δὴ κέκλημαι δού-
λα, λιποῦσ᾽ Ἀσίαν,
Εὐρώπας θεραπνᾶν ἀλλά-
ξασ᾽ Ἅιδα θαλάμους.

Ταλθύβιος

Ποῦ τὴν ἄνασσαν δή ποτ’ οὖσαν Ἰλίου
Ἑκάβην ἂν ἐξεύροιμι, Τρῳάδες κόραι;

Χορός

Αὕτη πέλας σου νῶτ’ ἔχουσ’ ἐπὶ χθονί,
Ταλθύβιε, κεῖται ξυγκεκλημένη πέπλοις.

Ταλθύβιος

Ὦ Ζεῦ, τί λέξω; Πότερά σ’ ἀνθρώπους ὁρᾶν;
Ἢ δόξαν ἄλλως τήνδε κεκτῆσθαι μάτην,
ψευδῆ, δοκοῦντας δαιμόνων εἶναι γένος
τύχην δὲ πάντα τἀν βροτοῖς ἐπισκοπεῖν;
Οὐχ ἥδ’ ἄνασσα τῶν πολυχρύσων Φρυγῶν,
οὐχ ἥδε Πριάμου τοῦ μέγ’ ὀλβίου δάμαρ;
Καὶ νῦν πόλις μὲν πᾶσ’ ἀνέστηκεν δορί,
αὐτὴ δὲ δούλη γραῦς ἄπαις ἐπὶ χθονὶ
κεῖται, κόνει φύρουσα δύστηνον κάρα.
Φεῦ φεῦ· γέρων μέν εἰμ’, ὅμως δέ μοι θανεῖν
εἴη πρὶν αἰσχρᾷ περιπεσεῖν τύχῃ τινί.
Ἀνίστασ’, ὦ δύστηνε, καὶ μετάρσιον
πλευρὰν ἔπαιρε καὶ τὸ πάλλευκον κάρα.

Ἑκάβη

Ἔα· τίς οὗτος σῶμα τοὐμὸν οὐκ ἐᾷ
κεῖσθαι; Τί κινεῖς μ’, ὅστις εἶ, λυπουμένην;

Ταλθύβιος

Ταλθύβιος ἥκω Δαναΐδων ὑπηρέτης,
Ἀγαμέμνονος πέμψαντος, ὦ γύναι, μέτα.

Ἑκάβη

Ὦ φίλτατ’, ἆρα κἄμ’ ἐπισφάξαι τάφῳ
δοκοῦν Ἀχαιοῖς ἦλθες; Ὡς φίλ’ ἂν λέγοις.

Σπεύδωμεν, ἐγκονῶμεν· ἡγοῦ μοι, γέρον.

Ταλθύβιος

Σὴν παῖδα κατθανοῦσαν ὡς θάψῃς, γύναι,
ἥκω μεταστείχων σε· πέμπουσιν δέ με
[510] δισσοί τ᾽ Ἀτρεῖδαι καὶ λεὼς Ἀχαιικός.

Ἑκάβη

[511] Οἴμοι, τί λέξεις; Οὐκ ἄρ᾽ ὡς θανουμένους
μετῆλθες ἡμᾶς, ἀλλὰ σημανῶν κακά;
Ὄλωλας, ὦ παῖ, μητρὸς ἁρπασθεῖσ᾽ ἄπο·
ἡμεῖς δ᾽ ἄτεκνοι τοὐπὶ σ᾽· ὦ τάλαιν᾽ ἐγώ.
[515] Πῶς καί νιν ἐξεπράξατ᾽; Ἦρ᾽ αἰδούμενοι;
Ἢ πρὸς τὸ δεινὸν ἦλθεθ᾽ ὡς ἐχθράν, γέρον,
κτείνοντες; Εἰπέ, καίπερ οὐ λέξων φίλα.

Ταλθύβιος

[518] Διπλᾶ με χρῄζεις δάκρυα κερδᾶναι, γύναι,
σῆς παιδὸς οἴκτῳ· νῦν τε γὰρ λέγων κακὰ
[520] τέγξω τόδ᾽ ὄμμα, πρὸς τάφῳ θ᾽ ὅτ᾽ ὤλλυτο.
Παρῆν μὲν ὄχλος πᾶς Ἀχαιικοῦ στρατοῦ
πλήρης πρὸ τύμβου σῆς κόρης ἐπὶ σφαγάς·
λαβὼν δ᾽ Ἀχιλλέως παῖς Πολυξένην χερὸς
ἔστησ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἄκρου χώματος, πέλας δ᾽ ἐγώ·
[525] λεκτοί τ᾽ Ἀχαιῶν ἔκκριτοι νεανίαι,
σκίρτημα μόσχου σῆς καθέξοντες χεροῖν,
ἔσποντο. Πλῆρες δ᾽ ἐν χεροῖν λαβὼν δέπας
πάγχρυσον αἴρει χειρὶ παῖς Ἀχιλλέως
χοὰς θανόντι πατρί· σημαίνει δέ μοι
[530] σιγὴν Ἀχαιῶν παντὶ κηρῦξαι στρατῷ.
Κἀγὼ καταστὰς εἶπον ἐν μέσοις τάδε·
Σιγᾶτ᾽, Ἀχαιοί, σῖγα πᾶς ἔστω λεώς,
σίγα σιώπα· νήνεμον δ᾽ ἔστησ᾽ ὄχλον.
Ὁ δ᾽ εἶπεν· Ὦ παῖ Πηλέως, πατὴρ δ᾽ ἐμός,
[535] δέξαι χοάς μοι τάσδε κηλητηρίους,

νεκρῶν ἀγωγούς· ἐλθὲ δ’, ὡς πίῃς μέλαν
κόρης ἀκραιφνὲς αἷμ’, ὅ σοι δωρούμεθα
στρατός τε κἀγώ· πρευμενὴς δ’ ἡμῖν γενοῦ
λῦσαί τε πρύμνας καὶ χαλινωτήρια
νεῶν δὸς ἡμῖν πρευμενοῦς τ’ ἀπ’ Ἰλίου
νόστου τυχόντας πάντας ἐς πάτραν μολεῖν.
Τοσαῦτ’ ἔλεξε, πᾶς δ’ ἐπηύξατο στρατός.
Εἶτ’ ἀμφίχρυσον φάσγανον κώπης λαβὼν
ἐξεῖλκε κολεοῦ, λογάσι δ’ Ἀργείων στρατοῦ
νεανίαις ἔνευσε παρθένον λαβεῖν.
Ἣ δ’, ὡς ἐφράσθη, τόνδ’ ἐσήμηνεν λόγον·
Ὦ τὴν ἐμὴν πέρσαντες Ἀργεῖοι πόλιν,
ἑκοῦσα θνῄσκω· μή τις ἅψηται χροὸς
τοὐμοῦ· παρέξω γὰρ δέρην εὐκαρδίως.
Ἐλευθέραν δέ μ’, ὡς ἐλευθέρα θάνω,
πρὸς θεῶν, μεθέντες κτείνατ’· ἐν νεκροῖσι γὰρ
δούλη κεκλῆσθαι βασιλὶς οὖσ’ αἰσχύνομαι.
Λαοὶ δ’ ἐπερρόθησαν, Ἀγαμέμνων τ’ ἄναξ
εἶπεν μεθεῖναι παρθένον νεανίαις.
Οἱ δ’, ὡς τάχιστ’ ἤκουσαν ὑστάτην ὄπα,
μεθῆκαν, οὗπερ καὶ μέγιστον ἦν κράτος.
Κἀπεὶ τόδ’ εἰσήκουσε δεσποτῶν ἔπος,
λαβοῦσα πέπλους ἐξ ἄκρας ἐπωμίδος
ἔρρηξε λαγόνας ἐς μέσας παρ’ ὀμφαλόν,
μαστούς τ’ ἔδειξε στέρνα θ’ ὡς ἀγάλματος
κάλλιστα, καὶ καθεῖσα πρὸς γαῖαν γόνυ
ἔλεξε πάντων τλημονέστατον λόγον·
Ἰδού, τόδ’, εἰ μὲν στέρνον, ὦ νεανία,
παίειν προθυμῇ, παῖσον, εἰ δ’ ὑπ’ αὐχένα
χρῄζεις, πάρεστι λαιμὸς εὐτρεπὴς ὅδε.
Ὃ δ’ οὐ θέλων τε καὶ θέλων οἴκτῳ κόρης,
τέμνει σιδήρῳ πνεύματος διαρροάς·
κρουνοὶ δ’ ἐχώρουν. Ἣ δὲ καὶ θνῄσκουσ’ ὅμως
πολλὴν πρόνοιαν εἶχεν εὐσχήμων πεσεῖν,
κρύπτουσ’ ἃ κρύπτειν ὄμματ’ ἀρσένων χρεών.
Ἐπεὶ δ’ ἀφῆκε πνεῦμα θανασίμῳ σφαγῇ,
οὐδεὶς τὸν αὐτὸν εἶχεν Ἀργείων πόνον·

ἀλλ᾽ οἳ μὲν αὐτῶν τὴν θανοῦσαν ἐκ χερῶν
φύλλοις ἔβαλλον, οἳ δὲ πληροῦσιν πυρὰν
κορμοὺς φέροντες πευκίνους, ὁ δ᾽ οὐ φέρων
πρὸς τοῦ φέροντος τοιάδ᾽ ἤκουεν κακά·
Ἔστηκας, ὦ κάκιστε, τῇ νεάνιδι
οὐ πέπλον οὐδὲ κόσμον ἐν χεροῖν ἔχων;
Οὐκ εἶ τι δώσων τῇ περίσσ᾽ εὐκαρδίῳ
ψυχήν τ᾽ ἀρίστῃ; Τοιάδ᾽ ἀμφὶ σῆς λέγων
παιδὸς θανούσης, εὐτεκνωτάτην τέ σε
πασῶν γυναικῶν δυστυχεστάτην θ᾽ ὁρῶ.

Χορός

Δεινόν τι πῆμα Πριαμίδαις ἐπέζεσεν
πόλει τε τὴμῇ θεῶν ἀνάγκαισιν τόδε.

Ἑκάβη

Ὦ θύγατερ, οὐκ οἶδ᾽ εἰς ὅ τι βλέψω κακῶν,
πολλῶν παρόντων· ἢν γὰρ ἄψωμαί τινος,
τόδ᾽ οὐκ ἐᾷ με, παρακαλεῖ δ᾽ ἐκεῖθεν αὖ
λύπη τις ἄλλη διάδοχος κακῶν κακοῖς.
Καὶ νῦν τὸ μὲν σὸν ὥστε μὴ στένειν πάθος
οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην ἐξαλείψασθαι φρενός·
τὸ δ᾽ αὖ λίαν παρεῖλες ἀγγελθεῖσά μοι
γενναῖος. Οὔκουν δεινόν, εἰ γῆ μὲν κακὴ
τυχοῦσα καιροῦ θεόθεν εὖ στάχυν φέρει,
χρηστὴ δ᾽ ἁμαρτοῦσ᾽ ὧν χρεὼν αὐτὴν τυχεῖν
κακὸν δίδωσι καρπόν, ἀνθρώποις δ᾽ ἀεὶ
ὁ μὲν πονηρὸς οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν κακός,
ὁ δ᾽ ἐσθλὸς ἐσθλός, οὐδὲ συμφορᾶς ὕπο
φύσιν διέφθειρ᾽, ἀλλὰ χρηστός ἐστ᾽ ἀεί;
Ἆρ᾽ οἱ τεκόντες διαφέρουσιν ἢ τροφαί;
Ἔχει γε μέντοι καὶ τὸ θρεφθῆναι καλῶς
δίδαξιν ἐσθλοῦ· τοῦτο δ᾽ ἢν τις εὖ μάθῃ,
οἶδεν τό γ᾽ αἰσχρόν, κανόνι τοῦ καλοῦ μαθών.
Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ νοῦς ἐτόξευσεν μάτην·
σὺ δ᾽ ἐλθὲ καὶ σήμηνον Ἀργείοις τάδε,

μὴ θιγγάνειν μοι μηδέν’, ἀλλ’ εἴργειν ὄχλον,
τῆς παιδός. Ἔν τοι μυρίῳ στρατεύματι
ἀκόλαστος ὄχλος ναυτική τ’ ἀναρχία
κρείσσων πυρός, κακὸς δ’ ὁ μή τι δρῶν κακόν.
Σὺ δ’ αὖ λαβοῦσα τεῦχος, ἀρχαία λάτρι,
βάψασ’ ἔνεγκε δεῦρο ποντίας ἁλός,
ὡς παῖδα λουτροῖς τοῖς πανυστάτοις ἐμήν,
νύμφην τ’ ἄνυμφον παρθένον τ’ ἀπάρθενον,
λούσω προθῶμαί θ’ ὡς μὲν ἀξία, πόθεν;
Οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην· ὡς δ’ ἔχω τί γὰρ πάθω;
Κόσμον τ’ ἀγείρασ’ αἰχμαλωτίδων πάρα,
αἵ μοι πάρεδροι τῶνδ’ ἔσω σκηνωμάτων
ναίουσιν, εἴ τις τοὺς νεωστὶ δεσπότας
λαθοῦσ’ ἔχει τι κλέμμα τῶν αὐτῆς δόμων.
Ὦ σχήματ’ οἴκων, ὦ ποτ’ εὐτυχεῖς δόμοι,
ὦ πλεῖστ’ ἔχων κάλλιστά τ’, εὐτεκνώτατε
Πρίαμε, γεραιά θ’ ἥδ’ ἐγὼ μήτηρ τέκνων,
ὡς ἐς τὸ μηδὲν ἥκομεν, φρονήματος
τοῦ πρὶν στερέντες. Εἶτα δῆτ’ ὀγκούμεθα,
ὃ μέν τις ἡμῶν πλουσίοις ἐν δώμασιν,
ὃ δ’ ἐν πολίταις τίμιος κεκλημένος.
Τὰ δ’ οὐδὲν ἄλλως, φροντίδων βουλεύματα
γλώσσης τε κόμποι. Κεῖνος ὀλβιώτατος,
ὅτῳ κατ’ ἦμαρ τυγχάνει μηδὲν κακόν.

Χορός

Ἐμοὶ χρῆν συμφοράν,
ἐμοὶ χρῆν πημονὰν γενέσθαι,
Ἰδαίαν ὅτε πρῶτον ὕλαν
Ἀλέξανδρος εἰλατίναν
ἐτάμεθ’, ἅλιον ἐπ’ οἶδμα ναυστολήσων
Ἑλένας ἐπὶ λέκτρα, τὰν
καλλίσταν ὁ χρυσοφαὴς
Ἅλιος αὐγάζει.
Πόνοι γὰρ καὶ πόνων
ἀνάγκαι κρείσσονες κυκλοῦνται

κοινὸν δ’ ἐξ ἰδίας ἀνοίας
κακὸν τᾷ Σιμουντίδι γᾷ
ὀλέθριον ἔμολε συμφορά τ’ ἀπ’ ἄλλων.
Ἐκρίθη δ’ ἔρις, ἂν ἐν Ἴ-
[645] δᾳ κρίνει τρισσὰς μακάρων
παῖδας ἀνὴρ βούτας,
ἐπὶ δορὶ καὶ φόνῳ καὶ ἐμῶν μελάθρων λώβᾳ·
[650] στένει δὲ καί τις ἀμφὶ τὸν εὔροον Εὐρώταν
Λάκαινα πολυδάκρυτος ἐν δόμοις κόρα,
[653] πολιάν τ’ ἐπὶ κρᾶτα μάτηρ
τέκνων θανόντων
[655] τίθεται χέρα δρύπτεται παρειάν,
δίαιμον ὄνυχα τιθεμένα σπαραγμοῖς.

Θεράπαινα

[658] Γυναῖκες, Ἑκάβη ποῦ ποθ’ ἡ παναθλία,
ἡ πάντα νικῶσ’ ἄνδρα καὶ θῆλυν σπορὰν
[660] κακοῖσιν; Οὐδεὶς στέφανον ἀνθαιρήσεται.

Χορός

Τί δ’, ὦ τάλαινα σῆς κακογλώσσου βοῆς;
Ὡς οὔποθ’ εὕδει λυπρά σου κηρύγματα.

Θεράπαινα

Ἑκάβῃ φέρω τόδ’ ἄλγος· ἐν κακοῖσι δὲ
οὐ ῥᾴδιον βροτοῖσιν εὐφημεῖν στόμα.

Χορός

[665] Καὶ μὴν περῶσα τυγχάνει δόμων ὕπερ
ἥδ’, ἐς δὲ καιρὸν σοῖσι φαίνεται λόγοις.

Θεράπαινα

Ὦ παντάλαινα κἄτι μᾶλλον ἢ λέγω,
δέσποιν’, ὅλωλας κοὐκέτ’ εἶ, βλέπουσα φῶς,
ἄπαις ἄνανδρος ἄπολις ἐξεφθαρμένη.

Ἑκάβη

Οὐ καινὸν εἶπας, εἰδόσιν δ’ ὠνείδισας.
Ἀτὰρ τί νεκρὸν τόνδε μοι Πολυξένης
ἥκεις κομίζουσ’, ἧς ἀπηγγέλθη τάφος
πάντων Ἀχαιῶν διὰ χερὸς σπουδὴν ἔχειν;

Θεράπαινα

Ἥδ’ οὐδὲν οἶδεν, ἀλλά μοι Πολυξένην
θρηνεῖ, νέων δὲ πημάτων οὐχ ἅπτεται.

Ἑκάβη

Οἵ ‘γὼ τάλαινα· μῶν τὸ βακχεῖον κάρα
τῆς θεσπιῳδοῦ δεῦρο Κασάνδρας φέρεις;

Θεράπαινα

Ζῶσαν λέλακας, τὸν θανόντα δ’ οὐ στένεις
τόνδ’· ἀλλ’ ἄθρησον σῶμα γυμνωθὲν νεκροῦ,
εἴ σοι φανεῖται θαῦμα καὶ παρ’ ἐλπίδας.

Ἑκάβη

Οἴμοι, βλέπω δὴ παῖδ’ ἐμὸν τεθνηκότα,
Πολύδωρον, ὅν μοι Θρῃξ ἔσῳζ’ οἴκοις ἀνήρ.
Ἀπωλόμην δύστηνος, οὐκέτ’ εἰμὶ δή.
Ὦ τέκνον τέκνον,
αἰαῖ, κατάρχομαι γόων,
βακχεῖον ἐξ ἀλάστορος
ἀρτιμαθῆ νόμον.

Θεράπαινα

Ἔγνως γὰρ ἄτην παιδός, ὦ δύστηνε σύ;

Ἑκάβη

Ἄπιστ’ ἄπιστα, καινὰ καινὰ δέρκομαι.
[690] Ἕτερα δ’ ἀφ’ ἑτέρων κακὰ κακῶν κυρεῖ·
οὐδέ ποτ’ ἀστένακτος ἀδάκρυτος ἀ-
μέρα μ’ ἐπισχήσει.

Χορός

Δείν’, ὦ τάλαινα, δεινὰ πάσχομεν κακά.

Ἑκάβη

Ὦ τέκνον τέκνον ταλαίνας ματρός,
[695] τίνι μόρῳ θνήσκεις,
τίνι πότμῳ κεῖσαι;
Πρὸς τίνος ἀνθρώπων;

Θεράπαινα

Οὐκ οἶδ’· ἐπ’ ἀκταῖς νιν κυρῶ θαλασσίαις . . .

Ἑκάβη

Ἔκβλητον, ἢ πέσημα φοινίου δορός,
[700] ἐν ψαμάθῳ λευρᾷ;

Θεράπαινα

Πόντου νιν ἐξήνεγκε πελάγιος κλύδων.

Ἑκάβη

[703] Ὤμοι, αἰαῖ, ἔμαθον ἔνυπνον ὀμμάτων
[704] ἐμῶν ὄψιν· οὔ με παρέβα
[705] φάσμα μελανόπτερον, τὰν ἐσεῖδον ἀμφὶ σέ,
ὦ τέκνον, οὐκέτ’ ὄντα Διὸς ἐν φάει.

Χορός

[709] Τίς γάρ νιν ἔκτειν’; Οἶσθ’ ὀνειρόφρων φράσαι;

Ἑκάβη

[710] Ἐμὸς ἐμὸς ξένος, Θρῄκιος ἱππότας,
ἵν’ ὁ γέρων πατὴρ ἔθετό νιν κρύψας.

Χορός

[713] Οἴμοι, τί λέξεις; Χρυσὸν ὡς ἔχοι κτανών;

Ἑκάβη

Ἄρρητ’ ἀνωνόμαστα, θαυμάτων πέρα,
[715] οὐχ ὅσι’ οὐδ’ ἀνεκτά. Ποῦ δίκα ξένων;
Ὦ κατάρατ’ ἀνδρῶν, ὡς διεμοιράσω
[718] χρόα, σιδαρέῳ τεμὼν φασγάνῳ
[720] μέλεα τοῦδε παιδὸς οὐδ’ ᾤκτισας.

Χορός

[722] Ὦ τλῆμον, ὅς σε πολυπονωτάτην βροτῶν
δαίμων ἔθηκεν ὅστις ἐστί σοι βαρύς.
Ἀλλ’ εἰσορῶ γὰρ τοῦδε δεσπότου δέμας
[725] Ἀγαμέμνονος, τοὐνθένδε σιγῶμεν, φίλαι.

Ἀγαμέμνων

[726] Ἑκάβη, τί μέλλεις παῖδα σὴν κρύπτειν τάφῳ
ἐλθοῦσ’, ἐφ’ οἷσπερ Ταλθύβιος ἤγγειλέ μοι
μὴ θιγγάνειν σῆς μηδέν’ Ἀργείων κόρης;
Ἡμεῖς μὲν οὖν εἰῶμεν οὐδ’ ἐψαύομεν·
[730] σὺ δὲ σχολάζεις, ὥστε θαυμάζειν ἐμέ.
Ἥκω δ’ ἀποστελῶν σε· τἀκεῖθεν γὰρ εὖ
πεπραγμέν’ ἐστίν εἴ τι τῶνδ’ ἐστὶν καλῶς.
Ἔα· τίν’ ἄνδρα τόνδ’ ἐπὶ σκηναῖς ὁρῶ

θανόντα Τρώων; Οὐ γὰρ Ἀργεῖον πέπλοι
δέμας περιπτύσσοντες ἀγγέλλουσί μοι.

Ἑκάβη

Δύστην’, ἐμαυτὴν γὰρ λέγω λέγουσα σέ,
Ἑκάβη, τί δράσω; Πότερα προσπέσω γόνυ
Ἀγαμέμνονος τοῦδ’ ἢ φέρω σιγῇ κακά;

Ἀγαμέμνων

Τί μοι προσώπῳ νῶτον ἐγκλίνασα σὸν
δύρῃ, τὸ πραχθὲν δ’ οὐ λέγεις; Τίς ἔσθ’ ὅδε;

Ἑκάβη

Ἀλλ’, εἴ με δούλην πολεμίαν θ’ ἡγούμενος
γονάτων ἀπώσαιτ’, ἄλγος ἂν προσθείμεθ’ ἄν.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Οὗτοι πέφυκα μάντις, ὥστε μὴ κλύων
ἐξιστορῆσαι σῶν ὁδὸν βουλευμάτων.

Ἑκάβη

Ἆρ’ ἐκλογίζομαί γε πρὸς τὸ δυσμενὲς
μᾶλλον φρένας τοῦδ’, ὄντος οὐχὶ δυσμενοῦς;

Ἀγαμέμνων

Εἴ τοί με βούλῃ τῶνδε μηδὲν εἰδέναι,
ἐς ταὐτὸν ἥκεις· καὶ γὰρ οὐδ’ ἐγὼ κλύειν.

Ἑκάβη

Οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην τοῦδε τιμωρεῖν ἄτερ
τέκνοισι τοῖς ἐμοῖσι. Τί στρέφω τάδε;
Τολμᾶν ἀνάγκη, κἂν τύχω κἂν μὴ τύχω.

Ἀγάμεμνον, ἱκετεύω σε τῶνδε γουνάτων
καὶ σοῦ γενείου δεξιᾶς τ’ εὐδαίμονος . . .

Ἀγαμέμνων

Τί χρῆμα μαστεύουσα; Μῶν ἐλεύθερον
[755] αἰῶνα θέσθαι; Ῥᾴδιον γάρ ἐστί σοι.

Ἑκάβη

Οὐ δῆτα· τοὺς κακοὺς δὲ τιμωρουμένη
αἰῶνα τὸν σύμπαντα δουλεύειν θέλω.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Καὶ δὴ τίν’ ἡμᾶς εἰς ἐπάρκεσιν καλεῖς;

Ἑκάβη

[759] Οὐδέν τι τούτων ὧν σὺ δοξάζεις, ἄναξ.
[760] ὁρᾷς νεκρὸν τόνδ’, οὗ καταστάζω δάκρυ;

Ἀγαμέμνων

Ὁρῶ· τὸ μέντοι μέλλον οὐκ ἔχω μαθεῖν.

Ἑκάβη

Τοῦτόν ποτ’ ἔτεκον κἄφερον ζώνης ὕπο.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Ἔστιν δὲ τίς σῶν οὗτος, ὦ τλῆμον, τέκνων;

Ἑκάβη

Οὐ τῶν θανόντων Πριαμιδῶν ὑπ’ Ἰλίῳ.

Ἀγαμέμνων

[765] Ἦ γάρ τιν’ ἄλλον ἔτεκες ἢ κείνους, γύναι;

Ἑκάβη

Ἀνόνητά γ’, ὡς ἔοικε, τόνδ’ ὃν εἰσορᾷς.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Ποῦ δ’ ὢν ἐτύγχαν’, ἡνίκ’ ὤλλυτο πτόλις**;**

Ἑκάβη

Πατήρ νιν ἐξέπεμψεν ὀρρωδῶν θανεῖν.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Ποῖ τῶν τότ’ ὄντων χωρίσας τέκνων μόνον;

Ἑκάβη

[770] Ἐς τήνδε χώραν, οὗπερ ηὐρέθη θανών.

Ἀγαμέμνων

[771] Πρὸς ἄνδρ’ ὃς ἄρχει τῆσδε Πολυμήστωρ χθονός;

Ἑκάβη

Ἐνταῦθ’ ἐπέμφθη πικροτάτου χρυσοῦ φύλαξ.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Θνῄσκει δὲ πρὸς τοῦ καὶ τίνος πότμου τυχών;

Ἑκάβη

Τίνος γ’ ὑπ’ ἄλλου; Θρῄξ νιν ὤλεσε ξένος.

Ἀγαμέμνων

[775] Ὦ τλῆμον· ἦ που χρυσὸν ἠράσθη λαβεῖν;

Ἑκάβη

Τοιαῦτ’, ἐπειδὴ συμφορὰν ἔγνω Φρυγῶν.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Ἡὗρες δὲ ποῦ νιν; Ἦ τίς ἤνεγκεν νεκρόν;

Ἑκάβη

Ἥδ’, ἐντυχοῦσα ποντίας ἀκτῆς ἔπι.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Τοῦτον ματεύουσ’ ἢ πονοῦσ’ ἄλλον πόνον;

Ἑκάβη

[780] Λούτρ’ ᾤχετ’ οἴσουσ’ ἐξ ἁλὸς Πολυξένῃ.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Κτανών νιν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐκβάλλει ξένος.

Ἑκάβη

Θαλασσόπλαγκτόν γ’, ὧδε διατεμὼν χρόα.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Ὦ σχετλία σὺ τῶν ἀμετρήτων πόνων.

Ἑκάβη

Ὄλωλα κοὐδὲν λοιπόν, Ἀγάμεμνον, κακῶν.

Ἀγαμέμνων

[785] Φεῦ φεῦ· τίς οὕτω δυστυχὴς ἔφυ γυνή;

Ἑκάβη

[786] Οὐκ ἔστιν, εἰ μὴ τὴν Τύχην αὐτὴν λέγοις.
Ἀλλ’ ὧνπερ οὕνεκ’ ἀμφὶ σὸν πίπτω γόνυ
ἄκουσον. Εἰ μὲν ὅσιά σοι παθεῖν δοκῶ,
στέργοιμ’ ἄν· εἰ δὲ τοὔμπαλιν, σύ μοι γενοῦ
[790] τιμωρὸς ἀνδρός, ἀνοσιωτάτου ξένου,
ὃς οὔτε τοὺς γῆς νέρθεν οὔτε τοὺς ἄνω
δείσας δέδρακεν ἔργον ἀνοσιώτατον,
κοινῆς τραπέζης πολλάκις τυχὼν ἐμοί,
ξενίας τ’ ἀριθμῷ πρῶτ’ ἔχων ἐμῶν φίλων,
[795] τυχὼν δ’ ὅσων δεῖ . Καὶ λαβὼν προμηθίαν
ἔκτεινε· τύμβου δ’, εἰ κτανεῖν ἐβούλετο,
οὐκ ἠξίωσεν, ἀλλ’ ἀφῆκε πόντιον.
Ἡμεῖς μὲν οὖν δοῦλοί τε κἀσθενεῖς ἴσως·
ἀλλ’ οἱ θεοὶ σθένουσι χὠ κείνων κρατῶν
[800] Νόμος· νόμῳ γὰρ τοὺς θεοὺς ἡγούμεθα
καὶ ζῶμεν ἄδικα καὶ δίκαι’ ὡρισμένοι·
ὃς ἐς σ’ ἀνελθὼν εἰ διαφθαρήσεται,
καὶ μὴ δίκην δώσουσιν οἵτινες ξένους
κτείνουσιν ἢ θεῶν ἱερὰ τολμῶσιν φέρειν,
[805] οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἴσον.
Ταῦτ’ οὖν ἐν αἰσχρῷ θέμενος αἰδέσθητί με·
οἴκτιρον ἡμᾶς, ὡς γραφεύς τ’ ἀποσταθεὶς
ἰδοῦ με κἀνάθρησον οἷ’ ἔχω κακά.
Τύραννος ἦ ποτ’, ἀλλὰ νῦν δούλη σέθεν,
[810] εὔπαις ποτ’ οὖσα, νῦν δὲ γραῦς ἄπαις θ’ ἅμα,
ἄπολις ἔρημος, ἀθλιωτάτη βροτῶν . . .
Οἴμοι τάλαινα, ποῖ μ’ ὑπεξάγεις πόδα;
Ἔοικα πράξειν οὐδέν· ὦ τάλαιν’ ἐγώ.
Τί δῆτα θνητοὶ τἄλλα μὲν μαθήματα
[815] μοχθοῦμεν ὡς χρὴ πάντα καὶ ματεύομεν,
Πειθὼ δὲ τὴν τύραννον ἀνθρώποις μόνην
οὐδέν τι μᾶλλον ἐς τέλος σπουδάζομεν
μισθοὺς διδόντες μανθάνειν, ἵν’ ἦν ποτε

πείθειν ἅ τις βούλοιτο τυγχάνειν θ᾽ ἅμα;
Πῶς οὖν ἔτ᾽ ἄν τις ἐλπίσαι πράξειν καλῶς;
Οἱ μὲν γὰρ ὄντες παῖδες οὐκέτ᾽ εἰσί μοι,
αὕτη δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αἰσχροῖς αἰχμάλωτος. Οἴχομαι·
καπνὸν δὲ πόλεως τόνδ᾽ ὑπερθρῴσκονθ᾽ ὁρῶ.
Καὶ μήν ἴσως μὲν τοῦ λόγου κενὸν τόδε,
Κύπριν προβάλλειν· ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως εἰρήσεται·
πρὸς σοῖσι πλευροῖς παῖς ἐμὴ κοιμίζεται
ἡ φοιβάς, ἣν καλοῦσι Κασάνδραν Φρύγες.
Ποῦ τὰς φίλας δῆτ᾽ εὐφρόνας δείξεις, ἄναξ,
ἢ τῶν ἐν εὐνῇ φιλτάτων ἀσπασμάτων
χάριν τίν᾽ ἕξει παῖς ἐμή, κείνης δ᾽ ἐγώ;
Ἐκ τοῦ σκότου τε τῶν τε νυκτερησίων
φίλτρων μεγίστη γίγνεται βροτοῖς χάρις.
Ἄκουε δή νυν· τὸν θανόντα τόνδ᾽ ὁρᾷς;
Τοῦτον καλῶς δρῶν ὄντα κηδεστὴν σέθεν
δράσεις. Ἑνός μοι μῦθος ἐνδεὴς ἔτι.
Εἴ μοι γένοιτο φθόγγος ἐν βραχίοσι
καὶ χερσὶ καὶ κόμαισι καὶ ποδῶν βάσει
ἢ Δαιδάλου τέχναισιν ἢ θεῶν τινος,
ὡς πάνθ᾽ ὁμαρτῇ σῶν ἔχοιντο γουνάτων
κλαίοντ᾽, ἐπισκήπτοντα παντοίους λόγους.
Ὦ δέσποτ᾽, ὦ μέγιστον Ἕλλησιν φάος,
πιθοῦ, παράσχες χεῖρα τῇ πρεσβύτιδι
τιμωρόν, εἰ καὶ μηδέν ἐστιν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως.
Ἐσθλοῦ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς τῇ δίκῃ θ᾽ ὑπηρετεῖν
καὶ τοὺς κακοὺς δρᾶν πανταχοῦ κακῶς ἀεί.

Χορός

Δεινόν γε, θνητοῖς ὡς ἅπαντα συμπίτνει,
καὶ τὰς ἀνάγκας οἱ νόμοι διώρισαν,
φίλους τιθέντες τούς γε πολεμιωτάτους
ἐχθρούς τε τοὺς πρὶν εὐμενεῖς ποιούμενοι.

Ἀγαμέμνων

[850] Ἐγὼ σὲ καὶ σὸν παῖδα καὶ τύχας σέθεν,
Ἑκάβη, δι’ οἴκτου χεῖρά θ’ ἱκεσίαν ἔχω,
καὶ βούλομαι θεῶν θ’ οὕνεκ’ ἀνόσιον ξένον
καὶ τοῦ δικαίου τήνδε σοι δοῦναι δίκην,
εἴ πως φανείη γ’ ὥστε σοί τ’ ἔχειν καλῶς,
[855] στρατῷ τε μὴ δόξαιμι Κασάνδρας χάριν
Θρῃκης ἄνακτι τόνδε βουλεῦσαι φόνον.
Ἔστιν γὰρ ᾗ ταραγμὸς ἐμπέπτωκέ μοι·
Τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον φίλιον ἡγεῖται στρατός,
τὸν κατθανόντα δ’ ἐχθρόν· εἰ δὲ σοὶ φίλος
[860] ὅδ’ ἐστί, χωρὶς τοῦτο κοὐ κοινὸν στρατῷ.
Πρὸς ταῦτα φρόντιζ’· ὡς θέλοντα μέν μ’ ἔχεις
σοὶ ξυμπονῆσαι καὶ ταχὺν προσαρκέσαι,
βραδὺν δ’, Ἀχαιοῖς εἰ διαβληθήσομαι.

Ἑκάβη

[864] Φεῦ.
Οὐκ ἔστι θνητῶν ὅστις ἔστ’ ἐλεύθερος·
[865] ἢ χρημάτων γὰρ δοῦλός ἐστιν ἢ τύχης,
ἢ πλῆθος αὐτὸν πόλεος ἢ νόμων γραφαὶ
εἴργουσι χρῆσθαι μὴ κατὰ γνώμην τρόποις.
Ἐπεὶ δὲ ταρβεῖς τῷ τ’ ὄχλῳ πλέον νέμεις,
ἐγώ σε θήσω τοῦδ’ ἐλεύθερον φόβου.
[870] Σύνισθι μὲν γάρ, ἤν τι βουλεύσω κακὸν
τῷ τόνδ’ ἀποκτείναντι, συνδράσῃς δὲ μή.
Ἦν δ’ ἐξ Ἀχαιῶν θόρυβος ἢ ‘πικουρία
πάσχοντος ἀνδρὸς Θρῃκὸς οἷα πείσεται
φανῇ τις, εἶργε μὴ δοκῶν ἐμὴν χάριν.
[875] Τὰ δ’ ἄλλα θάρσει πάντ’ ἐγὼ θήσω καλῶς.

Ἀγαμέμνων

[877] Πῶς οὖν; Τί δράσεις; Πότερα φάσγανον χερὶ
λαβοῦσα γραίᾳ φῶτα βάρβαρον κτενεῖς,
ἢ φαρμάκοισιν ἢ ‘πικουρίᾳ τινί;
Τίς σοι ξυνέσται χείρ; Πόθεν κτήσῃ φίλους;

Ἑκάβη

Στέγαι κεκεύθασ᾽ αἵδε Τρῳάδων ὄχλον.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Τὰς αἰχμαλώτους εἶπας, Ἑλλήνων ἄγραν;

Ἑκάβη

Σὺν ταῖσδε τὸν ἐμὸν φονέα τιμωρήσομαι.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Καὶ πῶς γυναιξὶν ἀρσένων ἔσται κράτος;

Ἑκάβη

Δεινὸν τὸ πλῆθος σὺν δόλῳ τε δύσμαχον.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Δεινόν· τὸ μέντοι θῆλυ μέμφομαι γένος.

Ἑκάβη

Τί δ᾽; Οὐ γυναῖκες εἶλον Αἰγύπτου τέκνα
καὶ Λῆμνον ἄρδην ἀρσένων ἐξῴκισαν;
Ἀλλ᾽ ὡς γενέσθω· τόνδε μὲν μέθες λόγον,
πέμψον δέ μοι τήνδ᾽ ἀσφαλῶς διὰ στρατοῦ
γυναῖκα. Καὶ σὺ Θρῃκὶ πλαθεῖσα ξένῳ
λέξον· Καλεῖ σ᾽ ἄνασσα δή ποτ᾽ Ἰλίου
Ἑκάβη, σὸν οὐκ ἔλασσον ἢ κείνης χρέος,
καὶ παῖδας· ὡς δεῖ καὶ τέκν᾽ εἰδέναι λόγους
τοὺς ἐξ ἐκείνης. Τὸν δὲ τῆς νεοσφαγοῦς
Πολυξένης ἐπίσχες, Ἀγάμεμνον, τάφον,
ὡς τῷδ᾽ ἀδελφῷ πλησίον μιᾷ φλογί,
δισσὴ μέριμνα μητρί, κρυφθῆτον χθονί.

Ἀγαμέμνων

[897] Ἔσται τάδ’ οὕτω· καὶ γὰρ εἰ μὲν ἦν στρατῷ
πλοῦς, οὐκ ἂν εἶχον τήνδε σοι δοῦναι χάριν·
[900] νῦν δ’, οὐ γὰρ ἴησ’ οὐρίους πνοὰς θεός,
μένειν ἀνάγκη πλοῦν ὁρῶντ’ ἐς ἥσυχον.
Γένοιτο δ’ εὖ πως· πᾶσι γὰρ κοινὸν τόδε,
ἰδίᾳ θ’ ἑκάστῳ καὶ πόλει, τὸν μὲν κακὸν
κακόν τι πάσχειν, τὸν δὲ χρηστὸν εὐτυχεῖν.

Χορός

[905] Σὺ μέν, ὦ πατρὶς Ἰλιάς,
τῶν ἀπορθήτων πόλις οὐκέτι λέξῃ·
τοῖον Ἑλλάνων νέφος ἀμφί σε κρύπτει
[909] δορὶ δὴ δορὶ πέρσαν.
[910] Ἀπὸ δὲ στεφάναν κέκαρ-
σαι πύργων, κατὰ δ’ αἰθάλου
κηλῖδ’ οἰκτροτάταν κέχρω-
σαι· τάλαιν’,
[913β] οὐκέτι σ’ ἐμβατεύσω.

Μεσονύκτιος ὠλλύμαν,
[915] ἦμος ἐκ δείπνων ὕπνος ἡδὺς ἐπ’ ὄσσοις
σκίδναται, μολπᾶν δ’ ἄπο καὶ χοροποιῶν
[918] θυσιᾶν καταλύσας
πόσις ἐν θαλάμοις ἔκει-
[920] το, ξυστὸν δ’ ἐπὶ πασσάλῳ,
ναύταν οὐκέθ’ ὁρῶν ὅμι-
λον Τροίαν
[922β] Ἰλιάδ’ ἐμβεβῶτα.

Ἐγὼ δὲ πλόκαμον ἀναδέτοις
μίτραισιν ἐρρυθμιζόμαν
[925] χρυσέων ἐνόπτρων λεύσ-
σουσ’ ἀτέρμονας εἰς αὐγάς,
ἐπιδέμνιος ὡς πέσοιμ’ ἐς εὐνάν.
ἀνὰ δὲ κέλαδος ἔμολε πόλιν·

κέλευσμα δ’ ἦν κατ’ ἄστυ Τροί-
ας τόδ’· Ὦ
παῖδες Ἑλλάνων, πότε δὴ πότε τὰν
Ἰλιάδα σκοπιὰν
πέρσαντες ἥξετ’ οἴκους;

Λέχη δὲ φίλια μονόπεπλος
λιποῦσα, Δωρὶς ὡς κόρα,
σεμνὰν προσίζουσ’ οὐκ
ἤνυσ’ Ἄρτεμιν ἁ τλάμων·
ἄγομαι δὲ θανόντ’ ἰδοῦσ’ ἀκοίταν
τὸν ἐμὸν ἅλιον ἐπὶ πέλαγος,
πόλιν τ’ ἀποσκοποῦσ’, ἐπεὶ
νόστιμον
ναῦς ἐκίνησεν πόδα καί μ’ ἀπὸ γᾶς
ὥρισεν Ἰλιάδος·
τάλαιν’, ἀπεῖπον ἄλγει,
τὰν τοῖν Διοσκούροιν Ἑλέναν κάσιν
Ἰδαῖόν τε βούταν
αἰνόπαριν κατάρᾳ
διδοῦσ’, ἐπεί με γᾶς ἐκ
πατρῴας ἀπώλεσεν
ἐξῴκισέν τ’ οἴκων γάμος, οὐ γάμος ἀλλ’ ἀ-
λάστορός τις οἰζύς·
ἂν μήτε πέλαγος ἅλιον ἀπαγάγοι πάλιν,
μήτε πα-
τρῷον ἵκοιτ’ ἐς οἶκον.

Πολυμήστωρ

Ὦ φίλτατ’ ἀνδρῶν Πρίαμε, φιλτάτη δὲ σύ,
Ἑκάβη, δακρύω σ’ εἰσορῶν πόλιν τε σὴν
τήν τ’ ἀρτίως θανοῦσαν ἔκγονον σέθεν.
Φεῦ·
οὐκ ἔστι πιστὸν οὐδέν, οὔτ’ εὐδοξία
οὔτ’ αὖ καλῶς πράσσοντα μὴ πράξειν κακῶς.
Φύρουσι δ’ αὐτοὶ θεοὶ πάλιν τε καὶ πρόσω

ταραγμὸν ἐντιθέντες, ὡς ἀγνωσίᾳ
σέβωμεν αὐτούς. Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν τί δεῖ
θρηνεῖν, προκόπτοντ᾽ οὐδὲν ἐς πρόσθεν κακῶν;
Σὺ δ᾽, εἴ τι μέμφῃ τῆς ἐμῆς ἀπουσίας,
σχές· τυγχάνω γὰρ ἐν μέσοις Θρῄκης ὅροις
ἀπών, ὅτ᾽ ἦλθες δεῦρ᾽· ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἀφικόμην,
ἤδη πόδ᾽ ἔξω δωμάτων αἴροντί μοι
ἐς ταὐτὸν ἥδε συμπίτνει δμωὶς σέθεν
λέγουσα μύθους, ὧν κλύων ἀφικόμην.

Ἑκάβη

Αἰσχύνομαί σε προσβλέπειν ἐναντίον,
Πολυμῆστορ, ἐν τοιοῖσδε κειμένη κακοῖς.
Ἄτῳ γὰρ ὤφθην εὐτυχοῦσ᾽, αἰδώς μ᾽ ἔχει
ἐν τῷδε πότμῳ τυγχάνουσ᾽ ἵν᾽ εἰμὶ νῦν
κοὐκ ἂν δυναίμην προσβλέπειν ὀρθαῖς κόραις.
Ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸ μὴ δύσνοιαν ἡγήσῃ σέθεν,
Πολυμῆστορ· ἄλλως δ᾽ αἴτιόν τι καὶ νόμος,
γυναῖκας ἀνδρῶν μὴ βλέπειν ἐναντίον.

Πολυμήστωρ

Καὶ θαῦμά γ᾽ οὐδέν. Ἀλλὰ τίς χρεία σ᾽ ἐμοῦ;
Τί χρῆμ᾽ ἐπέμψω τὸν ἐμὸν ἐκ δόμων πόδα·

Ἑκάβη

Ἴδιον ἐμαυτῆς δή τι πρὸς σὲ βούλομαι
καὶ παῖδας εἰπεῖν σούς· ὀπάονας δέ μοι
χωρὶς κέλευσον τῶνδ᾽ ἀποστῆναι δόμων.

Πολυμήστωρ

Χωρεῖτ᾽· ἐν ἀσφαλεῖ γὰρ ἥδ᾽ ἐρημία.
Φίλη μὲν εἶ σύ, προσφιλὲς δέ μοι τόδε
στράτευμ᾽ Ἀχαιῶν. Ἀλλὰ σημαίνειν σὲ χρῆν·

τί χρὴ τὸν εὖ πράσσοντα μὴ πράσσουσιν εὖ
φίλοις ἐπαρκεῖν; Ὡς ἕτοιμός εἰμ’ ἐγώ.

Ἑκάβη

Πρῶτον μὲν εἰπὲ παῖδ’ ὃν ἐξ ἐμῆς χερὸς
Πολύδωρον ἔκ τε πατρὸς ἐν δόμοις ἔχεις,
εἰ ζῇ· τὰ δ’ ἄλλα δεύτερόν σ’ ἐρήσομαι.

Πολυμήστωρ

Μάλιστα· τοὐκείνου μὲν εὐτυχεῖς μέρος.

Ἑκάβη

Ὦ φίλταθ’, ὡς εὖ κἀξίως λέγεις σέθεν.

Πολυμήστωρ

Τί δῆτα βούλῃ δεύτερον μαθεῖν ἐμοῦ;

Ἑκάβη

Εἰ τῆς τεκούσης τῆσδε . . . μέμνηταί τί μου;

Πολυμήστωρ

Καὶ δεῦρό γ’ ὡς σὲ κρύφιος ἐζήτει μολεῖν.

Ἑκάβη

Χρυσὸς δὲ σῶς ὃν ἦλθεν ἐκ Τροίας ἔχων;

Πολυμήστωρ

Σῶς, ἐν δόμοις γε τοῖς ἐμοῖς φρουρούμενος.

Ἑκάβη

Σῶσόν νυν αὐτὸν μηδ’ ἔρα τῶν πλησίον.

Πολυμήστωρ

Ἥκιστ’· ὀναίμην τοῦ παρόντος, ὦ γύναι.

Ἑκάβη

Οἶσθ’ οὖν ἃ λέξαι σοί τε καὶ παισὶν θέλω;

Πολυμήστωρ

Οὐκ οἶδα· τῷ σῷ τοῦτο σημανεῖς λόγῳ.

Ἑκάβη

[1000] Ἔστ’, ὦ φιληθεὶς ὡς σὺ νῦν ἐμοὶ φιλῇ

Πολυμήστωρ

Τί χρῆμ’ ὃ κἀμὲ καὶ τέκν’ εἰδέναι χρεών;

Ἑκάβη

Χρυσοῦ παλαιαὶ Πριαμιδῶν κατώρυχες.

Πολυμήστωρ

Ταῦτ’ ἔσθ’ ἃ βούλῃ παιδὶ σημῆναι σέθεν;

Ἑκάβη

Μάλιστα, διὰ σοῦ γ’· εἶ γὰρ εὐσεβὴς ἀνήρ.

Πολυμήστωρ

[1005] Τί δῆτα τέκνων τῶνδε δεῖ παρουσίας;

Ἑκάβη

Ἄμεινον, ἢν σὺ κατθάνῃς, τούσδ’ εἰδέναι.
Πολυμήστωρ

Καλῶς ἔλεξας· τῇδε καὶ σοφώτερον.

Ἑκάβη

Οἶσθ’ οὖν Ἀθάνας Ἰλίας ἵνα στέγαι;

Πολυμήστωρ

Ἐνταῦθ’ ὁ χρυσός ἐστι; Σημεῖον δὲ τί;

Ἑκάβη

[1010] Μέλαινα πέτρα γῆς ὑπερτέλλουσ’ ἄνω.

Πολυμήστωρ

Ἔτ’ οὖν τι βούλῃ τῶν ἐκεῖ φράζειν ἐμοί;

Ἑκάβη

Σῶσαί σε χρήμαθ’ οἷς συνεξῆλθον θέλω.

Πολυμήστωρ

Ποῦ δῆτα; Πέπλων ἐντὸς ἢ κρύψασ’ ἔχεις;

Ἑκάβη

Σκύλων ἐν ὄχλῳ ταῖσδε σῴζεται στέγαις.

Πολυμήστωρ

[1015] Ποῦ δ’; Αἵδ’ Ἀχαιῶν ναύλοχοι περιπτυχαί.

Ἑκάβη

Ἰδίᾳ γυναικῶν αἰχμαλωτίδων στέγαι.

Πολυμήστωρ

Τἄνδον δὲ πιστὰ κἀρσένων ἐρημία;

Ἑκάβη

Οὐδεὶς Ἀχαιῶν ἔνδον, ἀλλ᾽ ἡμεῖς μόναι.
ἀλλ᾽ ἕρπ᾽ ἐς οἴκους· καὶ γὰρ Ἀργεῖοι νεῶν
[1020] λῦσαι ποθοῦσιν οἴκαδ᾽ ἐκ Τροίας πόδα·
ὡς πάντα πράξας ὧν σε δεῖ στείχῃς πάλιν
ξὺν παισὶν οὗπερ τὸν ἐμὸν ᾤκισας γόνον.

Χορός

[1024] Οὔπω δέδωκας, ἀλλ᾽ ἴσως δώσεις δίκην·
[1025] Ἀλίμενόν τις ὡς εἰς ἄντλον πεσὼν
λέχριος ἐκπεσῇ φίλας καρδίας,
ἀμέρσας βίοτον. τὸ γὰρ ὑπέγγυον
[1029] Δίκᾳ καὶ θεοῖσιν οὐ συμπίτνει·
[1030] ὀλέθριον ὀλέθριον κακόν.
Ψεύσει σ᾽ ὁδοῦ τῆσδ᾽ ἐλπὶς ἥ σ᾽ ἐπήγαγεν
θανάσιμον πρὸς Ἅιδαν, ἰὼ τάλας·
ἀπολέμῳ δὲ χειρὶ λείψεις βίον.

Πολυμήστωρ

Ἔσωθε
[1035] ὤμοι, τυφλοῦμαι φέγγος ὀμμάτων τάλας.

Χορός

Ἠκούσατ᾽ ἀνδρὸς Θρῃκὸς οἰμωγήν, φίλαι;

Πολυμήστωρ

Ὤμοι μάλ᾽ αὖθις, τέκνα, δυστήνου σφαγῆς.

Χορός

Φίλαι, πέπρακται καίν᾽ ἔσω δόμων κακά.

Πολυμήστωρ

Ἀλλ᾽ οὔτι μὴ φύγητε λαιψηρῷ ποδί·
[1040] βάλλων γὰρ οἴκων τῶνδ᾽ ἀναρρήξω μυχούς.

Χορός

Ἰδού, βαρείας χειρὸς ὁρμᾶται βέλος.
Βούλεσθ᾽ ἐπεσπέσωμεν; Ὡς ἀκμὴ καλεῖ
Ἑκάβῃ παρεῖναι Τρῳάσιν τε συμμάχους.

Ἑκάβη

[1044] Ἄρασσε, φείδου μηδέν, ἐκβάλλων πύλας·
[1045] οὐ γάρ ποτ᾽ ὄμμα λαμπρὸν ἐνθήσεις κόραις,
οὐ παῖδας ὄψῃ ζῶντας οὓς ἔκτειν᾽ ἐγώ.

Χορός

Ἦ γὰρ καθεῖλες Θρῇκα, καὶ κρατεῖς, ξένον,
δέσποινα, καὶ δέδρακας οἷάπερ λέγεις;

Ἑκάβη

Ὄψῃ νιν αὐτίκ᾽ ὄντα δωμάτων πάρος
[1050] τυφλὸν τυφλῷ στείχοντα παραφόρῳ ποδί,
παίδων τε δισσῶν σώμαθ᾽, οὓς ἔκτειν᾽ ἐγὼ
σὺν ταῖς ἀρίσταις Τρῳάσιν· δίκην δέ μοι
δέδωκε. χωρεῖ δ᾽, ὡς ὁρᾷς, ὅδ᾽ ἐκ δόμων.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐκποδὼν ἄπειμι κἀποστήσομαι
[1055] θυμῷ ῥέοντι Θρῃκὶ δυσμαχωτάτῳ.

Πολυμήστωρ

[1056] Ὤμοι ἐγώ, πᾷ βῶ,
πᾷ στῶ, πᾷ κέλσω;
Τετράποδος βάσιν θηρὸς ὀρεστέρου

τιθέμενος ἐπίχειρα κατ᾽ ἴχνος; Ποίαν
ἢ ταύταν ἢ τάνδ᾽ ἐξαλλάξω, τὰς
ἀνδροφόνους μάρψαι χρῄζων Ἰλιάδας,
αἵ με διώλεσαν;
Τάλαιναι κόραι τάλαιναι Φρυγῶν,
ὦ κατάρατοι,
ποῖ καί με φυγᾷ πτώσσουσι μυχῶν;
Εἴθε μοι ὀμμάτων αἱματόεν βλέφαρον
ἀκέσαι᾽ ἀκέσαιο τυφλόν, Ἅλιε,
φέγγος ἐπαλλάξας.
Ἆ ἆ,
σίγα· κρυπτὰν βάσιν αἰσθάνομαι
τάνδε γυναικῶν. Πᾷ πόδ᾽ ἐπάξας
σαρκῶν ὀστέων τ᾽ ἐμπλησθῶ,
θοίναν ἀγρίων θηρῶν τιθέμενος,
ἀρνύμενος λώβαν
λύμας ἀντίποιν᾽ ἐμᾶς; Ὦ τάλας.
ποῖ πᾷ φέρομαι τέκν᾽ ἔρημα λιπὼν
Βάκχαις Ἅιδου διαμοιρᾶσαι,
σφακτά, κυσίν τε φοινίαν δαῖτ᾽ ἀνή-
μερον τ᾽ οὐρείαν ἐκβολάν;
Πᾷ στῶ, πᾷ κάμψω, πᾷ βῶ,
ναῦς ὅπως ποντίοις πείσμασιν, λινόκροκον
φᾶρος στέλλων, ἐπὶ τάνδε συθεὶς
τέκνων ἐμῶν φύλαξ ὀλέθριον κοίταν;

Χορός

Ὦ τλῆμον, ὡς σοι δύσφορ᾽ εἴργασται κακά·
δράσαντι δ᾽ αἰσχρὰ δεινὰ τἀπιτίμια.
Δαίμων ἔδωκεν ὅστις ἐστί σοι βαρύς.

Πολυμήστωρ

Αἰαῖ, ἰὼ Θρῄκης λογχοφόρον ἔνο-
πλον εὔιππον Ἄρει κάτοχον γένος.
Ἰὼ Ἀχαιοί. ἰὼ Ἀτρεῖδαι. βοὰν βοὰν ἀυτῶ, βοάν.
ὦ ἴτε· μόλετε πρὸς θεῶν.

Κλύει τις ἢ οὐδεὶς ἀρκέσει; Τί μέλλετε;
Γυναῖκες ὤλεσάν με, γυναῖκες αἰχμαλωτίδες· δεινὰ
[1095] δεινὰ πεπόνθαμεν.
[1098] Ὤμοι ἐμᾶς λώβας.
ποῖ τράπωμαι, ποῖ πορευθῶ;
[1100] Ἀμπτάμενος οὐράνιον
ὑψιπετὲς ἐς μέλαθρον,
Ὠαρίων ἢ Σείριος ἔνθα πυρὸς φλογέας ἀφίη-
[1105] σιν ὄσσων αὐγάς, ἢ τὸν ἐς Ἀίδα
μελάγχρωτα πορθμὸν ἄξω τάλας;

Χορός

Συγγνώσθ', ὅταν τις κρείσσον' ἢ φέρειν κακὰ
πάθῃ, ταλαίνης ἐξαπαλλάξαι ζόης.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Κραυγῆς ἀκούσας ἦλθον· οὐ γὰρ ἥσυχος
[1110] πέτρας ὀρείας παῖς λέλακ' ἀνὰ στρατὸν
Ἠχὼ διδοῦσα θόρυβον· εἰ δὲ μὴ Φρυγῶν
πύργους πεσόντας ἦσμεν Ἑλλήνων δορί,
φόβον παρέσχεν οὐ μέσως ὅδε κτύπος.

Πολυμήστωρ

Ὦ φίλτατ'· ἠσθόμην γάρ, Ἀγάμεμνον, σέθεν
[1115] φωνῆς ἀκούσας· εἰσορᾷς ἃ πάσχομεν;

Ἀγαμέμνων

Ἔα·
Πολυμῆστορ· ὦ δύστηνε, τίς σ' ἀπώλεσεν;
Τίς ὄμμ' ἔθηκε τυφλὸν αἱμάξας κόρας,
παῖδάς τε τούσδ' ἔκτεινεν; Ἦ μέγαν χόλον
σοὶ καὶ τέκνοισιν εἶχεν ὅστις ἦν ἄρα.

Πολυμήστωρ

[1120] Ἑκάβη με σὺν γυναιξὶν αἰχμαλωτίσιν
ἀπώλεσ᾽ οὐκ ἀπώλεσ᾽, ἀλλὰ μειζόνως.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Τί φῄς; Σὺ τοὔργον εἴργασαι τόδ᾽, ὡς λέγει;
Σὺ τόλμαν, Ἑκάβη, τήνδ᾽ ἔτλης ἀμήχανον;

Πολυμήστωρ

Ὤμοι, τί λέξεις; Ἦ γὰρ ἐγγύς ἐστί που;
[1125] Σήμηνον, εἰπὲ ποῦ ‘σθ᾽, ἵν᾽ ἁρπάσας χεροῖν
διασπάσωμαι καὶ καθαιμάξω χρόα.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Οὗτος, τί πάσχεις;

Πολυμήστωρ

Πρὸς θεῶν σε λίσσομαι,
μέθες μ᾽ ἐφεῖναι τῇδε μαργῶσαν χέρα.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Ἴσχ᾽· ἐκβαλὼν δὲ καρδίας τὸ βάρβαρον
[1130] λέγ᾽, ὡς ἀκούσας σοῦ τε τῆσδέ τ᾽ ἐν μέρει
κρίνω δικαίως ἀνθ᾽ ὅτου πάσχεις τάδε.

Πολυμήστωρ

[1132] Λέγοιμ᾽ ἄν. Ἦν τις Πριαμιδῶν νεώτατος,
Πολύδωρος, Ἑκάβης παῖς, ὃν ἐκ Τροίας ἐμοὶ
πατὴρ δίδωσι Πρίαμος ἐν δόμοις τρέφειν,
[1135] ὕποπτος ὢν δὴ Τρωικῆς ἁλώσεως.
Τοῦτον κατέκτειν᾽· ἀνθ᾽ ὅτου δ᾽ ἔκτεινά νιν,
ἄκουσον, ὡς εὖ καὶ σοφῇ προμηθίᾳ.
Ἔδεισα μὴ σοὶ πολέμιος λειφθεὶς ὁ παῖς
Τροίαν ἀθροίσῃ καὶ ξυνοικίσῃ πάλιν,

γνόντες δ’ Ἀχαιοὶ ζῶντα Πριαμιδῶν τινα
Φρυγῶν ἐς αἶαν αὖθις ἄρειαν στόλον,
κἄπειτα Θρῄκης πεδία τρίβοιεν τάδε
λεηλατοῦντες, γείτοσιν δ’ εἴη κακὸν
Τρώων, ἐν ᾧπερ νῦν, ἄναξ, ἐκάμνομεν.
Ἑκάβη δὲ παιδὸς γνοῦσα θανάσιμον μόρον
λόγῳ με τοιῷδ’ ἤγαγ’, ὡς κεκρυμμένας
θήκας φράσουσα Πριαμιδῶν ἐν Ἰλίῳ
χρυσοῦ· μόνον δὲ σὺν τέκνοισί μ’ εἰσάγει
δόμους, ἵν’ ἄλλος μή τις εἰδείη τάδε.
Ἵζω δὲ κλίνης ἐν μέσῳ κάμψας γόνυ·
πολλαὶ δὲ χεῖρες, αἳ μὲν ἐξ ἀριστερᾶς,
αἳ δ’ ἔνθεν, ὡς δὴ παρὰ φίλῳ, Τρώων κόραι
θάκους ἔχουσαι, κερκίδ’ Ἠδωνῆς χερὸς
ἤνουν, ὑπ’ αὐγὰς τούσδε λεύσσουσαι πέπλους·
ἄλλαι δὲ κάμακα Θρῃκίαν θεώμεναι
γυμνόν μ’ ἔθηκαν διπτύχου στολίσματος.
Ὅσαι δὲ τοκάδες ἦσαν, ἐκπαγλούμεναι
τέκν’ ἐν χεροῖν ἔπαλλον, ὡς πρόσω πατρὸς
γένοιντο, διαδοχαῖς ἀμείβουσαι χερῶν·
κᾆτ’ ἐκ γαληνῶν πῶς δοκεῖς; Προσφθεγμάτων
εὐθὺς λαβοῦσαι φάσγαν’ ἐκ πέπλων ποθὲν
κεντοῦσι παῖδας, αἳ δὲ πολεμίων δίκην
ξυναρπάσασαι τὰς ἐμὰς εἶχον χέρας
καὶ κῶλα· παισὶ δ’ ἀρκέσαι χρῄζων ἐμοῖς,
εἰ μὲν πρόσωπον ἐξανισταίην ἐμόν,
κόμης κατεῖχον, εἰ δὲ κινοίην χέρας,
πλήθει γυναικῶν οὐδὲν ἤνυον τάλας.
Τὸ λοίσθιον δέ, πῆμα πήματος πλέον,
ἐξειργάσαντο δείν’· ἐμῶν γὰρ ὀμμάτων,
πόρπας λαβοῦσαι, τὰς ταλαιπώρους κόρας
κεντοῦσιν, αἱμάσσουσιν· εἶτ’ ἀνὰ στέγας
φυγάδες ἔβησαν· ἐκ δὲ πηδήσας ἐγὼ
θὴρ ὣς διώκω τὰς μιαιφόνους κύνας,
ἅπαντ’ ἐρευνῶν τοῖχον ὡς κυνηγέτης
βάλλων ἀράσσων. Τοιάδε σπεύδων χάριν
πέπονθα τὴν σὴν πολέμιόν τε σὸν κτανών,

Ἀγάμεμνον. Ὡς δὲ μὴ μακροὺς τείνω λόγους,
εἴ τις γυναῖκας τῶν πρὶν εἴρηκεν κακῶς
ἢ νῦν λέγων ἔστιν τις ἢ μέλλει λέγειν,
ἅπαντα ταῦτα συντεμὼν ἐγὼ φράσω·
γένος γὰρ οὔτε πόντος οὔτε γῆ τρέφει
τοιόνδ'· ὁ δ' αἰεὶ ξυντυχὼν ἐπίσταται.

Χορός

Μηδὲν θρασύνου μηδὲ τοῖς σαυτοῦ κακοῖς
τὸ θῆλυ συνθεὶς ὧδε πᾶν μέμψῃ γένος.
Πολλαὶ γὰρ ἡμῶν, αἳ μέν εἰσ' ἐπίφθονοι,
αἳ δ' εἰς ἀριθμὸν τῶν κακῶν πεφύκαμεν.

Ἑκάβη

Ἀγάμεμνον, ἀνθρώποισιν οὐκ ἐχρῆν ποτε
τῶν πραγμάτων τὴν γλῶσσαν ἰσχύειν πλέον:
ἀλλ', εἴτε χρήστ' ἔδρασε, χρήστ' ἔδει λέγειν,
εἴτ' αὖ πονηρά, τοὺς λόγους εἶναι σαθρούς,
καὶ μὴ δύνασθαι τἄδικ' εὖ λέγειν ποτέ.
Σοφοὶ μὲν οὖν εἰσ' οἱ τάδ' ἠκριβωκότες,
ἀλλ' οὐ δύνανται διὰ τέλους εἶναι σοφοί,
κακῶς δ' ἀπώλοντ': οὔτις ἐξήλυξέ πω.
Καί μοι τὸ μὲν σὸν ὧδε φροιμίοις ἔχει:
πρὸς τόνδε δ' εἶμι καὶ λόγοις ἀμείψομαι:
ὃς φῂς Ἀχαιῶν πόνον ἀπαλλάσσων διπλοῦν
Ἀγαμέμνονός θ' ἕκατι παῖδ' ἐμὸν κτανεῖν.
Ἀλλ', ὦ κάκιστε, πρῶτον οὔποτ' ἂν φίλον
τὸ βάρβαρον γένοιτ' ἂν Ἕλλησιν γένος
οὐδ' ἂν δύναιτο. Τίνα δὲ καὶ σπεύδων χάριν
πρόθυμος ἦσθα; Πότερα κηδεύσων τινὰ
ἢ συγγενὴς ὤν, ἢ τίν' αἰτίαν ἔχων;
Ἢ σῆς ἔμελλον γῆς τεμεῖν βλαστήματα
πλεύσαντες αὖθις; Τίνα δοκεῖς πείσειν τάδε;
Ὁ χρυσός, εἰ βούλοιο τἀληθῆ λέγειν,
ἔκτεινε τὸν ἐμὸν παῖδα, καὶ κέρδη τὰ σά.
Ἐπεὶ δίδαξον τοῦτο: πῶς, ὅτ' εὐτύχει

Τροία, πέριξ δὲ πύργος εἶχ’ ἔτι πτόλιν,
ἔζη τε Πρίαμος Ἕκτορός τ’ ἤνθει δόρυ,
τί δ’ οὐ τότ’, εἴπερ τῷδ’ ἐβουλήθης χάριν
θέσθαι, τρέφων τὸν παῖδα κἀν δόμοις ἔχων
ἔκτεινας ἢ ζῶντ’ ἦλθες Ἀργείοις ἄγων;
Ἀλλ’ ἡνίχ’ ἡμεῖς οὐκέτ’ ἐσμὲν ἐν φάει
καπνῷ δ’ ἐσήμην’ ἄστυ πολεμίων ὕπο,
ξένον κατέκτας σὴν μολόντ’ ἐφ’ ἑστίαν.
Πρὸς τοῖσδε νῦν ἄκουσον, ὡς φανῇς κακός.
Χρῆν σ’, εἴπερ ἦσθα τοῖς Ἀχαιοῖσιν φίλος,
τὸν χρυσὸν ὃν φῂς οὐ σὸν ἀλλὰ τοῦδ’ ἔχειν
δοῦναι φέροντα πενομένοις τε καὶ χρόνον
πολὺν πατρῴας γῆς ἀπεξενωμένοις·
σὺ δ’ οὐδὲ νῦν πω σῆς ἀπαλλάξαι χερὸς
τολμᾷς, ἔχων δὲ καρτερεῖς ἔτ’ ἐν δόμοις.
Καὶ μὴν τρέφων μὲν ὥς σε παῖδ’ ἐχρῆν τρέφειν
σώσας τε τὸν ἐμόν, εἶχες ἂν καλὸν κλέος·
ἐν τοῖς κακοῖς γὰρ ἀγαθοὶ σαφέστατοι
φίλοι· τὰ χρηστὰ δ’ αὖθ’ ἕκαστ’ ἔχει φίλους.
Εἰ δ’ ἐσπάνιζες χρημάτων, ὃ δ’ εὐτύχει,
θησαυρὸς ἄν σοι παῖς ὑπῆρχ’ οὐμὸς μέγας·
νῦν δ’ οὔτ’ ἐκεῖνον ἄνδρ’ ἔχεις σαυτῷ φίλον,
χρυσοῦ τ’ ὄνησις οἴχεται παῖδές τε σοί,
αὐτός τε πράσσεις ὧδε. Σοὶ δ’ ἐγὼ λέγω,
Ἀγάμεμνον, εἰ τῷδ’ ἀρκέσεις, κακὸς φανῇ·
οὔτ’ εὐσεβῆ γὰρ οὔτε πιστὸν οἷς ἐχρῆν,
οὐχ ὅσιον, οὐ δίκαιον εὖ δράσεις ξένον·
αὐτὸν δὲ χαίρειν τοῖς κακοῖς σὲ φήσομεν
τοιοῦτον ὄντα . . . δεσπότας δ’ οὐ λοιδορῶ.

Χορός

Φεῦ φεῦ· βροτοῖσιν ὡς τὰ χρηστὰ πράγματα
χρηστῶν ἀφορμὰς ἐνδίδωσ’ ἀεὶ λόγων.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Ἀχθεινὰ μέν μοι τἀλλότρια κρίνειν κακά,
ὅμως δ᾽ ἀνάγκη· καὶ γὰρ αἰσχύνην φέρει,
πρᾶγμ᾽ ἐς χέρας λαβόντ᾽ ἀπώσασθαι τόδε.
Ἐμοὶ δ᾽, ἵν᾽ εἰδῇς, οὔτ᾽ ἐμὴν δοκεῖς χάριν
οὔτ᾽ οὖν Ἀχαιῶν ἄνδρ᾽ ἀποκτεῖναι ξένον,
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἔχῃς τὸν χρυσὸν ἐν δόμοισι σοῖς.
Λέγεις δὲ σαυτῷ πρόσφορ᾽ ἐν κακοῖσιν ὤν.
Τάχ᾽ οὖν παρ᾽ ὑμῖν ῥᾴδιον ξενοκτονεῖν·
ἡμῖν δέ γ᾽ αἰσχρὸν τοῖσιν Ἕλλησιν τόδε.
Πῶς οὖν σε κρίνας μὴ ἀδικεῖν φύγω ψόγον;
Οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην. Ἀλλ᾽ ἐπεὶ τὰ μὴ καλὰ
πράσσειν ἐτόλμας, τλῆθι καὶ τὰ μὴ φίλα.

Πολυμήστωρ

Οἴμοι, γυναικός, ὡς ἔοιχ᾽, ἡσσώμενος
δούλης ὑφέξω τοῖς κακίοσιν δίκην.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Οὔκουν δικαίως, εἴπερ εἰργάσω κακά;

Πολυμήστωρ

Οἴμοι τέκνων τῶνδ᾽ ὀμμάτων τ᾽ ἐμῶν, τάλας.

Ἑκάβη

Ἀλγεῖς· τί δ᾽; Ἦ ‘μὲ παιδὸς οὐκ ἀλγεῖν δοκεῖς;

Πολυμήστωρ

Χαίρεις ὑβρίζουσ᾽ εἰς ἔμ᾽, ὦ πανοῦργε σύ;

Ἑκάβη

Οὐ γάρ με χαίρειν χρή σε τιμωρουμένην;

Πολυμήστωρ

Ἀλλ’ οὐ τάχ’, ἡνίκ’ ἄν σε ποντία νοτὶς

Ἑκάβη

[1260] Μῶν ναυστολήσῃ γῆς ὅρους Ἑλληνίδος;

Πολυμήστωρ

Κρύψῃ μὲν οὖν πεσοῦσαν ἐκ καρχησίων.

Ἑκάβη

Πρὸς τοῦ βιαίων τυγχάνουσαν ἁλμάτων;

Πολυμήστωρ

Αὐτὴ πρὸς ἱστὸν ναὸς ἀμβήσῃ ποδί.

Ἑκάβη

Ὑποπτέροις νώτοισιν ἢ ποίῳ τρόπῳ;

Πολυμήστωρ

[1265] Κύων γενήσῃ πύρσ’ ἔχουσα δέργματα.

Ἑκάβη

Πῶς δ’ οἶσθα μορφῆς τῆς ἐμῆς μετάστασιν;

Πολυμήστωρ

Ὁ Θρῃξὶ μάντις εἶπε Διόνυσος τάδε.

Ἑκάβη

Σοὶ δ’ οὐκ ἔχρησεν οὐδὲν ὧν ἔχεις κακῶν;

Πολυμήστωρ

Οὐ γάρ ποτ’ ἂν σύ μ’ εἶλες ὧδε σὺν δόλῳ.

Ἑκάβη

[1270] Θανοῦσα δ’ ἢ ζῶσ’ ἐνθάδ’ ἐκπλήσω βίον;

Πολυμήστωρ

Θανοῦσα· τύμβῳ δ’ ὄνομα σῷ κεκλήσεται

Ἑκάβη

Μορφῆς ἐπῳδόν, ἢ τί, τῆς ἐμῆς ἐρεῖς;

Πολυμήστωρ

Κυνὸς ταλαίνης σῆμα, ναυτίλοις τέκμαρ.

Ἑκάβη

Οὐδὲν μέλει μοι σοῦ γέ μοι δόντος δίκην.

Πολυμήστωρ

[1275] Καὶ σήν γ’ ἀνάγκη παῖδα Κασάνδραν θανεῖν.

Ἑκάβη

Ἀπέπτυσ’· αὐτῷ ταῦτα σοὶ δίδωμ’ ἔχειν.

Πολυμήστωρ

Κτενεῖ νιν ἡ τοῦδ’ ἄλοχος, οἰκουρὸς πικρά.

Ἑκάβη

Μήπω μανείη Τυνδαρὶς τοσόνδε παῖς.

Πολυμήστωρ

Καὐτόν γε τοῦτον, πέλεκυν ἐξάρασ᾽ ἄνω.

Ἀγαμέμνων

[1280] Οὗτος σύ, μαίνῃ καὶ κακῶν ἐρᾷς τυχεῖν;

Πολυμήστωρ

[1281] Κτεῖν᾽, ὡς ἐν Ἄργει φόνια λουτρά σ᾽ ἀμμένει.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Οὐχ ἕλξετ᾽ αὐτόν, δμῶες, ἐκποδὼν βίᾳ;

Πολυμήστωρ

Ἀλγεῖς ἀκούων;

Ἀγαμέμνων

Οὐκ ἐφέξετε στόμα;

Πολυμήστωρ

Ἐγκλῄετ᾽· εἴρηται γάρ.

Ἀγαμέμνων

[1284] Οὐχ ὅσον τάχος
[1285] νήσων ἐρήμων αὐτὸν ἐκβαλεῖτέ που,
ἐπείπερ οὕτω καὶ λίαν θρασυστομεῖ;
Ἑκάβη, σὺ δ᾽, ὦ τάλαινα, διπτύχους νεκροὺς
στείχουσα θάπτε· δεσποτῶν δ᾽ ὑμᾶς χρεὼν
σκηναῖς πελάζειν, Τρῳάδες· καὶ γὰρ πνοὰς
[1290] πρὸς οἶκον ἤδη τάσδε πομπίμους ὁρῶ.
εὖ δ᾽ ἐς πάτραν πλεύσαιμεν, εὖ δὲ τἀν δόμοις
ἔχοντ᾽ ἴδοιμεν τῶνδ᾽ ἀφειμένοι πόνων.

Χορός

Ἴτε πρὸς λιμένας σκηνάς τε, φίλαι,
τῶν δεσποσύνων πειρασόμεναι
[1295] μόχθων· στερρὰ γὰρ ἀνάγκη.

THE SUPPLIANTS

Αἴθρα

Δήμητερ ἑστιοῦχ᾽ Ἐλευσῖνος χθονὸς
τῆσδ᾽, οἵ τε ναοὺς ἔχετε πρόσπολοι θεᾶς,
εὐδαιμονεῖν με Θησέα τε παῖδ᾽ ἐμὸν
πόλιν τ᾽ Ἀθηνῶν τήν τε Πιτθέως χθόνα,

ἐν ᾗ με θρέψας ὀλβίοις ἐν δώμασιν
Αἴθραν πατὴρ δίδωσι τῷ Πανδίονος
Αἰγεῖ δάμαρτα, Λοξίου μαντεύμασιν.
Ἐς τάσδε γὰρ βλέψασ᾽ ἐπηυξάμην τάδε
γραῦς, αἳ λιποῦσαι δώματ᾽ Ἀργείας χθονὸς

ἱκτῆρι θαλλῷ προσπίτνουσ᾽ ἐμὸν γόνυ,
πάθος παθοῦσαι δεινόν: ἀμφὶ γὰρ πύλας
Κάδμου θανόντων ἑπτὰ γενναίων τέκνων
ἄπαιδές εἰσιν, οὓς ποτ᾽ Ἀργείων ἄναξ
Ἄδραστος ἤγαγ᾽, Οἰδίπου παγκληρίας

μέρος κατασχεῖν φυγάδι Πολυνείκει θέλων
γαμβρῷ. Νεκροὺς δὲ τοὺς ὀλωλότας δορὶ
θάψαι θελουσῶν τῶνδε μητέρων χθονὶ
εἴργουσιν οἱ κρατοῦντες οὐδ᾽ ἀναίρεσιν
δοῦναι θέλουσι, νόμιμ᾽ ἀτίζοντες θεῶν.

Κοινὸν δὲ φόρτον ταῖσδ᾽ ἔχων χρείας ἐμῆς
Ἄδραστος ὄμμα δάκρυσιν τέγγων ὅδε
κεῖται, τό τ᾽ ἔγχος τήν τε δυστυχεστάτην
στένων στρατείαν ἣν ἔπεμψεν ἐκ δόμων:
ὅς μ᾽ ἐξοτρύνει παῖδ᾽ ἐμὸν πεῖσαι λιταῖς

νεκρῶν κομιστὴν ἢ λόγοισιν ἢ δορὸς
ῥώμῃ γενέσθαι καὶ τάφου μεταίτιον,
μόνον τόδ᾽ ἔργον προστιθεὶς ἐμῷ τέκνῳ

πόλει τ’ Ἀθηνῶν. Τυγχάνω δ’ ὑπὲρ χθονὸς
ἀρότου προθύουσ’, ἐκ δόμων ἐλθοῦσ’ ἐμῶν

πρὸς τόνδε σηκόν, ἔνθα πρῶτα φαίνεται
φρίξας ὑπὲρ γῆς τῆσδε κάρπιμος στάχυς.
Δεσμὸν δ’ ἄδεσμον τόνδ’ ἔχουσα φυλλάδος
μένω πρὸς ἀγναῖς ἐσχάραις δυοῖν θεαῖν
Κόρης τε καὶ Δήμητρος, οἰκτίρουσα μὲν

πολιὰς ἄπαιδας τάσδε μητέρας τέκνων,
σέβουσα δ’ ἱερὰ στέμματ’. Οἴχεται δέ μοι
κῆρυξ πρὸς ἄστυ δεῦρο Θησέα καλῶν,
ὡς ἢ τὸ τούτων λυπρὸν ἐξέλῃ χθονός,
ἢ τάσδ’ ἀνάγκας ἱκεσίους λύσῃ, θεοὺς

ὅσιόν τι δράσας: πάντα γὰρ δι’ ἀρσένων
γυναιξὶ πράσσειν εἰκός, αἵτινες σοφαί.

Χορός

Ἱκετεύω σε, γεραιά,
γεραιῶν ἐκ στομάτων, πρὸς
γόνυ πίπτουσα τὸ σόν:

ἄνομοι — τέκνα λῦσαι. — Φθιμένων
νεκύων οἳ καταλείπουσι μέλη
θανάτῳ λυσιμελεῖ θηρσὶν ὀρείοισι βοράν:Χορός
ἐσιδοῦσ’ οἰκτρὰ μὲν ὄσσων
δάκρυ’ ἀμφὶ βλεφάροις, ῥυ-

σὰ δὲ σαρκῶν πολιᾶν
καταδρύμματα χειρῶν: τί γάρ; ἃ
φθιμένους παῖδας ἐμοὺς οὔτε δόμοις
προθέμαν οὔτε τάφων χώματα γαίας ἐσορῶ.

Ἔτεκες καὶ σύ ποτ’, ὦ πότνια, κοῦρον

φίλα ποιησαμένα λέ-
κτρα πόσει σῷ: μετά νυν
δὸς ἐμοὶ σᾶς διανοίας,
μετάδος δ’, ὅσσον ἐπαλγῶ μελέα <‘gw\>
φθιμένων οὓς ἔτεκον:

παράπεισον δὲ σόν, ὤ, λισσόμεθ’, ἐλθεῖν
τέκνον Ἰσμηνὸν ἐμάν τ’ ἐς χέρα θεῖναι
νεκύων θαλερᾷ σώματ’ ἀλαίνοντ’ ἄταφα.

Ὡσίως οὔχ, ὑπ’ ἀνάγκας δὲ προπίπτου-
σα προσαιτοῦσ’ ἔμολον δε-
ξιπύρους θεῶν θυμέλας:

ἔχομεν δ’ ἔνδικα, καὶ σοί
τι πάρεστι σθένος ὥστ’ εὐτεκνία+ δυσ-
τυχίαν τὰν παρ’ ἐμοὶ
καθελεῖν: οἰκτρὰ δὲ πάσχουσ’ ἱκετεύω
σὸν ἐμοὶ παῖδα ταλαίνᾳ ‘ν χερὶ θεῖναι

νέκυν, ἀμφιβαλεῖν λυγρὰ μέλη παιδὸς ἐμοῦ.

Ἀγὼν ὅδ’ ἄλλος ἔρχεται γόων γόων
διάδοχος, ἀχοῦσι προσπόλων χέρες.
Ἴτ’ ὦ ξυνῳδοὶ κτύποι,
ἴτ’ ὦ ξυναλγηδόνες,

χορὸν τὸν Ἅιδας σέβει,
διὰ παρῇδος ὄνυχα λευκὸν
αἱματοῦτε χρῶτά τε φόνιον:
τὰ γὰρ φθιτῶν

β τοῖς ὁρῶσι κόσμος.

Ἄπληστος ἅδε μ’ ἐξάγει χάρις γόων

πολύπονος, ὡς ἐξ ἀλιβάτου πέτρας
ὑγρὰ ῥέουσα σταγὼν

ἄπαυστος αἰεί: γόων,
τὸ γὰρ θανόντων τέκνων
ἐπιπονόν τι κατὰ γυναῖκας

ἐς γόους πέφυκε πάθος. Ἔ ἔ.
Θανοῦσα τῶνδ’

β ἀλγέων λαθοίμαν.

Θησεύς

τίνων γόων ἤκουσα καὶ στέρνων κτύπον
νεκρῶν τε θρήνους, τῶνδ’ ἀνακτόρων ἄπο
ἠχοῦς ἰούσης; ὡς φόβος μ’ ἀναπτεροῖ

μή μοί τι μήτηρ, ἣν μεταστείχω ποδί,
χρονίαν ἀποῦσαν ἐκ δόμων ἔχῃ νέον.
Ἔα:
τί χρῆμα; καινὰς ἐσβολὰς ὁρῶ λόγων:
μητέρα γεραιὰν βωμίαν ἐφημένην
ξένους θ’ ὁμοῦ γυναῖκας, οὐχ ἕνα ῥυθμὸν
κακῶν ἐχούσας: ἔκ τε γὰρ γερασμίων
ὄσσων ἐλαύνουσ’ οἰκτρὸν ἐς γαῖαν δάκρυ,
κουραί τε καὶ πεπλώματ’ οὐ θεωρικά.
Τί ταῦτα, μῆτερ; σὸν τὸ μηνύειν ἐμοί,
ἡμῶν δ’ ἀκούειν: προσδοκῶ τι γὰρ νέον.

Αἴθρα

Ὦ παῖ, γυναῖκες αἵδε μητέρες τέκνων
τῶν κατθανόντων ἀμφὶ Καδμείας πύλας
ἑπτὰ στρατηγῶν: ἱκεσίοις δὲ σὺν κλάδοις
φρουροῦσί μ’, ὡς δέδορκας, ἐν κύκλῳ, τέκνον.

Θησεύς

Τίς δ’ ὁ στενάζων οἰκτρὸν ἐν πύλαις ὅδε;

Αἴθρα

Ἄδραστος, ὡς λέγουσιν, Ἀργείων ἄναξ.

Θησεύς

Οἱ δ’ ἀμφὶ τόνδε παῖδες; ἦ τούτων τέκνα;

Αἴθρα

Οὔκ, ἀλλὰ νεκρῶν τῶν ὀλωλότων κόροι.

Θησεύς

Τί γὰρ πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἦλθον ἱκεσίᾳ χερί;

Αἴθρα

Οἶδ’: ἀλλὰ τῶνδε μῦθος οὐντεῦθεν, τέκνον.

Θησεύς

Σὲ τὸν κατήρη χλανιδίοις ἀνιστορῶ.
Λέγ’ ἐκκαλύψας κρᾶτα καὶ πάρες γόον:
πέρας γὰρ οὐδὲν μὴ διὰ γλώσσης ἰόν.

Ἄδραστος

Ὦ καλλίνικε γῆς Ἀθηναίων ἄναξ,
Θησεῦ, σὸς ἱκέτης καὶ πόλεως ἥκω σέθεν.

Θησεύς

Τί χρῆμα θηρῶν καὶ τίνος χρείαν ἔχων;

Ἄδραστος

Οἶσθ’ ἣν στρατείαν ἐστράτευσ’ ὀλεθρίαν.

Θησεύς

Οὐ γάρ τι σιγῇ διεπέρασας Ἑλλάδα.

Ἄδραστος

Ἐνταῦθ’ ἀπώλεσ’ ἄνδρας Ἀργείων ἄκρους.

Θησεύς

Τοιαῦθ’ ὁ τλήμων πόλεμος ἐξεργάζεται.

Ἄδραστος

Τούτους θανόντας ἦλθον ἐξαιτῶν πόλιν.

Θησεύς

Κήρυξιν Ἑρμοῦ πίσυνος, ὡς θάψῃς νεκρούς;

Ἄδραστος

Κἄπειτά γ’ οἱ κτανόντες οὐκ ἐῶσί με.

Θησεύς

Τί γὰρ λέγουσιν, ὅσια χρῄζοντος σέθεν;

Ἄδραστος

Τί δ’; εὐτυχοῦντες οὐκ ἐπίστανται φέρειν.

Θησεύς

Ξύμβουλον οὖν μ’ ἐπῆλθες; ἢ τίνος χάριν;

Ἄδραστος

Κομίσαι σε, Θησεῦ, παῖδας Ἀργείων θέλων.

Θησεύς

Τὸ δ’ Ἄργος ἡμῖν ποῦ ‘στιν; ἢ κόμποι μάτην;

Ἄδραστος

Σφαλέντες οἰχόμεσθα. πρὸς σὲ δ’ ἥκομεν.

Θησεύς

Ἰδίᾳ δοκῆσάν σοι τόδ’ ἢ πάσῃ πόλει;

Ἄδραστος

Πάντες ἱκνοῦνται Δαναΐ¨δαι θάψαι νεκρούς.

Θησεύς

Ἐκ τοῦ δ’ ἐλαύνεις ἑπτὰ πρὸς Θήβας λόχους;

Ἄδραστος

Δισσοῖσι γαμβροῖς τήνδε πορσύνων χάριν.

Θησεύς

Τῷ δ’ ἐξέδωκας παῖδας Ἀργείων σέθεν;

Ἄδραστος

Οὐκ ἐγγενῆ συνῆψα κηδείαν δόμοις.

Θησεύς

Ἀλλὰ ξένοις ἔδωκας Ἀργείας κόρας;

Ἄδραστος

Τυδεῖ Πολυνείκει τε τῷ Θηβαιγενεῖ.

Θησεύς

Τίν’ εἰς ἔρωτα τῆσδε κηδείας μολών;

Ἄδραστος

Φοίβου μ’ ὑπῆλθε δυστόπαστ’ αἰνίγματα.

Θησεύς

Τί δ’ εἶπ’ Ἀπόλλων παρθένοις κραίνων γάμον;

Ἄδραστος

Κάπρῳ με δοῦναι καὶ λέοντι παῖδ’ ἐμώ.

Θησεύς

Σὺ δ’ ἐξελίσσεις πῶς θεοῦ θεσπίσματα;

Ἄδραστος

Ἐλθόντε φυγάδε νυκτὸς εἰς ἐμὰς πύλας —

Θησεύς

Τίς καὶ τίς; εἰπέ: δύο γὰρ ἐξαυδᾷς ἅμα.

Ἄδραστος

Τυδεὺς μάχην ξυνῆψε Πολυνείκης θ’ ἅμα.

Θησεύς

Ἦ τοῖσδ’ ἔδωκας θηρσὶν ὡς κόρας σέθεν;

Ἄδραστος

Μάχην γε δισσοῖν κνωδάλοιν ἀπεικάσας.

Θησεύς

῏Ηλθον δὲ δὴ πῶς πατρίδος ἐκλιπόνθ’ ὅρους;

Ἄδραστος

Τυδεὺς μὲν αἷμα συγγενὲς φεύγων χθονός.

Θησεύς

Ὁ δ’ Οἰδίπου , τίνι τρόπῳ Θήβας λιπών;

Ἄδραστος

Ἀραῖς πατρῴαις, μὴ κασίγνητον κτάνοι.

Θησεύς

Σοφήν γ’ ἔλεξας τήνδ’ ἑκούσιον φυγήν.

Ἄδραστος

Ἀλλ’ οἱ μένοντες τοὺς ἀπόντας ἠδίκουν.

Θησεύς

Οὔ πού σφ’ ἀδελφὸς χρημάτων νοσφίζεται;

Ἄδραστος

Ταύτῃ δικάζων ἦλθον: εἶτ’ ἀπωλόμην.

Θησεύς

Μμάντεις δ’ ἐπῆλθες ἐμπύρων τ’ εἶδες φλόγα;

Ἄδραστος

Οἴμοι; διώκεις μ’ ᾗ μάλιστ’ ἐγὼ ‘σφάλην.

Θησεύς

Οὐκ ἦλθες, ὡς ἔοικεν, εὐνοίᾳ θεῶν.

Ἄδραστος

Τὸ δὲ πλέον, ἦλθον Ἀμφιάρεώ γε πρὸς βίαν.

Θησεύς

Οὕτω τὸ θεῖον ῥᾳδίως ἀπεστράφης;

Ἄδραστος

Νέων γὰρ ἀνδρῶν θόρυβος ἐξέπλησσέ με.

Θησεύς

Εὐψυχίαν ἔσπευσας ἀντ' εὐβουλίας.

Ἄδραστος

Ὃ δή γε πολλοὺς ὤλεσε στρατηλάτας.
Ἀλλ', ὦ καθ' Ἑλλάδ' ἀλκιμώτατον κάρα,
ἄναξ Ἀθηνῶν, ἐν μὲν αἰσχύναις ἔχω

πίτνων πρὸς οὖδας γόνυ σὸν ἀμπίσχειν χερί,
πολιὸς ἀνὴρ τύραννος εὐδαίμων πάρος:
ὅμως δ' ἀνάγκη συμφοραῖς εἴκειν ἐμαῖς.
Σῶσον νεκρούς μοι, τἀμά τ' οἰκτίρας κακὰ
καὶ τῶν θανόντων τάσδε μητέρας τέκνων,

αἷς γῆρας ἥκει πολιὸν εἰς ἀπαιδίαν,
ἐλθεῖν δ' ἔτλησαν δεῦρο καὶ ξένον πόδα
θεῖναι μόλις γεραιὰ κινοῦσαι μέλη,
πρεσβεύματ' οὐ Δήμητρος ἐς μυστήρια,
ἀλλ' ὡς νεκροὺς θάψωσιν, ἃς αὐτὰς ἐχρῆν

κείνων ταφείσας χερσὶν ὡραίων τυχεῖν.
Σοφὸν δὲ πενίαν τ᾽ εἰσορᾶν τὸν ὄλβιον,
πένητά τ᾽ εἰς τοὺς πλουσίους ἀποβλέπειν
ζηλοῦνθ᾽, ἵν᾽ αὐτὸν χρημάτων ἔρως ἔχῃ,
τά τ᾽ οἰκτρὰ τοὺς μὴ δυστυχεῖς δεδοικέναι.
. . . . . .

Τόν θ᾽ ὑμνοποιὸν αὐτὸς ἂν τίκτῃ μέλη
χαίροντα τίκτειν: ἢν δὲ μὴ πάσχῃ τόδε,
οὔτοι δύναιτ᾽ ἂν οἴκοθέν γ᾽ ἀτώμενος
τέρπειν ἂν ἄλλους: οὐδὲ γὰρ δίκην ἔχει.
Τάχ᾽ οὖν ἂν εἴποις: Πελοπίαν παρεὶς χθόνα

πῶς ταῖς Ἀθήναις τόνδε προστάσσεις πόνον;
ἐγὼ δίκαιός εἰμ᾽ ἀφηγεῖσθαι τάδε.
Σπάρτη μὲν ὠμὴ καὶ πεποίκιλται τρόπους,
τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλα μικρὰ κἀσθενῆ: πόλις δὲ σὴ
μόνη δύναιτ᾽ ἂν τόνδ᾽ ὑποστῆναι πόνον:

τά τ᾽ οἰκτρὰ γὰρ δέδορκε καὶ νεανίαν
ἔχει σὲ ποιμέν᾽ ἐσθλόν: οὗ χρείᾳ πόλεις
πολλαὶ διώλοντ᾽, ἐνδεεῖς στρατηλάτου.

Χορός

Κἀγὼ τὸν αὐτὸν τῷδέ σοι λόγον λέγω,
Θησεῦ, δι᾽ οἴκτου τὰς ἐμὰς λαβεῖν τύχας.

Θησεύς

Ἄλλοισι δὴ ‘πόνησ᾽ ἀμιλληθεὶς λόγῳ
τοιῷδ᾽. Ἔλεξε γάρ τις ὡς τὰ χείρονα
πλείω βροτοῖσίν ἐστι τῶν ἀμεινόνων:
ἐγὼ δὲ τούτοις ἀντίαν γνώμην ἔχω,
πλείω τὰ χρηστὰ τῶν κακῶν εἶναι βροτοῖς:

εἰ μὴ γὰρ ἦν τόδ᾽, οὐκ ἂν ἦμεν ἐν φάει.
Αἰνῶ δ᾽ ὃς ἡμῖν βίοτον ἐκ πεφυρμένου

καὶ θηριώδους θεῶν διεσταθμήσατο,
πρῶτον μὲν ἐνθεὶς σύνεσιν, εἶτα δ’ ἄγγελον
γλῶσσαν λόγων δούς, ὥστε γιγνώσκειν ὅπα,

τροφήν τε καρποῦ τῇ τροφῇ τ’ ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ
σταγόνας ὑδρηλάς, ὡς τά γ’ ἐκ γαίας τρέφῃ
ἄρδῃ τε νηδύν: πρὸς δὲ τοῖσι χείματος
προβλήματ’, αἶθρον ἐξαμύνασθαι θεοῦ,
πόντου τε ναυστολήμαθ’, ὡς διαλλαγὰς

ἔχοιμεν ἀλλήλοισιν ὧν πένοιτο γῆ.
Ἃ δ’ ἔστ’ ἄσημα κοὐ σαφῶς γιγνώσκομεν,
ἐς πῦρ βλέποντες καὶ κατὰ σπλάγχνων πτυχὰς
μάντεις προσημαίνουσιν οἰωνῶν τ’ ἄπο.
Ἆρ’ οὐ τρυφῶμεν θεοῦ κατασκευὴν βίῳ

δόντος τοιαύτην, οἷσιν οὐκ ἀρκεῖ τάδε;
ἀλλ’ ἡ φρόνησις τοῦ θεοῦ μεῖζον σθένειν
ζητεῖ, τὸ γαῦρον δ’ ἐν φρεσὶν κεκτημένοι
δοκοῦμεν εἶναι δαιμόνων σοφώτεροι.Θησεύς
Ἧς καὶ σὺ φαίνῃ δεκάδος, οὐ σοφὸς γεγώς,

ὅστις κόρας μὲν θεσφάτοις Φοίβου ζυγεὶς
ξένοισιν ὧδ’ ἔδωκας ὡς ζώντων θεῶν,
λαμπρὸν δὲ θολερῷ δῶμα συμμείξας τὸ σὸν
ἤλκωσας οἴκους: χρῆν γὰρ οὐδὲ σώματα
ἄδικα δικαίοις τὸν σοφὸν συμμιγνύναι,

εὐδαιμονοῦντας δ’ ἐς δόμους κτᾶσθαι φίλους.
Κοινὰς γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τὰς τύχας ἡγούμενος
τοῖς τοῦ νοσοῦντος πήμασιν διώλεσε
τὸν συννοσοῦντα κοὐδὲν ἠδικηκότα.
Ἐς δὲ στρατείαν πάντας Ἀργείους ἄγων,

μάντεων λεγόντων θέσφατ’, εἶτ’ ἀτιμάσας
βίᾳ παρελθὼν θεοὺς ἀπώλεσας πόλιν,
νέοις παραχθείς, οἵτινες τιμώμενοι

χαίρουσι πολέμους τ’ αὐξάνουσ’ ἄνευ δίκης,
φθείροντες ἀστούς, ὁ μὲν ὅπως στρατηλατῇ,

ὁ δ’ ὡς ὑβρίζῃ δύναμιν ἐς χεῖρας λαβών,
ἄλλος δὲ κέρδους οὕνεκ’, οὐκ ἀποσκοπῶν
τὸ πλῆθος εἴ τι βλάπτεται πάσχον τάδε.
Τρεῖς γὰρ πολιτῶν μερίδες: οἳ μὲν ὄλβιοι
ἀνωφελεῖς τε πλειόνων τ’ ἐρῶσ’ ἀεί:

οἳ δ’ οὐκ ἔχοντες καὶ σπανίζοντες βίου
δεινοί, νέμοντες τῷ φθόνῳ πλέον μέρος,
ἐς τοὺς ἔχοντας κέντρ’ ἀφιᾶσιν κακά,
γλώσσαις πονηρῶν προστατῶν φηλούμενοι:
τριῶν δὲ μοιρῶν ἡ ‘ν μέσῳ σῴζει πόλεις,

κόσμον φυλάσσουσ’ ὅντιν’ ἂν τάξῃ πόλις.
Κἄπειτ’ ἐγώ σοι σύμμαχος γενήσομαι;
τί πρὸς πολίτας τοὺς ἐμοὺς λέγων καλόν;
χαίρων ἴθ’: εἰ γὰρ μὴ βεβούλευσαι καλῶς,
αὐτὸς πιέζειν τὴν τύχην, ἡμᾶς δ’ ἐᾶν.

Χορός

Ἥμαρτεν: ἐν νέοισι δ’ ἀνθρώπων τόδε
ἔνεστι: συγγνώμην δὲ τῷδ’ ἔχειν χρεών.
[ἀλλ’ ὡς ἰατρὸν τῶνδ’, ἄναξ, ἀφίγμεθα.]

Ἄδραστος

Οὔτοι δικαστὴν εἰλόμην ἐμῶν κακῶν
οὐδ’, εἴ τι πράξας μὴ καλῶς εὑρίσκομαι,

τούτων κολαστὴν κἀπιτιμητήν, ἄναξ,
ἀλλ’ ὡς ὀναίμην. Εἰ δὲ μὴ βούλῃ τάδε,
στέργειν ἀνάγκη τοῖσι σοῖς: τί γὰρ πάθω;
ἄγ’, ὦ γεραιαί, στείχετε, γλαυκὴν χλόην
αὐτοῦ λιποῦσαι, φυλλάδος καταστροφῇ

θεούς τε καὶ γῆν τήν τε πυρφόρον θεὰν
Δήμητρα θέμεναι μάρτυρ’ ἡλίου τε φῶς,
ὡς οὐδὲν ἡμῖν ἤρκεσαν λιταὶ θεῶν.

Χορός

. . . . . .
Ὃς Πέλοπος ἦν παῖς, Πελοπίας δ’ ἡμεῖς χθονὸς
ταὐτὸν πατρῷον αἷμα σοὶ κεκτήμεθα.

Τί δρᾷς; προδώσεις ταῦτα κἀκβαλεῖς χθονὸς
γραῦς οὐ τυχούσας οὐδὲν ὧν αὐτὰς ἐχρῆν;
μὴ δῆτ’: ἔχει γὰρ καταφυγὴν θὴρ μὲν πέτραν,
δοῦλος δὲ βωμοὺς θεῶν, πόλις δὲ πρὸς πόλιν
ἔπτηξε χειμασθεῖσα: τῶν γὰρ ἐν βροτοῖς
οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν διὰ τέλους εὐδαιμονοῦν.

Βᾶθι, τάλαιν’, ἱερῶν δαπέδων ἄπο Περσεφονείας,
βᾶθι καὶ ἀντίασον γονάτων ἔπι χεῖρα βαλοῦσα,
τέκνων τεθνεώτων κομίσαι δέμας, ὦ μελέα ‘γώ,
οὓς ὑπὸ τείχεσι Καδμείοισιν ἀπώλεσα κούρους.

[Ἴώ μοι: λάβετε φέρετε πέμπετε κρίνετε ταλαίνας χέρας γεραιάς.]
Πρός γενειάδος, ὦ φίλος, ὦ δοκιμώτατος Ἑλλάδι,

ἄντομαι ἀμφιπίτνουσα τὸ σὸν γόνυ καὶ χέρα δειλαία:
οἴκτισαι ἀμφὶ τέκνων μ’ †ἱκέταν ἤ τιν’† ἀλάταν
οἰκτρὸν ἰήλεμον οἰκτρὸν ἱεῖσαν.
Μηδ’ ἀτάφους, τέκνον, ἐν χθονὶ Κάδμου χάρματα θηρῶν
παῖδας ἐν ἁλικίᾳ τᾷ σᾷ κατίδῃς, ἱκετεύω.
Βλέψον ἐμῶν βλεφάρων ἔπι δάκρυον, ἃ περὶ σοῖσι

γούνασιν ὧδε πίτνω τέκνοις τάφον ἐξανύσασθαι.

Θησεύς

Μῆτερ, τί κλαίεις λέπτ’ ἐπ’ ὀμμάτων φάρη
βαλοῦσα τῶν σῶν; ἆρα δυστήνους γόους

κλύουσα τῶνδε; κἀμὲ γὰρ διῆλθέ τι.
Ἔπαιρε λευκὸν κρᾶτα, μὴ δακρυρρόει

σεμναῖσι Δηοῦς ἐσχάραις παρημένη.

Αἴθρα

Αἰαῖ.

Θησεύς

Τὰ τούτων οὐχὶ σοὶ στενακτέον.

Αἴθρα

Ὦ τλήμονες γυναῖκες.

Θησεύς

Οὐ σὺ τῶνδ’ ἔφυς.

Αἴθρα

Εἶπω τι, τέκνον, σοί τε καὶ πόλει καλόν;

Θησεύς

Ὡς πολλά γ’ ἐστὶ κἀπὸ θηλειῶν σοφά.

Αἴθρα

Ἀλλ’ εἰς ὄκνον μοι μῦθος ὃν κεύθω φέρει.

Θησεύς

Αἰσχρόν γ’ ἔλεξας, χρήστ’ ἔπη κρύπτειν φίλοις.

Αἴθρα

Οὔτοι σιωπῶσ᾽ εἶτα μέμψομαί ποτε
τὴν νῦν σιωπὴν ὡς ἐσιγήθη κακῶς,
οὐδ᾽ ὡς ἀχρεῖον τὰς γυναῖκας εὖ λέγειν

δείσασ᾽ ἀφήσω τῷ φόβῳ τοὐμὸν καλόν.
Ἐγὼ δέ σ᾽, ὦ παῖ, πρῶτα μὲν τὰ τῶν θεῶν
σκοπεῖν κελεύω μὴ σφαλῇς ἀτιμάσας:
τἄλλ᾽ εὖ φρονῶν γάρ, ἐν μόνῳ τούτῳ ‘σφάλης.
Πρὸς τοῖσδε δ᾽, εἰ μὲν μὴ ἀδικουμένοις ἐχρῆν

τολμηρὸν εἶναι, κάρτ᾽ ἂν εἶχον ἡσύχως:
νῦν δ᾽ ἴσθι σοί τε τοῦθ᾽ ὅσην τιμὴν φέρει,
κἀμοὶ παραινεῖν οὐ φόβον φέρει, τέκνον,
ἄνδρας βιαίους καὶ κατείργοντας νεκροὺς
τάφου τε μοίρας καὶ κτερισμάτων λαχεῖν

ἐς τήνδ᾽ ἀνάγκην σῇ καταστῆσαι χερί,
νόμιμά τε πάσης συγχέοντας Ἑλλάδος
παῦσαι: τὸ γάρ τοι συνέχον ἀνθρώπων πόλεις
τοῦτ᾽ ἔσθ᾽, ὅταν τις τοὺς νόμους σῴζῃ καλῶς.
Ἐρεῖ δὲ δή τις ὡς ἀνανδρίᾳ χερῶν,

πόλει παρόν σοι στέφανον εὐκλείας λαβεῖν,
δείσας ἀπέστης, καὶ συὸς μὲν ἀγρίου
ἀγῶνος ἥψω φαῦλον ἀθλήσας πόνον,
οὗ δ᾽ ἐς κράνος βλέψαντα καὶ λόγχης ἀκμὴν
χρῆν ἐκπονῆσαι, δειλὸς ὢν ἐφηυρέθης.

Μὴ δῆτ᾽ ἐμός γ᾽ ὤν, ὦ τέκνον, δράσῃς τάδε.
Ὁρᾷς, ἄβουλος ὡς κεκερτομημένη
τοῖς κερτομοῦσι γοργὸν ὄμμ᾽ ἀναβλέπει
σὴ πατρίς; ἐν γὰρ τοῖς πόνοισιν αὔξεται:
αἱ δ᾽ ἥσυχοι σκοτειναὶ πράσσουσαι πόλεις

σκοτειναὶ καὶ βλέπουσιν εὐλαβούμεναι.
Οὐκ εἶ νεκροῖσι καὶ γυναιξὶν ἀθλίαις
προσωφελήσων, ὦ τέκνον, κεχρημέναις;

ὡς οὔτε ταρβῶ σὺν δίκῃ σ᾽ ὁρμώμενον,
Κάδμου θ᾽ ὁρῶσα λαὸν εὖ πεπραγότα,

ἔτ᾽ αὐτὸν ἄλλα βλήματ᾽ ἐν κύβοις βαλεῖν
πέποιθ᾽: ὁ γὰρ θεὸς πάντ᾽ ἀναστρέφει πάλιν.

Χορός

Ὦ φιλτάτη μοι, τῷδέ τ᾽ εἴρηκας καλῶς
κἀμοί: διπλοῦν δὲ χάρμα γίγνεται τόδε.

Θησεύς

Ἐμοὶ λόγοι μέν, μῆτερ, οἱ λελεγμένοι

ὀρθῶς ἔχουσ᾽ ἐς τόνδε, κἀπεφηνάμην
γνώμην ὑφ᾽ οἵων ἐσφάλη βουλευμάτων:
ὁρῶ δὲ κἀγὼ ταῦθ᾽ ἅπερ με νουθετεῖς,
ὡς τοῖς ἐμοῖσιν οὐχὶ πρόσφορον τρόποις
φεύγειν τὰ δεινά. Πολλὰ γὰρ δράσας καλὰ

ἔθος τόδ᾽ εἰς Ἕλληνας ἐξελεξάμην,
ἀεὶ κολαστὴς τῶν κακῶν καθεστάναι.
Οὔκουν ἀπαυδᾶν δυνατόν ἐστί μοι πόνους.
Τί γάρ μ᾽ ἐροῦσιν οἵ γε δυσμενεῖς βροτῶν,
ὅθ᾽ ἡ τεκοῦσα χὑπερορρωδοῦσ᾽ ἐμοῦ

πρώτη κελεύεις τόνδ᾽ ὑποστῆναι πόνον;
δράσω τάδ᾽: εἶμι καὶ νεκροὺς ἐκλύσομαι
λόγοισι πείθων: εἰ δὲ μή, βίᾳ δορὸς
ἤδη τόδ᾽ ἔσται κοὐχὶ σὺν φθόνῳ θεῶν.
Δόξαι δὲ χρῄζω καὶ πόλει πάσῃ τόδε.

Δόξει δ᾽ ἐμοῦ θέλοντος: ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου
προσδοὺς ἔχοιμ᾽ ἂν δῆμον εὐμενέστερον.
Καὶ γὰρ κατέστησ᾽ αὐτὸν ἐς μοναρχίαν
ἐλευθερώσας τήνδ᾽ ἰσόψηφον πόλιν.
Λαβὼν δ᾽ Ἄδραστον δεῖγμα τῶν ἐμῶν λόγων

ἐς πλῆθος ἀστῶν εἶμι: καὶ πείσας τάδε,
λεκτοὺς ἀθροίσας δεῦρ’ Ἀθηναίων κόρους
ἥξω: παρ’ ὅπλοις θ’ ἥμενος πέμψω λόγους
Κρέοντι νεκρῶν σώματ’ ἐξαιτούμενος.
Ἀλλ’, ὦ γεραιαί, σέμν’ ἀφαιρεῖτε στέφη

μητρός, πρὸς οἴκους ὥς νιν Αἰγέως ἄγω,
φίλην προσάψας χεῖρα: τοῖς τεκοῦσι γὰρ
δύστηνος ὅστις μὴ ἀντιδουλεύει τέκνων —
κάλλιστον ἔρανον: δοὺς γὰρ ἀντιλάζυται
παίδων παρ’ αὐτοῦ τοιάδ’ ἂν τοκεῦσι δῷ.

Χορός

Ἱππόβοτον Ἄργος, ὦ πάτριον ἐμὸν πέδον,
ἐκλύετε τάδ’, ἐκλύετε
ἄνακτος ὅσια περὶ θεοὺς
καὶ μεγάλα Πελασγίᾳ
καὶ κατ’ Ἄργος.

Εἰ γὰρ ἐπὶ τέρμα καὶ τὸ πλέον ἐμῶν κακῶν
ἱκόμενος ἔτι ματέρος
ἄγαλμα φόνιον ἐξέλοι,
γᾶν δὲ φίλιον Ἰνάχου
θεῖτ’ ὀνήσας.

Καλὸν δ’ ἄγαλμα πόλεσιν εὐσεβὴς πόνος
χάριν τ’ ἔχει τὰν ἐς αἰεί.
Τί μοι πόλις κρανεῖ ποτ’; ἆρα φίλιά μοι
τεμεῖ, καὶ τέκνοις ταφὰς ληψόμεσθα;

Ἄμυνε ματρί, πόλις, ἄμυνε, Παλλάδος,
νόμους βροτῶν μὴ μιαίνειν.
Σύ τοι σέβεις δίκαν, τὸ δ’ ἧσσον ἀδικίᾳ
νέμεις, δυστυχῆ τ’ ἀεὶ πάντα ῥύῃ.

Θησεύς

Τέχνην μὲν αἰεὶ τήνδ’ ἔχων ὑπηρετεῖς
πόλει τε κἀμοί, διαφέρων κηρύγματα:
ἐλθὼν δ’ ὑπέρ τ’ Ἀσωπὸν Ἰσμηνοῦ θ’ ὕδωρ
σεμνῷ τυράννῳ φράζε Καδμείων τάδε:
Θησεύς σ’ ἀπαιτεῖ πρὸς χάριν θάψαι νεκρούς,
συγγείτον’ οἰκῶν γαῖαν, ἀξιῶν τυχεῖν,
φίλον τε θέσθαι πάντ’ Ἐρεχθειδῶν λεών.
Κἂν μὲν θέλωσιν, αἰνέσας παλίσσυτος
στεῖχ’: ἢν δ’ ἀπιστῶσ’, οἵδε δεύτεροι λόγοι:

Κῶμον δέχεσθαι τὸν ἐμὸν ἀσπιδηφόρον.
Στρατὸς δὲ θάσσει κἀξετάζεται παρὼν
Καλλίχορον ἀμφὶ σεμνὸν εὐτρεπὴς ὅδε.
Καὶ μὴν ἑκοῦσά γ’ ἀσμένη τ’ ἐδέξατο
πόλις πόνον τόνδ’, ὡς θέλοντά μ’ ᾔσθετο.

Ἔα: λόγων τίς ἐμποδὼν ὅδ’ ἔρχεται;
Καδμεῖος, ὡς ἔοικεν οὐ σάφ’ εἰδότι,
κῆρυξ. Ἐπίσχες, ἤν σ’ ἀπαλλάξῃ πόνου
μολὼν ὕπαντα τοῖς ἐμοῖς βουλεύμασιν

Κῆρυξ

Τίς γῆς τύραννος; πρὸς τίν’ ἀγγεῖλαί με χρὴ

λόγους Κρέοντος, ὃς κρατεῖ Κάδμου χθονὸς
Ἐτεοκλέους θανόντος ἀμφ’ ἑπταστόμους
πύλας ἀδελφῇ χειρὶ Πολυνείκους ὕπο;

Θησεύς

Πρῶτον μὲν ἦρξω τοῦ λόγου ψευδῶς, ξένε,
ζητῶν τύραννον ἐνθάδ’: οὐ γὰρ ἄρχεται

ἑνὸς πρὸς ἀνδρός, ἀλλ’ ἐλευθέρα πόλις.
Δῆμος δ’ ἀνάσσει διαδοχαῖσιν ἐν μέρει
ἐνιαυσίαισιν, οὐχὶ τῷ πλούτῳ διδοὺς
τὸ πλεῖστον, ἀλλὰ χὠ πένης ἔχων ἴσον.

Κῆρυξ

Ἓν μὲν τόδ’ ἡμῖν ὥσπερ ἐν πεσσοῖς δίδως

κρεῖσσον: πόλις γὰρ ἧς ἐγὼ πάρειμ’ ἄπο
ἑνὸς πρὸς ἀνδρός, οὐκ ὄχλῳ κρατύνεται:
οὐδ’ ἔστιν αὐτὴν ὅστις ἐκχαυνῶν λόγοις
πρὸς κέρδος ἴδιον ἄλλοτ’ ἄλλοσε στρέφει,
τὸ δ’ αὐτίχ’ ἡδὺς καὶ διδοὺς πολλὴν χάριν,

ἐσαῦθις ἔβλαψ’, εἶτα διαβολαῖς νέαις
κλέψας τὰ πρόσθε σφάλματ’ ἐξέδυ δίκης.
Ἄλλως τε πῶς ἂν μὴ διορθεύων λόγους
ὀρθῶς δύναιτ’ ἂν δῆμος εὐθύνειν πόλιν;
ὁ γὰρ χρόνος μάθησιν ἀντὶ τοῦ τάχους

κρείσσω δίδωσι. Γαπόνος δ’ ἀνὴρ πένης,
εἰ καὶ γένοιτο μὴ ἀμαθής, ἔργων ὕπο
οὐκ ἂν δύναιτο πρὸς τὰ κοίν’ ἀποβλέπειν.
Ἦ δὴ νοσῶδες τοῦτο τοῖς ἀμείνοσιν,
ὅταν πονηρὸς ἀξίωμ’ ἀνὴρ ἔχῃ

γλώσσῃ κατασχὼν δῆμον, οὐδὲν ὢν τὸ πρίν.

Θησεύς

Κομψός γ’ ὁ κῆρυξ καὶ παρεργάτης λόγων.
Ἐπεὶ δ’ ἀγῶνα καὶ σὺ τόνδ’ ἠγωνίσω,
ἄκου’: ἄμιλλαν γὰρ σὺ προύθηκας λόγων.
Οὐδὲν τυράννου δυσμενέστερον πόλει,

ὅπου τὸ μὲν πρώτιστον οὐκ εἰσὶν νόμοι
κοινοί, κρατεῖ δ’ εἷς τὸν νόμον κεκτημένος
αὐτὸς παρ’ αὑτῷ: καὶ τόδ’ οὐκέτ’ ἔστ’ ἴσον.
Γεγραμμένων δὲ τῶν νόμων ὅ τ’ ἀσθενὴς
ὁ πλούσιός τε τὴν δίκην ἴσην ἔχει,

ἔστιν δ’ ἐνισπεῖν τοῖσιν ἀσθενεστέροις
τὸν εὐτυχοῦντα ταὔθ’, ὅταν κλύῃ κακῶς,
νικᾷ δ’ ὁ μείων τὸν μέγαν δίκαι’ ἔχων.
Τοὐλεύθερον δ’ ἐκεῖνο: Τίς θέλει πόλει
χρηστόν τι βούλευμ’ ἐς μέσον φέρειν ἔχων;

καὶ ταῦθ’ ὁ χρῄζων λαμπρός ἐσθ’, ὁ μὴ θέλων
σιγᾷ. Τί τούτων ἔστ’ ἰσαίτερον πόλει;
καὶ μὴν ὅπου γε δῆμος αὐθέντης χθονός,
ὑποῦσιν ἀστοῖς ἥδεται νεανίαις:
ἀνὴρ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἐχθρὸν ἡγεῖται τόδε,

καὶ τοὺς ἀρίστους οὕς τ’ ἂν ἡγῆται φρονεῖν
κτείνει, δεδοικὼς τῆς τυραννίδος πέρι.
Πῶς οὖν ἔτ’ ἂν γένοιτ’ ἂν ἰσχυρὰ πόλις,
ὅταν τις ὡς λειμῶνος ἠρινοῦ στάχυν
τόλμας ἀφαιρῇ κἀπολωτίζῃ νέους;

κτᾶσθαι δὲ πλοῦτον καὶ βίον τί δεῖ τέκνοις
ὡς τῷ τυράννῳ πλείον’ ἐκμοχθῇ βίον;
ἢ παρθενεύειν παῖδας ἐν δόμοις καλῶς,
τερπνὰς τυράννοις ἡδονάς, ὅταν θέλῃ,
δάκρυα δ’ ἑτοιμάζουσι; μὴ ζῴην ἔτι,

εἰ τἀμὰ τέκνα πρὸς βίαν νυμφεύσεται.
Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ πρὸς τὰ σὰ ἐξηκόντισα.
Ἥκεις δὲ δὴ τί τῆσδε γῆς κεχρημένος;
κλαίων γ’ ἂν ἦλθες, εἴ σε μὴ ‘†πεμψεν πόλις,
περισσὰ φωνῶν: τὸν γὰρ ἄγγελον χρεὼν
λέξανθ’ ὅσ’ ἂν τάξῃ τις ὡς τάχος πάλιν
χωρεῖν. Τὸ λοιπὸν δ’ εἰς ἐμὴν πόλιν Κρέων
ἧσσον λάλον σου πεμπέτω τιν’ ἄγγελον.

Χορός

Φεῦ φεῦ: κακοῖσιν ὡς ὅταν δαίμων διδῷ
καλῶς, ὑβρίζουσ’ ὡς ἀεὶ πράξοντες εὖ.

Κῆρυξ

Λέγοιμ’ ἂν ἤδη. Τῶν μὲν ἠγωνισμένων
σοὶ μὲν δοκείτω ταῦτ’, ἐμοὶ δὲ τἀντία.
Ἐγὼ δ’ ἀπαυδῶ πᾶς τε Καδμεῖος λεὼς
Ἄδραστον ἐς γῆν τήνδε μὴ παριέναι:
εἰ δ’ ἔστιν ἐν γῇ, πρὶν θεοῦ δῦναι σέλας,

λύσαντα σεμνὰ στεμμάτων μυστήρια
τῆσδ’ ἐξελαύνειν, μηδ’ ἀναιρεῖσθαι νεκροὺς
βίᾳ, προσήκοντ’ οὐδὲν Ἀργείων πόλει.
Κἂν μὲν πίθῃ μοι, κυμάτων ἄτερ πόλιν
σὴν ναυστολήσεις: εἰ δὲ μή, πολὺς κλύδων

ἡμῖν τε καὶ σοὶ συμμάχοις τ’ ἔσται δορός.
Σκέψαι δέ, καὶ μὴ τοῖς ἐμοῖς θυμούμενος
λόγοισιν, ὡς δὴ πόλιν ἐλευθέραν ἔχων,
σφριγῶντ’ ἀμείψῃ μῦθον ἐκ βραχιόνων:
ἐλπὶς γάρ ἐστ’ ἄπιστον, ἢ πολλὰς πόλεις

συνῆψ’, ἄγουσα θυμὸν εἰς ὑπερβολάς.
Ὅταν γὰρ ἔλθῃ πόλεμος ἐς ψῆφον λεώ,
οὐδεὶς ἔθ’ αὑτοῦ θάνατον ἐκλογίζεται,
τὸ δυστυχὲς δὲ τοῦτ’ ἐς ἄλλον ἐκτρέπει:
εἰ δ’ ἦν παρ’ ὄμμα θάνατος ἐν ψήφου φορᾷ,

οὐκ ἄν ποθ’ Ἑλλὰς δοριμανὴς ἀπώλλυτο.
Καίτοι δυοῖν γε πάντες ἄνθρωποι λόγοιν
τὸν κρείσσον’ ἴσμεν, καὶ τὰ χρηστὰ καὶ κακά,
ὅσῳ τε πολέμου κρεῖσσον εἰρήνη βροτοῖς:
ἣ πρῶτα μὲν Μούσαισι προσφιλεστάτη,

Ποιναῖσι δ’ ἐχθρά, τέρπεται δ’ εὐπαιδίᾳ,
χαίρει δὲ πλούτῳ. Ταῦτ’ ἀφέντες οἱ κακοὶ
πολέμους ἀναιρούμεσθα καὶ τὸν ἥσσονα
δουλούμεθ’, ἄνδρες ἄνδρα καὶ πόλις πόλιν.

Σὺ δ’ ἄνδρας ἐχθροὺς καὶ θανόντας ὠφελεῖς,

θάπτων κομίζων θ’ ὕβρις οὓς ἀπώλεσεν;
οὔ τἄρ’ ἔτ’ ὀρθῶς Καπανέως κεραύνιον
δέμας καπνοῦται, κλιμάκων ὀρθοστάτας
ὃς προσβαλὼν πύλῃσιν ὤμοσεν πόλιν
πέρσειν θεοῦ θέλοντος ἤν τε μὴ θέλῃ;

οὐδ’ ἥρπασεν χάρυβδις οἰωνοσκόπον,
τέθριππον ἅρμα περιβαλοῦσα χάσματι,
ἄλλοι τε κεῖνται πρὸς πύλαις λοχαγέται
πέτροις καταξανθέντες ὀστέων ῥαφάς;
ἤ νυν φρονεῖν ἄμεινον ἐξαύχει Διός,

ἢ θεοὺς δικαίως τοὺς κακοὺς ἀπολλύναι.
Φιλεῖν μὲν οὖν χρὴ τοὺς σοφοὺς πρῶτον τέκνα,
ἔπειτα τοκέας πατρίδα θ’, ἣν αὔξειν χρεὼν
καὶ μὴ κατᾶξαι. Σφαλερὸν ἡγεμὼν θρασύς:
νεώς τε ναύτης ἥσυχος, καιρῷ σοφός.

Καὶ τοῦτ’ ἐμοὶ τἀνδρεῖον, ἡ προμηθία.

Χορός
Ἐξαρκέσας ἦν Ζεὺς ὁ τιμωρούμενος,
ὑμᾶς δ’ ὑβρίζειν οὐκ ἐχρῆν τοιάνδ’ ὕβριν.

Ἄδραστος

Ὦ παγκάκιστε —

Θησεύς

Σῖγ’, Ἄδραστ’, ἔχε στόμα,
καὶ μὴ ‘πίπροσθεν τῶν ἐμῶν τοὺς σοὺς λόγους

θῇς: οὐ γὰρ ἥκει πρὸς σὲ κηρύσσων ὅδε,
ἀλλ’ ὡς ἔμ’: ἡμᾶς κἀποκρίνασθαι χρεών.
Καὶ πρῶτα μέν σε πρὸς τὰ πρῶτ’ ἀμείψομαι.
Οὐκ οἶδ’ ἐγὼ Κρέοντα δεσπόζοντ’ ἐμοῦ
οὐδὲ σθένοντα μεῖζον, ὥστ’ ἀναγκάσαι

δρᾶν τὰς Ἀθήνας ταῦτ’: ἄνω γὰρ ἂν ῥέοι
τὰ πράγμαθ’ οὕτως, εἰ ‘πιταξόμεσθα δή.
Πόλεμον δὲ τοῦτον οὐκ ἐγὼ καθίσταμαι,
ὃς οὐδὲ σὺν τοῖσδ’ ἦλθον ἐς Κάδμου χθόνα:
νεκροὺς δὲ τοὺς θανόντας, οὐ βλάπτων πόλιν

οὐδ’ ἀνδροκμῆτας προσφέρων ἀγωνίας,
θάψαι δικαιῶ, τὸν Πανελλήνων νόμον
σῴζων. Τί τούτων ἐστὶν οὐ καλῶς ἔχον;
εἰ γάρ τι καὶ πεπόνθατ’ Ἀργείων ὕπο,
τεθνᾶσιν, ἠμύνασθε πολεμίους καλῶς,

αἰσχρῶς δ’ ἐκείνοις, χἡ δίκη διοίχεται.
Ἐάσατ’ ἤδη γῇ καλυφθῆναι νεκρούς,
ὅθεν δ’ ἕκαστον ἐς τὸ φῶς ἀφίκετο,
ἐνταῦθ’ ἀπελθεῖν, πνεῦμα μὲν πρὸς αἰθέρα,
τὸ σῶμα δ’ ἐς γῆν: οὔτι γὰρ κεκτήμεθα

ἡμέτερον αὐτὸ πλὴν ἐνοικῆσαι βίον,
κἄπειτα τὴν θρέψασαν αὐτὸ δεῖ λαβεῖν.
Δοκεῖς κακουργεῖν Ἄργος οὐ θάπτων νεκρούς;
ἥκιστα: πάσης Ἑλλάδος κοινὸν τόδε,
εἰ τοὺς θανόντας νοσφίσας ὧν χρῆν λαχεῖν

ἀτάφους τις ἕξει: δειλίαν γὰρ ἐσφέρει
τοῖς ἀλκίμοισιν οὗτος ἢν τεθῇ νόμος.
Κἀμοὶ μὲν ἦλθες δείν’ ἀπειλήσων ἔπη,
νεκροὺς δὲ ταρβεῖτ’, εἰ κρυβήσονται χθονί;
τί μὴ γένηται; μὴ κατασκάψωσι γῆν
ταφέντες ὑμῶν; ἢ τέκν’ ἐν μυχῷ χθονὸς
φύσωσιν, ἐξ ὧν εἶσί τις τιμωρία;
σκαιόν γε τἀνάλωμα τῆς γλώσσης τόδε,
φόβους πονηροὺς καὶ κενοὺς δεδοικέναι.

Ἀλλ’, ὦ μάταιοι, γνῶτε τἀνθρώπων κακά:

παλαίσμαθ’ ἡμῶν ὁ βίος: εὐτυχοῦσι δὲ
οἳ μὲν τάχ’, οἳ δ’ ἐσαῦθις, οἳ δ’ ἤδη βροτῶν,

τρυφᾷ δ’ ὁ δαίμων: πρός τε γὰρ τοῦ δυστυχοῦς,
ὡς εὐτυχήσῃ, τίμιος γεραίρεται,
ὅ τ’ ὄλβιός νιν πνεῦμα δειμαίνων λιπεῖν

ὑψηλὸν αἴρει. Γνόντας οὖν χρεὼν τάδε
ἀδικουμένους τε μέτρια μὴ θυμῷ φέρειν
ἀδικεῖν τε τοιαῦθ’ οἷα μὴ βλάψαι πόλιν.
Πῶς οὖν ἂν εἴη; τοὺς ὀλωλότας νεκροὺς
θάψαι δὸς ἡμῖν τοῖς θέλουσιν εὐσεβεῖν.

Ἦ δῆλα τἀνθένδ’: εἶμι καὶ θάψω βίᾳ.
Οὐ γάρ ποτ’ εἰς Ἕλληνας ἐξοισθήσεται
ὡς εἰς ἔμ’ ἐλθὼν καὶ πόλιν Πανδίονος
νόμος παλαιὸς δαιμόνων διεφθάρη.

Χορός

Θάρσει: τὸ γάρ τοι τῆς Δίκης σῴζων φάος
πολλοὺς ὑπεκφύγοις ἂν ἀνθρώπων ψόγους.

Κῆρυξ

Βούλῃ συνάψω μῦθον ἐν βραχεῖ †σέθεν†;

Θησεύς

Λέγ’, εἴ τι βούλῃ: καὶ γὰρ οὐ σιγηλὸς εἶ.

Κῆρυξ

Οὐκ ἄν ποτ’ ἐκ γῆς παῖδας Ἀργείων λάβοις.

Θησεύς

Κἀμοῦ νυν ἀντάκουσον, εἰ βούλῃ, πάλιν.

Κῆρυξ

Κλύοιμ’ ἄν: οὐ γὰρ ἀλλὰ δεῖ δοῦναι μέρος.

Θησεύς

Θάψω νεκροὺς γῆς ἐξελὼν Ἀσωπίας.

Κῆρυξ

Ἐν ἀσπίσιν σοι πρῶτα κινδυνευτέον.

Θησεύς

Πολλοὺς ἔτλην δὴ †χἀτέρους ἄλλους πόνους†.

Κῆρυξ

Ἦ πᾶσιν οὖν ἔφυσεν ἐξαρκεῖν πατήρ;

Θησεύς

Ὅσοι γ’ ὑβρισταί: χρηστὰ δ’ οὐ κολάζομεν.

Κῆρυξ

Πράσσειν σὺ πόλλ’ εἴωθας ἥ τε σὴ πόλις.

Θησεύς

Τοιγὰρ πονοῦσα πολλὰ πόλλ’ εὐδαιμονεῖ.

Κῆρυξ

Ἔλθ’, ὥς σε λόγχη σπαρτὸς ἐν πόλει λάβῃ.

Θησεύς

Τίς δ’ ἐκ δράκοντος θοῦρος ἂν γένοιτ’ Ἄρης;

Κῆρυξ

Γνώσῃ σὺ πάσχων: νῦν δ’ ἔτ’ εἶ νεανίας.

Θησεύς

Οὔτοι μ’ ἐπαρεῖς ὥστε θυμῶσαι φρένας
τοῖς σοῖσι κόμποις: ἀλλ’ ἀποστέλλου χθονός,
Λόγους ματαίους οὕσπερ ἠνέγκω λαβών.
περαίνομεν γὰρ οὐδέν.
Ὁρμᾶσθαι χρεὼν

πάντ’ ἄνδρ’ ὁπλίτην ἁρμάτων τ’ ἐπεμβάτην,
μοναμπύκων τε φάλαρα κινεῖσθαι στόμα
ἀφρῷ καταστάζοντα Καδμείαν χθόνα.
Χωρήσομαι γὰρ ἑπτὰ πρὸς Κάδμου πύλας

αὐτὸς σίδηρον ὀξὺν ἐν χεροῖν ἔχων

αὐτός τε κῆρυξ. Σοὶ δὲ προστάσσω μένειν,

Ἄδραστε, κἀμοὶ μὴ ἀναμίγνυσθαι τύχας
τὰς σάς. Ἐγὼ γὰρ δαίμονος τοὐμοῦ μέτα
στρατηλατήσω καινὸς ἐν καινῷ δορί.
Ἓν δεῖ μόνον μοι: τοὺς θεοὺς ἔχειν, ὅσοι

Δίκην σέβονται: ταῦτα γὰρ ξυνόνθ’ ὁμοῦ
νίκην δίδωσιν. Ἀρετὴ δ’ οὐδὲν λέγει
βροτοῖσιν, ἢ μὴ τὸν θεὸν χρῄζοντ’ ἔχῃ.

Χορός

— Ὦ μέλεαι μελέων ματέρες λοχαγῶν,
ὥς μοι ὑφ’ ἅπατι χλωρὸν δεῖμα θάσσει —

— τίν’ αὐδὰν τάνδε προσφέρεις νέαν;
— στράτευμα πᾷ Παλλάδος κριθήσεται;
— διὰ δορὸς εἶπας, ἢ λόγων ξυναλλαγαῖς;
— γένοιτ’ ἂν κέρδος: εἰ δ’ ἀρείφατοι
φόνοι μάχαι στερνοτυπεῖς τ’ ἀνὰ πτόλιν

κτύποι φανήσονται, τάλαι-
να, τίνα λόγον, τίν’ ἂν τῶνδ’ αἰτία λάβοιμι

Χορός

— ἀλλὰ τὸν εὐτυχίᾳ λαμπρὸν ἄν τις αἱροῖ
μοῖρα πάλιν: τόδε μοι θράσος ἀμφιβαίνει.

— Δικαίους δαίμονας σύ γ’ ἐννέπεις.
— Τίνες γὰρ ἄλλοι νέμουσι συμφοράς;
— διάφορα πολλὰ θεῶν βροτοῖσιν εἰσορῶ.
— Φόβῳ γὰρ τῷ πάρος διόλλυσαι:
δίκα δίκαν δ’ ἐκάλεσε καὶ φόνος φόνον,

κακῶν δ’ ἀναψυχὰς θεοὶ

βροτοῖς νέμουσι, πάντων τέρμ’ ἔχοντες αὐτοί.

Χορός

— Τὰ καλλίπυργα πεδία πῶς ἱκοίμεθ’ ἄν,
Καλλίχορον θεᾶς ὕδωρ λιποῦσαι —

— ποτανὰν εἴ σέ τις θεῶν κτίσαι.
— Διπόταμον ἵνα πόλιν μόλω.
— Εἰδείης ἂν φίλων εἰδείης ἂν τύχας.
— Τίς ποτ’ αἶσα, τίς ἄρα πότμος
ἐπιμένει τὸν ἄλκιμον

τᾶσδε γᾶς ἄνακτα;

Χορός

— Κεκλημένους μὲν ἀνακαλούμεθ’ αὖ θεούς:
— ἀλλὰ φόβων πίστις ἅδε πρώτα.
— Ἰὼ Ζεῦ, τᾶς παλαιομάτορος
παιδογόνε πόριος Ἰνάχου.

— Πόλει μοι ξύμμαχος γενοῦ τᾷδ’ εὐμενής.
— Τὸ σὸν ἄγαλμα, τὸ σὸν ἵδρυμα
πόλεος, ἐκκομίζομαι
πρὸς πυρὰν ὑβρισθέν.

Ἄγγελος

Γυναῖκες, ἥκω πόλλ’ ἔχων λέγειν φίλα,

αὐτός τε σωθείς: ἠρέθην γὰρ ἐν μάχῃ,
ἣν οἱ θανόντων ἑπτὰ δεσποτῶν λόχοι
ἠγωνίσαντο ῥεῦμα Διρκαῖον πάρα:
νίκην τε Θησέως ἀγγελῶν. Λόγου δέ σε
μακροῦ ἀποπαύσω: Καπανέως γὰρ ἦ λάτρις,
ὃν Ζεὺς κεραυνῷ πυρπόλῳ καταιθαλοῖ.

Χορός

Ὦ φίλτατ’, εὖ μὲν νόστον ἀγγέλλεις σέθεν
τήν τ’ ἀμφὶ Θησέως βάξιν: εἰ δὲ καὶ στρατὸς
σῶς ἐστ’ Ἀθηνῶν, πάντ’ ἂν ἀγγέλλοις φίλα.

Ἄγγελος

Σῶς, καὶ πέπραγεν ὡς Ἄδραστος ὤφελεν

πρᾶξαι ξὺν Ἀργείοισιν, οὓς ἀπ’ Ἰνάχου
στείλας ἐπεστράτευσε Καδμείων πόλιν.

Χορός

Πῶς γὰρ τροπαῖα Ζηνὸς Αἰγέως τόκος
ἔστησεν οἵ τε συμμετασχόντες δορός;
λέξον: παρὼν γὰρ οὐ παρόντας εὐφρανεῖς.

Ἄγγελος

Λαμπρὰ μὲν ἀκτὶς ἡλίου, κανὼν σαφής,
ἔβαλλε γαῖαν: ἀμφὶ δ’ Ἠλέκτρας πύλας
ἔστην θεατὴς πύργον εὐαγῆ λαβών.
Ὁρῶ δὲ φῦλα τρία τριῶν στρατευμάτων:
τευχεσφόρον μὲν λαὸν ἐκτείνοντ’ ἄνω

Ἰσμήνιον πρὸς ὄχθον, ὡς μὲν ἦν λόγος,
αὐτόν τ’ ἄνακτα, παῖδα κλεινὸν Αἰγέως,
καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτῷ, δεξιὸν τεταγμένους
κέρας, παλαιᾶς Κεκροπίας οἰκήτορας,

ἴσους ἀριθμόν: ἁρμάτων δ’ ὀχήματα

αὐτόν τε Πάραλον ἐστολισμένον δορὶ

κρήνην παρ’ αὐτὴν Ἄρεος: ἱππότην δ’ ὄχλον
πρὸς κρασπέδοισι στρατοπέδου τεταγμένον.

Κάδμου δὲ λαὸς ἦστο πρόσθε τειχέων,

νεκροὺς ὄπισθεν θέμενος, ὧν ἔκειτ’ ἀγών,

ἔνερθε σεμνῶν μνημάτων Ἀμφίονος.

Ἱππεῦσι δ’ ἱππῆς ἦσαν ἀνθωπλισμένοι
τετραόροισί τ’ ἀντί’ ἄρμαθ’ ἅρμασιν.
Κῆρυξ δὲ Θησέως εἶπεν ἐς πάντας τάδε:
Σιγᾶτε, λαοί: σῖγα, Καδμείων στίχες,

ἀκούσαθ’: ἡμεῖς ἥκομεν νεκροὺς μέτα,
θάψαι θέλοντες, τὸν Πανελλήνων νόμον
σῴζοντες, οὐδὲν δεόμενοι τεῖναι φόνον.

Κοὐδὲν Κρέων τοῖσδ’ ἀντεκήρυξεν λόγοις,
ἀλλ’ ἦστ’ ἐφ’ ὅπλοις σῖγα. Ποιμένες δ’ ὄχων

τετραόρων κατῆρχον ἐντεῦθεν μάχης:
πέραν δὲ διελάσαντες ἀλλήλων ὄχους,
παραιβάτας ἔστησαν ἐς τάξιν δορός.

Χοῖ μὲν σιδήρῳ διεμάχονθ’, οἳ δ’ ἔστρεφον
πώλους ἐς ἀλκὴν αὖθις ἐς παραιβάτας.

Ἰδὼν δὲ Φόρβας, ὃς μοναμπύκων ἄναξ
ἦν τοῖς Ἐρεχθείδαισιν, ἁρμάτων ὄχλον,
οἵ τ’ αὖ τὸ Κάδμου διεφύλασσον ἱππικόν,
συνῆψαν ἀλκὴν κἀκράτουν ἡσσῶντό τε.
Λεύσσων δὲ ταῦτα κοὐ κλύων — ἐκεῖ γὰρ ἦ

ἔνθ’ ἅρματ’ ἠγωνίζεθ’ οἵ τ’ ἐπεμβάται —
τἀκεῖ παρόντα πολλὰ πήματ’, οὐκ ἔχω
τί πρῶτον εἴπω, πότερα τὴν ἐς οὐρανὸν
κόνιν προσαντέλλουσαν, ὡς πολλὴ παρῆν,
ἢ τοὺς ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω φορουμένους

ἱμᾶσιν, αἵματός τε φοινίου ῥοάς,
τῶν μὲν πιτνόντων, τῶν δὲ θραυσθέντων δίφρων
ἐς κρᾶτα πρὸς γῆν ἐκκυβιστώντων βίᾳ
πρὸς ἁρμάτων τ’ ἀγαῖσι λειπόντων βίον;
νικῶντα δ’ ἵπποις ὡς ὑπείδετο στρατὸν

Κρέων τὸν ἐνθένδ’, ἰτέαν λαβὼν χερὶ
χωρεῖ, πρὶν ἐλθεῖν ξυμμάχοις δυσθυμίαν.

Καὶ συμπατάξαντες μέσον πάντα στρατὸν

ἔκτεινον ἐκτείνοντο, καὶ παρηγγύων
κελευσμὸν ἀλλήλοισι σὺν πολλῇ βοῇ:
Θεῖν’: ἀντέρειδε τοῖς Ἐρεχθείδαις δόρυ.

Καὶ μὴν τὰ Θησέως γ’ οὐκ ὄκνῳ διεφθάρη,
ἀλλ’ ἵετ’ εὐθὺς λάμπρ’ ἀναρπάσας ὅπλα:

λόχος δ’ ὀδόντων ὄφεος ἐξηνδρωμένος
δεινὸς παλαιστὴς ἦν: ἔκλινε γὰρ κέρας

τὸ λαιὸν ἡμῶν: δεξιοῦ δ’ ἡσσώμενον
φεύγει τὸ κείνων: ἦν δ’ ἀγὼν ἰσόρροπος.

Κἀν τῷδε τὸν στρατηγὸν αἰνέσαι παρῆν:
οὐ γὰρ τὸ νικῶν τοῦτ’ ἐκέρδαινεν μόνον,
ἀλλ’ ᾤχετ’ ἐς τὸ κάμνον οἰκείου στρατοῦ.

710 Ἔρρηξε δ’ αὐδήν, ὥσθ’ ὑπηχῆσαι χθόνα:
Ὦ παῖδες, εἰ μὴ σχήσετε στερρὸν δόρυ
σπαρτῶν τόδ’ ἀνδρῶν, οἴχεται τὰ Παλλάδος.
Θάρσος δ’ ἐνῶρσε παντὶ Κραναϊ̈δῶν στρατῷ.
Αὐτός θ’ ὅπλισμα τοὐπιδαύριον λαβὼν

715 δεινῆς κορύνης διαφέρων ἐσφενδόνα
ὁμοῦ τραχήλους κἀπικείμενον κάρα,
κυνέας θερίζων κἀποκαυλίζων ξύλῳ.
Μόλις δέ πως ἔτρεψαν ἐς φυγὴν πόδα.
Ἐγὼ δ’ ἀνηλάλαξα κἀνωρχησάμην

720 κἄκρουσα χεῖρας. Οἳ δ’ ἔτεινον ἐς πύλας.
Βοὴ δὲ καὶ κωκυτὸς ἦν ἀνὰ πτόλιν
νέων γερόντων, ἱερά τ’ ἐξεπίμπλασαν
φόβῳ. Παρὸν δὲ τειχέων ἔσω μολεῖν,
Θησεὺς ἐπέσχεν: οὐ γὰρ ὡς πέρσων πόλιν

725 μολεῖν ἔφασκεν, ἀλλ’ ἀπαιτήσων νεκρούς

Τοιόνδε τὸν στρατηγὸν αἱρεῖσθαι χρεών,
ὃς ἔν τε τοῖς δεινοῖσίν ἐστιν ἄλκιμος
μισεῖ θ’ ὑβριστὴν λαόν, ὃς πράσσων καλῶς
ἐς ἄκρα βῆναι κλιμάκων ἐνήλατα

730 ζητῶν ἀπώλεσ’ ὄλβον ᾧ χρῆσθαι παρῆν.

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Χορός

Νῦν τήνδ’ ἄελπτον ἡμέραν ἰδοῦσ’ ἐγὼ
θεοὺς νομίζω, καὶ δοκῶ τῆς συμφορᾶς
ἔχειν ἔλασσον, τῶνδε τεισάντων δίκην.

Ἄδραστος

Ὦ Ζεῦ, τί δῆτα τοὺς ταλαιπώρους βροτοὺς

φρονεῖν λέγουσι; σοῦ γὰρ ἐξηρτήμεθα
δρῶμέν τε τοιαῦθ’ ἂν σὺ τυγχάνῃς θέλων.
Ἡμῖν γὰρ ἦν τό τ’ Ἄργος οὐχ ὑποστατόν,
αὐτοί τε πολλοὶ καὶ νέοι βραχίοσιν:
Ἐτεοκλέους τε σύμβασιν ποιουμένου,

μέτρια θέλοντος, οὐκ ἐχρῄζομεν λαβεῖν,
κἄπειτ’ ἀπωλόμεσθα. Ὁ δ’ αὖ τότ’ εὐτυχής,
λαβὼν πένης ὡς ἀρτίπλουτα χρήματα,
ὕβριζ’, ὑβρίζων τ’ αὖθις ἀνταπώλετο
Κάδμου κακόφρων λαός. Ὦ καιροῦ πέρα

τὸ τόξον ἐντείνοντες: ὦ κενοὶ βροτῶν,
καὶ πρὸς δίκης γε πολλὰ πάσχοντες κακά,
φίλοις μὲν οὐ πείθεσθε, τοῖς δὲ πράγμασιν:
πόλεις τ’, ἔχουσαι διὰ λόγου κάμψαι κακά,
φόνῳ καθαιρεῖσθ’, οὐ λόγῳ, τὰ πράγματα.

Ἀτὰρ τί ταῦτα; Κεῖνο βούλομαι μαθεῖν,
πῶς ἐξεσώθης: εἶτα τἄλλ’ ἐρήσομαι.

Ἄγγελος

Ἐπεὶ ταραγμὸς πόλιν ἐκίνησεν δορί,
πύλας διῆλθον, ᾗπερ εἰσῄει στρατός.

Ἄδραστος

Ὧν δ’ οὕνεχ’ ἁγὼν ἦν, νεκροὺς κομίζετε;

Ἄγγελος

ὅσοι γε κλεινοῖς ἕπτ’ ἐφέστασαν δόμοις.

Ἄδραστος

Πῶς φῄς; ὁ δ’ ἄλλος ποῦ κεκμηκότων ὄχλος;

Ἄγγελος

Τάφῳ δέδονται πρὸς Κιθαιρῶνος πτυχαῖς.

Ἄδραστος

Τοὐκεῖθεν ἢ τοὐνθένδε; τίς δ’ ἔθαψέ νιν;

Ἄγγελος

Θησεύς, σκιώδης ἔνθ’ Ἐλευθερὶς πέτρα.

Ἄδραστος

760 Οὗς δ’ οὐκ ἔθαψε ποῦ νεκροὺς ἥκεις λιπών;

Ἄγγελος

Ἐγγύς: πέλας γὰρ πᾶν ὅ τι σπουδάζεται.

Ἄδραστος

Ἦ που πικρῶς νιν θέραπες ἦγον ἐκ φόνου;

Ἄγγελος

Οὐδεὶς ἐπέστη τῷδε δοῦλος ὢν πόνῳ.

Ἄδραστος
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* >

Ἄγγελος

Φαίης ἄν, εἰ παρῆσθ’ ὅτ’ ἠγάπα νεκρούς.

Ἄδραστος

Ἔνιψεν αὐτὸς τῶν ταλαιπώρων σφαγάς;

Ἄγγελος

Κἄστρωσέ γ’ εὐνὰς κἀκάλυψε σώματα.

Ἄδραστος

Δεινὸν μὲν ἦν βάσταγμα κᾀσχύνην ἔχον.

Ἄγγελος

Τί δ’ αἰσχρὸν ἀνθρώποισι τἀλλήλων κακά;

Ἄδραστος

Οἴμοι: πόσῳ σφιν συνθανεῖν ἂν ἤθελον.

Ἄγγελος

Ἄκραντ’ ὀδύρῃ ταῖσδέ τ’ ἐξάγεις δάκρυ.

Ἄδραστος

Δοκῶ μέν, αὐταί γ’ εἰσὶν αἱ διδάσκαλοι.
ἀλλ’ εἶέν: αἴρω χεῖρ’ ἀπαντήσας νεκροῖς
Ἅιδου τε μολπὰς ἐκχέω δακρυρρόους,
φίλους προσαυδῶν, ὧν λελειμμένος τάλας

ἔρημα κλαίω: τοῦτο γὰρ μόνον βροτοῖς
οὐκ ἔστι τἀνάλωμ’ ἀναλωθὲν λαβεῖν,
ψυχὴν βροτείαν: χρημάτων δ’ εἰσὶν πόροι.

Χορός

Τὰ μὲν εὖ, τὰ δὲ δυστυχῆ.
πόλει μὲν εὐδοξία

καὶ στρατηλάταις δορὸς
διπλάζεται τιμά:
ἐμοὶ δὲ παίδων μὲν εἰσιδεῖν μέλη
πικρόν, καλὸν θέαμα δ', εἴπερ ὄψομαι,
τὰν ἄελπτον ἀμέραν

ἰδοῦσα, πάντων μέγιστον ἄλγος.Χορός
ἄγαμόν μ' ἔτι δεῦρ' ἀεὶ
Χρόνος παλαιὸς πατὴρ
ὤφελ' ἀμερᾶν κτίσαι.
τί γάρ μ' ἔδει παίδων;

Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἤλπιζον ἂν πεπονθέναι
πάθος περισσόν, εἰ γάμων ἀπεζύγην,
νῦν δ' ὁρῶ σαφέστατον
κακόν, τέκνων φιλτάτων στερεῖσα.

Χορός

ἀλλὰ τάδ' ἤδη σώματα λεύσσω

τῶν οἰχομένων παίδων: μελέα
πῶς ἂν ὀλοίμην σὺν τοῖσδε τέκνοις
κοινὸν ἐς Ἅιδην καταβᾶσα;

Ἄδραστος

Στεναγμόν, ὦ ματέρες,
τῶν κατὰ χθονὸς νεκρῶν

ἀύσατ' ἀπύσατ' ἀντίφων' ἐμῶν
στεναγμάτων κλύουσαι.

Χορός

Ὦ παῖδες, ὦ πικρὸν φίλων
προσηγόρημα ματέρων,
προσαυδῶ σε τὸν θανόντα.

Ἄδραστος

ᾼδὼ ἰώ.

Χορός

Τῶν γ᾽ ἐμῶν κακῶν ἐγώ.

Ἄδραστος

Αἰαῖ.

Χορός

. . . . .

Ἄδραστος

Ἐπάθομεν ὤ . . . .

Χορός

Τὰ κύντατ᾽ ἄλγη κακῶν.

Ἄδραστος

Ὦ πόλις Ἀργεία, τὸν ἐμὸν πότμον οὐκ ἐσορᾶτε;

Χορός

Ὁρῶσι κἀμὲ τὰν τάλαι-

ναν, τέκνων ἄπαιδα.

Ἄδραστος

Προσάγετε δυσπότμων
σώμαθ᾽ αἱματοσταγῆ,

σφαγέντας οὐκ ἄξι᾽ οὐδ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἀξίων,
ἐν οἷς ἀγὼν ἐκράνθη.

Χορός

Δόθ᾽, ὡς περιπτυχαῖσι δὴ
χέρας προσαρμόσασ᾽ ἐμοῖς
ἐν ἀγκῶσι τέκνα θῶμαι.

Ἄδραστος

Ἔχεις ἔχεις.

Χορός

Πημάτων γ᾽ ἅλις βάρος.

Ἄδραστος

Αἰαῖ.

Χορός

Τοῖς τεκοῦσι δ᾽ οὐ λέγεις;

Ἄδραστος

Ἀίετέ μου.

Χορός

Στένεις ἐπ᾽ ἀμφοῖν ἄχη.

Ἄδραστος

Εἴθε με Καδμείων ἔναρον στίχες ἐν κονίαισιν.

Χορός

Ἐμὸν δὲ μήποτ’ ἐζύγη
δέμας ἐς ἀνδρὸς εὐνάν.

Ἄδραστος

Ἴδετε κακῶν πέλαγος, ὦ

ματέρες τάλαιναι τέκνων.

Χορός

Κατὰ μὲν ὄνυξιν ἠλοκίσμεθ’, ἀμφὶ δὲ
σποδὸν κάρᾳ κεχύμεθα.

Ἄδραστος

Ἰὼ ἰώ μοί μοι:
κατά με πέδον γᾶς ἕλοι,

διὰ δὲ θύελλα σπάσαι,
πυρός τε φλογμὸς ὁ Διὸς ἐν κάρᾳ πέσοι.

Χορός

Πικροὺς ἐσεῖδες γάμους,
πικρὰν δὲ Φοίβου φάτιν:

ἔρημά σ’ ἁ πολύστονος Οἰδιπόδα
δώματα λιποῦσ’ ἦλθ’ Ἐρινύς.

Θησεύς

Μέλλων σ’ ἐρωτᾶν, ἡνίκ’ ἐξήντλεις στρατῷ
γόους, ἀφήσω: τοὺς ἐκεῖ μὲν ἐκλιπὼν

εἴασα μύθους, νῦν δ’ Ἄδραστον εἰσορῶ:
πόθεν ποθ’ οἵδε διαπρεπεῖς εὐψυχίᾳ
θνητῶν ἔφυσαν; εἰπέ γ’ ὡς σοφώτερος

νέοισιν ἀστῶν τῶνδ’: ἐπιστήμων γὰρ εἶ.
Εἶδον γὰρ αὐτῶν κρείσσον’ ἢ λέξαι λόγῳ

τολμήμαθ’, οἷς ἤλπιζον αἱρήσειν πόλιν.
Ἓν δ’ οὐκ ἐρήσομαί σε, μὴ γέλωτ’ ὄφλω,
ὅτῳ ξυνέστη τῶνδ’ ἕκαστος ἐν μάχῃ
ἢ τραῦμα λόγχης πολεμίων ἐδέξατο.
Κενοὶ γὰρ οὗτοι τῶν τ’ ἀκουόντων λόγοι

καὶ τοῦ λέγοντος, ὅστις ἐν μάχῃ βεβὼς
λόγχης ἰούσης πρόσθεν ὀμμάτων πυκνῆς
σαφῶς ἀπήγγειλ’ ὅστις ἐστὶν ἀγαθός.
Οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην οὔτ’ ἐρωτῆσαι τάδε
οὔτ’ αὖ πιθέσθαι τοῖσι τολμῶσιν λέγειν:

μόλις γὰρ ἄν τις αὐτὰ τἀναγκαῖ’ ὁρᾶν
δύναιτ’ ἂν ἑστὼς πολεμίοις ἐναντίος.

Ἄδραστος

Ἄκουε δή νυν: καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἄκοντί μοι
δίδως ἔπαινον ὧν ἔγωγε βούλομαι
φίλων ἀληθῆ καὶ δίκαι’ εἰπεῖν πέρι.

Ὁρᾷς τὸν ἀβρόν, οὗ βέλος διέπτατο;
Καπανεὺς ὅδ’ ἐστίν: ᾧ βίος μὲν ἦν πολύς,
ἥκιστα δ’ ὅλβῳ γαῦρος ἦν: φρόνημα δὲ
οὐδέν τι μεῖζον εἶχεν ἢ πένης ἀνήρ,
φεύγων τραπέζαις ὅστις ἐξογκοῖτ’ ἄγαν

τἀρκοῦντ’ ἀτίζων: οὐ γὰρ ἐν γαστρὸς βορᾷ
τὸ χρηστὸν εἶναι, μέτρια δ’ ἐξαρκεῖν ἔφη.
Φίλοις τ’ ἀληθὴς ἦν φίλος, παροῦσί τε
καὶ μὴ παροῦσιν: ὧν ἀριθμὸς οὐ πολύς.
Ἀψευδὲς ἦθος, εὐπροσήγορον στόμα,

ἄκραντον οὐδὲν οὔτ’ ἐς οἰκέτας ἔχων
οὔτ’ ἐς πολίτας. Τὸν δὲ δεύτερον λέγω

Ἐτέοκλον, ἄλλην χρηστότητ᾽ ἠσκηκότα:
νεανίας ἦν τῷ βίῳ μὲν ἐνδεής,
πλείστας δὲ τιμὰς ἔσχ᾽ ἐν Ἀργείᾳ χθονί.

Φίλων δὲ χρυσὸν πολλάκις δωρουμένων
οὐκ εἰσεδέξατ᾽ οἶκον ὥστε τοὺς τρόπους
δούλους παρασχεῖν χρημάτων ζευχθεὶς ὕπο.
Τοὺς δ᾽ ἐξαμαρτάνοντας, οὐχὶ τὴν πόλιν
ἤχθαιρ᾽: ἐπεί τοι κοὐδὲν αἰτία πόλις

κακῶς κλύουσα διὰ κυβερνήτην κακόν.

Ὁ δ᾽ αὖ τρίτος τῶνδ᾽ Ἱππομέδων τοιόσδ᾽ ἔφυ:
παῖς ὢν ἐτόλμησ᾽ εὐθὺς οὐ πρὸς ἡδονὰς
Μουσῶν τραπέσθαι πρὸς τὸ μαλθακὸν βίου,
ἀγροὺς δὲ ναίων, σκληρὰ τῇ φύσει διδοὺς

ἔχαιρε πρὸς τἀνδρεῖον, ἔς τ᾽ ἄγρας ἰὼν
ἵπποις τε χαίρων τόξα τ᾽ ἐντείνων χεροῖν,
πόλει παρασχεῖν σῶμα χρήσιμον θέλων.
Ὁ τῆς κυναγοῦ δ᾽ ἄλλος Ἀταλάντης γόνος
[παῖς] Παρθενοπαῖος, εἶδος ἐξοχώτατος,

Ἀρκὰς μὲν ἦν, ἐλθὼν δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ Ἰνάχου ῥοὰς
παιδεύεται κατ᾽ Ἄργος. Ἐκτραφεὶς δ᾽ ἐκεῖ
πρῶτον μέν, ὡς χρὴ τοὺς μετοικοῦντας ξένους,
λυπηρὸς οὐκ ἦν οὐδ᾽ ἐπίφθονος πόλει
οὐδ᾽ ἐξεριστὴς τῶν λόγων, ὅθεν βαρὺς

μάλιστ᾽ ἂν εἴη δημότης τε καὶ ξένος.
Λόχοις δ᾽ ἐνεστὼς ὥσπερ Ἀργεῖος γεγὼς
ἤμυνε χώρᾳ, χὠπότ᾽ εὖ πράσσοι πόλις,
ἔχαιρε, λυπρῶς δ᾽ ἔφερεν, εἴ τι δυστυχοῖ.
Πολλοὺς δ᾽ ἐραστὰς κἀπὸ θηλειῶν ὅσας

ἔχων ἐφρούρει μηδὲν ἐξαμαρτάνειν.
Τυδέως δ᾽ ἔπαινον ἐν βραχεῖ θήσω μέγαν:
[οὐκ ἐν λόγοις ἦν λαμπρός, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν ἀσπίδι

δεινὸς σοφιστής, πολλά τ᾽ ἐξευρεῖν σοφά.]
[Γνώμῃ δ᾽ ἀδελφοῦ Μελεάγρου λελειμμένος,

ἴσον παρέσχεν ὄνομα διὰ τέχνης δορός,
εὑρὼν ἀκριβῆ μουσικὴν ἐν ἀσπίδι:]
φιλότιμον ἦθος πλούσιον, φρόνημα δὲ
ἐν τοῖσιν ἔργοις, οὐχὶ τοῖς λόγοις, ἴσον.
Ἐκ τῶνδε μὴ θαύμαζε τῶν εἰρημένων,

Θησεῦ, πρὸ πύργων τούσδε τολμῆσαι θανεῖν.
Τὸ γὰρ τραφῆναι μὴ κακῶς αἰδῶ φέρει:
αἰσχύνεται δὲ τἀγάθ᾽ ἀσκήσας ἀνὴρ
κακὸς γενέσθαι πᾶς τις. Ἡ δ᾽ εὐανδρία
διδακτός, εἴπερ καὶ βρέφος διδάσκεται

λέγειν ἀκούειν θ᾽ ὧν μάθησιν οὐκ ἔχει.
Ἃ δ᾽ ἂν μάθῃ τις, ταῦτα σῴζεσθαι φιλεῖ
πρὸς γῆρας. Οὕτω παῖδας εὖ παιδεύετε.

Χορός

Ἰὼ τέκνον, δυστυχῆ σ᾽
ἔτρεφον, ἔφερον ὑφ᾽ ἥπατος

πόνους ἐνεγκοῦσ᾽ ἐν ὠδῖσι: καὶ
νῦν Ἅιδας τὸν ἐμὸν
ἔχει μόχθον ἀθλίας,
ἐγὼ δὲ γηροβοσκὸν οὐκ ἔχω, τεκοῦσ᾽
ἃ τάλαινα παῖδα.

Θρησεύς

Καὶ μὴν τὸν Οἰκλέους γε γενναῖον τόκον
θεοὶ ζῶντ᾽ ἀναρπάσαντες ἐς μυχοὺς χθονὸς
αὐτοῖς τεθρίπποις εὐλογοῦσιν ἐμφανῶς:
τὸν Οἰδίπου τε παῖδα, Πολυνείκην λέγω,
ἡμεῖς ἐπαινέσαντες οὐ ψευδοίμεθ᾽ ἄν.

Ξένος γὰρ ἦν μοι πρὶν λιπὼν Κάδμου πόλιν
φυγῇ πρὸς Ἄργος διαβαλεῖν αὐθαίρετος.
Ἀλλ᾽ οἶσθ᾽ ὃ δρᾶσαι βούλομαι τούτων πέρι;

Ἄδραστος

οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἔν, σοῖσι πείθεσθαι λόγοις.

Θησεύς

Τὸν μὲν Διὸς πληγέντα Καπανέα πυρὶ . . .

Ἄδραστος

Ἦ χωρὶς ἱερὸν ὡς νεκρὸν θάψαι θέλεις;

Θησεύς

Ναί: τοὺς δέ γ᾽ ἄλλους πάντας ἐν μιᾷ πυρᾷ.

Ἄδραστος

Ποῦ δῆτα θήσεις μνῆμα τῷδε χωρίσας;

Θησεύς

Αὐτοῦ παρ᾽ οἴκους τούσδε συμπήξας τάφον.

Ἄδραστος

Οὗτος μὲν ἤδη δμωσὶν ἂν μέλοι πόνος.

Θησεύς

ἡμῖν δέ γ᾽ οἵδε: στειχέτω δ᾽ ἄχθη νεκρῶν.

Ἄδραστος

Ἴτ᾽, ὦ τάλαιναι μητέρες, τέκνων πέλας.

Θησεύς

Ἥκιστ’, Ἄδραστε, τοῦτο πρόσφορον λέγεις.

Ἄδραστος

Πῶς; Τὰς τεκούσας οὐ χρεὼν ψαῦσαι τέκνων;

Θησεύς

Ὅλοιντ’ ἰδοῦσαι τούσδ’ ἂν ἠλλοιωμένους.

Ἄδραστος

Πικρὰ γὰρ ὄψις αἷμα κὠτειλαὶ νεκρῶν.

Θησεύς

Τί δῆτα λύπην ταῖσδε προσθεῖναι θέλεις;

Ἄδραστος

Νικᾷς. Μένειν χρὴ τλημόνως: λέγει γὰρ εὖ
Θησεύς: ὅταν δὲ τούσδε προσθῶμεν πυρί,
ὀστᾶ προσάξεσθε. Ὦ ταλαίπωροι βροτῶν,

τί κτᾶσθε λόγχας καὶ κατ’ ἀλλήλων φόνους
τίθεσθε; παύσασθ’, ἀλλὰ λήξαντες πόνων
ἄστη φυλάσσεθ’ ἥσυχοι μεθ’ ἡσύχων.
Σμικρὸν τὸ χρῆμα τοῦ βίου: τοῦτον δὲ χρὴ
ὡς ῥᾷστα καὶ μὴ σὺν πόνοις διεκπερᾶν.

Χορός

Οὐκέτ’ εὔτεκνος, οὐκέτ’ εὔ-
παις, οὐδ’ εὐτυχίας μέτε-
στίν μοι κουροτόκοις ἐν Ἀργείαις:
οὐδ’ Ἄρτεμις λοχία
προσφθέγξαιτ’ ἂν τὰς ἀτέκνους.

Δυσαίων δ’ ὁ βίος,
πλαγκτὰ δ’ ὡσεί τις νεφέλα
πνευμάτων ὑπὸ δυσχίμων ἀίσσω.

Χορός

Ἑπτὰ ματέρες ἑπτὰ κού-
ρους ἐγεινάμεθ’ αἱ ταλαί-

πωροι κλεινοτάτους ἐν Ἀργείοις:
καὶ νῦν ἄπαις ἄτεκνος
γηράσκω δυστανοτάτως,
οὔτ’ ἐν φθιμένοις
οὔτ’ ἐν ζωοῖσιν †ἀριθμουμένη†,

χωρὶς δή τινα τῶνδ’ ἔχουσα μοῖραν.

Χορός

Ὑπολελειμμένα μοι δάκρυα:
μέλεα παιδὸς ἐν οἴκοις
κεῖται μνήματα, πένθιμοι
κουραὶ καὶ στέφανοι κόμας,

ἀοιδαί θ’ ἃς χρυσοκόμας
Ἀπόλλων οὐκ ἐνδέχεται:
γόοισι δ’ ὀρθρευομένα
δάκρυσι νοτερὸν ἀεὶ πέπλων
πρὸς στέρνῳ πτύχα τέγξω.

Χορός

Καὶ μὴν θαλάμας τάσδ’ ἐσορῶ δὴ
Καπανέως ἤδη τύμβον θ’ ἱερὸν
μελάθρων τ’ ἐκτὸς
Θησέως ἀναθήματα νεκροῖς,
κλεινήν τ’ ἄλοχον τοῦ καπφθιμένου

τοῦδε κεραυνῷ πέλας Εὐάδνην,
ἣν Ἶφις ἄναξ παῖδα φυτεύει.
Τί ποτ᾽ αἰθερίαν ἔστηκε πέτραν,
ἢ τῶνδε δόμων ὑπερακρίζει,
τήνδ᾽ ἐμβαίνουσα κέλευθον;

Εὐάδνη

Τί φέγγος, τίν᾽ αἴγλαν
ἐδίφρευε τόθ᾽ ἅλιος
σελάνα τε κατ᾽ αἰθέρα,
†λαμπάδ᾽ ἵν᾽ ὠκυθόαι νύμφαι†,
ἱππεύουσι δι᾽ ὀρφναίας,

ἀνίκα γάμων
τῶν ἐμῶν πόλις Ἄργους
ἀοιδάς, εὐδαιμονίας,
ἐπύργωσε καὶ γαμέτα
χαλκεοτευχοῦς, αἰαῖ, Καπανέως.

Πρός σ᾽ ἔβαν δρομὰς ἐξ ἐμῶν
οἴκων ἐκβακχευσαμένα,
πυρᾶς φῶς τάφον τε
βατεύσουσα τὸν αὐτόν,
ἐς Ἅιδαν καταλύσουσ᾽ ἔμμοχθον

βίοτον αἰῶνός τε πόνους:
ἥδιστος γάρ τοι θάνατος
συνθνῄσκειν θνῄσκουσι φίλοις,
εἰ δαίμων τάδε κραίνοι.

Χορός

Καὶ μὴν ὁρᾷς τήνδ᾽ ἧς ἐφέστηκας πέλας

πυράν, Διὸς θησαυρόν, ἔνθ᾽ ἔνεστι σὸς
πόσις δαμασθεὶς λαμπάσιν κεραυνίοις.

Εὐάδνη

Ὁρῶ δὴ τελευτάν,
ἵν’ ἕστακα: τύχα δέ μοι
ξυνάπτοι ποδός: ἀλλὰ τᾶς

εὐκλεί¨ας χάριν ἔνθεν ὁρ-
μάσω τᾶσδ’ ἀπὸ πέτρας πη-
δήσασα πυρὸς ἔσω,
σῶμά τ’ αἴθοπι φλογμῷ
πόσει συμμείξασα, φίλον
χρῶτα χρωτὶ πέλας θεμένα,
Φερσεφονείας ἥξω θαλάμους,
σὲ τὸν θανόντ’ οὔποτ’ ἐμᾷ
προδοῦσα ψυχᾷ κατὰ γᾶς.

Ἴτω φῶς γάμοι τε:
ἴθ’ αἵτινες εὐναὶ
δικαίων ὑμεναίων ἐν Ἄργει
φανῶσιν τέκνοις: ὅσιος δ’
εὐναῖος γαμέτας

συντηχθεὶς αὔραις ἀδόλοις
γενναίας [ψυχᾶς] ἀλόχοιο.

Χορός

Καὶ μὴν ὅδ’ αὐτὸς σὸς πατὴρ βαίνει πέλας
γεραιὸς Ἶφις ἐς νεωτέρους λόγους,
οὓς οὐ κατειδὼς πρόσθεν ἀλγήσει κλύων.

Ἶφις

Ὦ δυστάλαιναι, δυστάλας δ’ ἐγὼ γέρων,

ἥκω διπλοῦν πένθημ’ ὁμαιμόνων ἔχων,
τὸν μὲν θανόντα παῖδα Καδμείων δορὶ
Ἐτέοκλον ἐς γῆν πατρίδα ναυσθλώσων νεκρόν,

ζητῶν τ’ ἐμὴν παῖδ’, ἢ δόμων ἐξώπιος
βέβηκε πηδήσασα Καπανέως δάμαρ,

θανεῖν ἐρῶσα σὺν πόσει. Χρόνον μὲν οὖν
τὸν πρόσθ’ ἐφρουρεῖτ’ ἐν δόμοις: ἐπεὶ δ’ ἐγὼ
φυλακὰς ἀνῆκα τοῖς παρεστῶσιν κακοῖς,
βέβηκεν. Ἀλλὰ τῇδέ νιν δοξάζομεν
μάλιστ’ ἂν εἶναι: φράζετ’ εἰ κατείδετε.

Εὐάδνη

Τί τάσδ’ ἐρωτᾷς; ἥδ’ ἐγὼ πέτρας ἔπι
ὄρνις τις ὡσεὶ Καπανέως ὑπὲρ πυρᾶς
δύστηνον αἰώρημα κουφίζω, πάτερ.

Ἶφις

Τέκνον, τίς αὔρα; τίς στόλος; τίνος χάριν
δόμων ὑπεκβᾶσ’ ἦλθες ἐς τήνδε χθόνα;

Εὐάδνη

Ὀργὴν λάβοις ἂν τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων
κλύων: ἀκοῦσαι δ’ οὔ σε βούλομαι, πάτερ.

Ἶφις

Τί δ’; Οὐ δίκαιον πατέρα τὸν σὸν εἰδέναι;

Εὐάδνη

Κριτὴς ἂν εἴης οὐ σοφὸς γνώμης ἐμῆς.

Ἶφις

Σκευῇ δὲ τῇδε τοῦ χάριν κοσμεῖς δέμας;

Εὐάδνη

Θέλει τι κλεινὸν οὗτος ὁ στολμός, πάτερ.

Ἶφις

Ὡς οὐκ ἐπ᾽ ἀνδρὶ πένθιμος πρέπεις ὁρᾶν.

Εὐάδνη

Ἐς γάρ τι πρᾶγμα νεοχμὸν ἐσκευάσμεθα.

Ἶφις

Κἄπειτα τύμβῳ καὶ πυρᾷ φαίνῃ πέλας;

Εὐάδνη

Ἐνταῦθα γὰρ δὴ καλλίνικος ἔρχομαι.

Ἶφις

Νικῶσα νίκην τίνα; μαθεῖν χρῄζω σέθεν.

Εὐάδνη

Πάσας γυναῖκας ἃς δέδορκεν ἥλιος.

Ἶφις

Ἔργοις Ἀθάνας ἢ φρενῶν εὐβουλίᾳ;

Εὐάδνη

Ἀρετῇ: πόσει γὰρ συνθανοῦσα κείσομαι.

Ἶφις

Τί φῄς; τί τοῦτ᾽ αἴνιγμα σημαίνεις σαθρόν;

Εὐάδνη

Ἄσσω θανόντος Καπανέως τήνδ᾽ ἐς πυράν.

Ἶφις

Ὦ θύγατερ, οὐ μὴ μῦθον ἐς πολλοὺς ἐρεῖς.

Εὐάδνη

Τοῦτ᾽ αὐτὸ χρῄζω, πάντας Ἀργείους μαθεῖν.

Ἶφις

Ἀλλ᾽ οὐδέ τοί σοι πείσομαι δρώσῃ τάδε.

Εὐάδνη

Ὅμοιον: οὐ γὰρ μὴ κίχῃς μ᾽ ἑλὼν χερί.

καὶ δὴ παρεῖται σῶμα — σοὶ μὲν οὐ φίλον,
ἡμῖν δὲ καὶ τῷ συμπυρουμένῳ πόσει.

Χορός

Ἰώ, γύναι, δεινὸν ἔργον ἐξειργάσω.

Ἶφις

Ἀπωλόμην δύστηνος, Ἀργείων κόραι.

Χορός

Ἔ ἔ, σχέτλια τάδε παθών,

τὸ πάντολμον ἔργον ὄψῃ τάλας.

Ἶφις

Οὐκ ἄν τιν᾽ εὕροιτ᾽ ἄλλον ἀθλιώτερον.

Χορός

Ἰὼ τάλας:
μετέλαχες τύχας Οἰδιπόδα, γέρον,
μέρος καὶ σὺ πόλις ἐμὰ τλάμων.

Ἶφις

οἴμοι: τί δὴ βροτοῖσιν οὐκ ἔστιν τόδε,
νέους δὶς εἶναι καὶ γέροντας αὖ πάλιν;
ἀλλ’ ἐν δόμοις μὲν ἤν τι μὴ καλῶς ἔχῃ,
γνώμαισιν ὑστέραισιν ἐξορθούμεθα,
αἰῶνα δ’ οὐκ ἔξεστιν. Εἰ δ’ ἦμεν νέοι

δὶς καὶ γέροντες, εἴ τις ἐξημάρτανε,
διπλοῦ βίου λαχόντες ἐξωρθούμεθ’ ἄν.
Ἐγὼ γὰρ ἄλλους εἰσορῶν τεκνουμένους
παίδων ἐραστὴς ἦ πόθῳ τ’ ἀπωλλύμην.
†Εἰ δ’ ἐς τόδ’ ἦλθον κἀξεπειράθην τέκνων

οἷον στέρεσθαι πατέρα γίγνεται τέκνων,
οὐκ ἄν ποτ’ ἐς τόδ’ ἦλθον εἰς ὃ νῦν κακόν:†
ὅστις φυτεύσας καὶ νεανίαν τεκὼν
ἄριστον, εἶτα τοῦδε νῦν στερίσκομαι.
Εἶέν: τί δὴ χρὴ τὸν ταλαίπωρόν με δρᾶν;

στείχειν πρὸς οἴκους; κᾆτ’ ἐρημίαν ἴδω
πολλῶν μελάθρων, ἀπορίαν τ’ ἐμῷ βίῳ;
ἢ πρὸς μέλαθρα τοῦδε Καπανέως μόλω;
ἥδιστα πρίν γε δῆθ’, ὅτ’ ἦν παῖς ἥδε μοι.
Ἀλλ’ οὐκέτ’ ἔστιν, ἥ γ’ ἐμὴν γενειάδα

προσήγετ’ αἰεὶ στόματι καὶ κάρα τόδε
κατεῖχε χειρί: πατρὶ δ’ οὐδὲν †ἥδιον†
γέροντι θυγατρός: ἀρσένων δὲ μείζονες
ψυχαί, γλυκεῖαι δ’ ἦσσον ἐς θωπεύματα.
Οὐχ ὡς τάχιστα δῆτά μ’ ἄξετ’ ἐς δόμους;

σκότῳ δὲ δώσετ’: ἔνθ’ ἀσιτίαις ἐμὸν
δέμας γεραιὸν συντακεὶς ἀποφθερῶ.

Τί μ’ ὠφελήσει παιδὸς ὀστέων θιγεῖν;
ὦ δυσπάλαιστον γῆρας, ὡς μισῶ σ’ ἔχων,
μισῶ δ’ ὅσοι χρῄζουσιν ἐκτείνειν βίον,

βρωτοῖσι καὶ ποτοῖσι καὶ μαγεύμασι
παρεκτρέποντες ὀχετὸν ὥστε μὴ θανεῖν:
οὓς χρῆν, ἐπειδὰν μηδὲν ὠφελῶσι γῆν,
θανόντας ἔρρειν κἀκποδὼν εἶναι νέοις.

Χορός

Ἰὼ
τάδε δὴ παίδων †καὶ δὴ† φθιμένων

ὀστᾶ φέρεται. λάβετ’, ἀμφίπολοι,
γραίας ἀμενοῦς — οὐ γὰρ ἔνεστιν
ῥώμη παίδων ὑπὸ πένθους —
πολλοῦ τε χρόνου ζώσης μέτρα δὴ
καταλειβομένης τ’ ἄλγεσι πολλοῖς.

τί γὰρ ἂν μεῖζον τοῦδ’ ἔτι θνητοῖς
πάθος ἐξεύροις
ἢ τέκνα θανόντ’ ἐσιδέσθαι;

Παῖδες

Φέρω φέρω,
τάλαινα μᾶτερ, ἐκ πυρὸς πατρὸς μέλη,

βάρος μὲν οὐκ ἀβριθὲς ἀλγέων ὕπερ,
ἐν δ’ ὀλίγῳ τἀμὰ πάντα συνθείς.

Χορός

Ἰὼ ἰώ,
πᾶ φέρεις δάκρυα φίλᾳ
ματρὶ τῶν ὀλωλότων;

σποδοῦ τε πλῆθος ὀλίγον ἀντὶ σωμάτων
εὐδοκίμων δήποτ᾽ ἐν Μυκήναις;

Παῖδες

Ἄπαις, ἄπαις:
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἔρημος ἀθλίου πατρὸς τάλας
ἔρημον οἶκον ὀρφανεύσομαι λαβών,
οὐ πατρὸς ἐν χερσὶ τοῦ τεκόντος.

Χορός

Ἰὼ ἰώ:
β ποῦ δὲ πόνος ἐμῶν τέκνων,
ποῦ λοχευμάτων χάρις;
τροφαί τε ματρὸς ἄυπνά τ᾽ ὀμμάτων τέλη,
καὶ φίλιαι προσβολαὶ προσώπων;

Παῖδες

Βεβᾶσιν, οὐκέτ᾽ εἰσίν: οἴμοι πάτερ:

βεβᾶσιν.

Χορός

Αἰθὴρ ἔχει νιν ἤδη,
πυρὸς τετακότας σποδῷ:
ποτανοὶ δ᾽ ἤνυσαν τὸν Ἅιδαν.

Παῖδες

Πάτερ, μῶν σῶν κλύεις τέκνων γόους;
ἆρ᾽ ἀσπιδοῦχος ἔτι ποτ᾽ ἀντιτάσσομαι

σὸν φόνον — εἰ γὰρ γένοιτο — τεκνῶν;

Παῖδες

Ἔτ’ ἂν θεοῦ θέλοντος ἔλθοι δίκα
πατρῷος:

Χορός

Οὔπω κακὸν τόδ’ εὖδει.
αἰαῖ γόων: ἄλις τύχας,
ἄλις δ’ ἀλγέων ἐμοὶ πάρεστι.

Παῖδες

Ἔτ’ Ἀσωποῦ με δέξεται γάνος
χαλκέοις ἐν ὅπλοις Δαναϊ̈δῶν στρατηλάταν,
τοῦ φθιμένου πατρὸς ἐκδικαστάν.

Παῖδες

Ἔτ’ εἰσορᾶν σε, πάτερ, ἐπ’ ὀμμάτων δοκῶ . . .

Χορός

Φίλον φίλημα παρὰ γένυν τιθέντα σόν.

Παῖδες

λόγων δὲ παρακέλευσμα σῶν
ἀέρι φερόμενον οἴχεται.

Χορός

Δυοῖν δ’ ἄχη, ματρί τ’ ἔλιπεν —
σέ τ’ οὔποτ’ ἄλγη πατρῷα λείψει.

Παῖδες

Ἔχω τοσόνδε βάρος ὅσον μ’ ἀπώλεσεν.

Χορός

Φέρ’, ἀμφὶ μαστὸν ὑποβάλω σποδόν.

Παῖδες

Ἔκλαυσα τόδε κλύων ἔπος
στυγνότατον: ἔθιγέ μου φρενῶν.

Χορός

Ὦ τέκνον, ἔβας: οὐκέτι φίλον
φίλας ἄγαλμ’ ὄψομαί σε ματρός.

Θησεύς

Ἄδραστε καὶ γυναῖκες Ἀργεῖαι γένος,
ὁρᾶτε παῖδας τούσδ’ ἔχοντας ἐν χεροῖν
πατέρων ἀρίστων σώμαθ’ ὧν ἀνειλόμην:
τούτοις ἐγώ σφε καὶ πόλις δωρούμεθα.
Ὑμᾶς δὲ τῶνδε χρὴ χάριν μεμνημένους

σῴζειν, ὁρῶντας ὧν ἐκύρσατ’ ἐξ ἐμοῦ,
παισίν θ’ ὑπειπεῖν τούσδε τοὺς αὐτοὺς λόγους,
τιμᾶν πόλιν τήνδ’, ἐκ τέκνων ἀεὶ τέκνοις
μνήμην παραγγέλλοντας ὧν ἐκύρσατε.
Ζεὺς δὲ ξυνίστωρ οἵ τ’ ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοὶ

οἵων ὑφ’ ἡμῶν στείχετ’ ἠξιωμένοι.

Ἄδραστος

Θησεῦ, ξύνισμεν πάνθ’ ὅσ’ Ἀργείαν χθόνα
δέδρακας ἐσθλὰ δεομένην εὐεργετῶν,
χάριν τ’ ἀγήρων ἔξομεν: γενναῖα γὰρ
παθόντες ὑμᾶς ἀντιδρᾶν ὀφείλομεν.

Θησεύς

Τί δῆτ’ ἔθ’ ὑμῖν ἄλλ’ ὑπουργῆσαί με χρή;

Ἄδραστος

Χαῖρ’: ἄξιος γὰρ καὶ σὺ καὶ πόλις σέθεν.

Θησεύς

Ἔσται τάδ’: ἀλλὰ καὶ σὺ τῶν αὐτῶν τύχοις.

Ἀθήνα

Ἄκουε, Θησεῦ, τούσδ’ Ἀθηναίας λόγους,
ἃ χρή σε δρᾶσαι, δρῶντα δ’ ὠφελεῖν τάδε.

Μὴ δῷς τάδ’ ὀστᾶ τοῖσδ’ ἐς Ἀργείαν χθόνα
παισὶν κομίζειν ῥᾳδίως οὕτω μεθείς,
ἀλλ’ ἀντὶ τῶν σῶν καὶ πόλεως μοχθημάτων
πρῶτον λάβ’ ὅρκον. Τόνδε δ’ ὀμνύναι χρεὼν
Ἄδραστον: οὗτος κύριος, τύραννος ὤν,

πάσης ὑπὲρ γῆς Δαναϊ̈δῶν ὁρκωμοτεῖν.
Ὁ δ’ ὅρκος ἔσται, μήποτ’ Ἀργείους χθόνα
ἐς τήνδ’ ἐποίσειν πολέμιον παντευχίαν,
ἄλλων τ’ ἰόντων ἐμποδὼν θήσειν δόρυ.
Ἢν δ’ ὅρκον ἐκλιπόντες ἔλθωσιν, πάλιν
κακῶς ὀλέσθαι πρόστρεπ’ Ἀργείων χθόνα.

Ἀθήνα

Ἐν ᾧ δὲ τέμνειν σφάγια χρή σ’, ἄκουέ μου.
Ἔστιν τρίπους σοι χαλκόπους ἔσω δόμων,
ὃν Ἰλίου ποτ’ ἐξαναστήσας βάθρα
σπουδὴν ἐπ’ ἄλλην Ἡρακλῆς ὁρμώμενος

στῆσαί σ’ ἐφεῖτο Πυθικὴν πρὸς ἐσχάραν.
Ἐν τῷδε λαιμοὺς τρεῖς τριῶν μήλων τεμὼν
ἔγγραψον ὅρκους τρίποδος ἐν κοίλῳ κύτει,
κἄπειτα σῴζειν θεῷ δὸς ᾧ Δελφῶν μέλει,
μνημεῖά θ’ ὅρκων μαρτύρημά θ’ Ἑλλάδι.

῏ Η δ’ ἂν διοίξῃς σφάγια καὶ τρώσῃς φόνον
ὀξύστομον μάχαιραν ἐς γαίας μυχοὺς
κρύψον παρ’ αὐτὰς ἑπτὰ πυρκαιὰς νεκρῶν:
φόβον γὰρ αὐτοῖς, ἤν ποτ’ ἔλθωσιν πόλιν,
δειχθεῖσα θήσει καὶ κακὸν νόστον πάλιν.

Δράσας δὲ ταῦτα πέμπε γῆς ἔξω νεκρούς.
Τεμένη δ’, ἵν’ αὐτῶν σώμαθ’ ἡγνίσθη πυρί,
μέθες παρ’ αὐτὴν τρίοδον Ἰσθμίας θεοῦ:
σοὶ μὲν τάδ’ εἶπον: παισὶ δ’ Ἀργείων λέγω:
πορθήσεθ’ ἡβήσαντες Ἰσμηνοῦ πόλιν,

πατέρων θανόντων ἐκδικάζοντες φόνον,
σύ τ’ ἀντὶ πατρός, Αἰγιαλεῦ, στρατηλάτης
νέος καταστάς, παῖς τ’ ἀπ’ Αἰτωλῶν μολὼν
Τυδέως, ὃν ὠνόμαζε Διομήδην πατήρ.
Ἀλλ’ οὐ φθάνειν χρὴ συσκιάζοντας γένυν

καὶ χαλκοπληθῆ Δαναΐδῶν ὁρμᾶν στρατὸν
ἑπτάστολον πύργωμα Καδμείων ἔπι:
πικροὶ γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἥξετ’, ἐκτεθραμμένοι
σκύμνοι λεόντων, πόλεος ἐκπορθήτορες.
Κοὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλως: Ἔκγονοι δ’ ἀν’ Ἑλλάδα

κληθέντες ᾠδὰς ὑστέροισι θήσετε:
τοῖον στράτευμα σὺν θεῷ πορεύσετε.

Θησεύς

Δέσποιν’ Ἀθάνα, πείσομαι λόγοισι σοῖς:
σὺ γάρ μ’ ἀνορθοῖς, ὥστε μὴ ‘ξαμαρτάνειν:
καὶ τόνδ’ ἐν ὅρκοις ζεύξομαι: μόνον σύ με

ἐς ὀρθὸν ἵστη: σοῦ γὰρ εὐμενοῦς πόλει
οὔσης τὸ λοιπὸν ἀσφαλῶς οἰκήσομεν.

Χορός

Στείχωμεν, Ἄδρασθ’, ὅρκια δῶμεν
τῷδ’ ἀνδρὶ πόλει τ’: ἄξια δ’ ἡμῖν
προμεμοχθήκασι σέβεσθαι.

ELECTRA

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ

Ὦ γῆς παλαιὸν ἄργος, Ἰνάχου ῥοαί,
ὅθεν ποτ᾽ ἄρας ναυσὶ χιλίαις Ἄρη
ἐς γῆν ἔπλευσε Τρῳάδ᾽ Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ.
κτείνας δὲ τὸν κρατοῦντ᾽ ἐν Ἰλιάδι χθονὶ
Πρίαμον, ἑλών τε Δαρδάνου κλεινὴν πόλιν,
ἀφίκετ᾽ ἐς τόδ᾽ Ἄργος, ὑψηλῶν δ᾽ ἐπὶ
ναῶν ἔθηκε σκῦλα πλεῖστα βαρβάρων.
κἀκεῖ μὲν εὐτύχησεν· ἐν δὲ δώμασι
θνῄσκει γυναικὸς πρὸς Κλυταιμήστρας δόλῳ
καὶ τοῦ Θυέστου παιδὸς Αἰγίσθου χερί.
χὠ μὲν παλαιὰ σκῆπτρα Ταντάλου λιπὼν
ὄλωλεν, Αἴγισθος δὲ βασιλεύει χθονός,
ἄλοχον ἐκείνου Τυνδαρίδα κόρην ἔχων.
οὗς δ᾽ ἐν δόμοισιν ἔλιφ᾽ ὅτ᾽ ἐς Τροίαν ἔπλει,
ἄρσενά τ᾽ Ὀρέστην θῆλύ τ᾽ Ἠλέκτρας θάλος,
τὸν μὲν πατρὸς γεραιὸς ἐκκλέπτει τροφεὺς
μέλλοντ᾽ Ὀρέστην χερὸς ὑπ᾽ Αἰγίσθου θανεῖν
Στροφίῳ τ᾽ ἔδωκε Φωκέων ἐς γῆν τρέφειν·
ἣ δ᾽ ἐν δόμοις ἔμεινεν Ἠλέκτρα πατρός,
ταύτην ἐπειδὴ θαλερὸς εἶχ᾽ ἥβης χρόνος,
μνηστῆρες ᾔτουν Ἑλλάδος πρῶτοι χθονός.
δείσας δὲ μή τῳ παῖδ᾽ ἀριστέων τέκοι
Ἀγαμέμνονος ποινάτορ᾽, εἶχεν ἐν δόμοις
Αἴγισθος οὐδ᾽ ἥρμοζε νυμφίῳ τινί.
ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἦν φόβου πολλοῦ πλέων,
μή τῳ λαθραίως τέκνα γενναίῳ τέκοι,
κτανεῖν σφε βουλεύσαντος, ὠμόφρων ὅμως
μήτηρ νιν ἐξέσωσεν Αἰγίσθου χερός.
ἐς μὲν γὰρ ἄνδρα σκῆψιν εἶχ᾽ ὀλωλότα,
παίδων δ᾽ ἔδεισε μὴ φθονηθείη φόνῳ.
ἐκ τῶνδε δὴ τοιόνδ᾽ ἐμηχανήσατο
Αἴγισθος· ὃς μὲν γῆς ἀπηλλάχθη φυγὰς
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖς, χρυσὸν εἶφ᾽ ὃς ἂν κτάνῃ,

ἡμῖν δὲ δὴ δίδωσιν Ἠλέκτραν ἔχειν
δάμαρτα, πατέρων μὲν Μυκηναίων ἄπο
γεγῶσιν-οὐ δὴ τοῦτό γ᾽ ἐξελέγχομαι·
λαμπροὶ γὰρ ἐς γένος γε, χρημάτων δὲ δὴ
πένητες, ἔνθεν ηὐγένει᾽ ἀπόλλυται-
ὡς ἀσθενεῖ δοὺς ἀσθενῆ λάβοι φόβον.
εἰ γάρ νιν ἔσχεν ἀξίωμ᾽ ἔχων ἀνήρ,
εὔδοντ᾽ ἂν ἐξήγειρε τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος
φόνον δίκη τ᾽ ἂν ἦλθεν Αἰγίσθῳ τότε.
ἣν οὔποθ᾽ ἁνὴρ ὅδε-σύνοιδέ μοι Κύπρις-
ᾔσχυνεν εὐνῇ· παρθένος δ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἐστὶ δή.
αἰσχύνομαι γὰρ ὀλβίων ἀνδρῶν τέκνα
λαβὼν ὑβρίζειν, οὐ κατάξιος γεγώς.
στένω δὲ τὸν λόγοισι κηδεύοντ᾽ ἐμοὶ
ἄθλιον Ὀρέστην, εἴ ποτ᾽ εἰς Ἄργος μολὼν
γάμους ἀδελφῆς δυστυχεῖς ἐσόψεται.
ὅστις δέ μ᾽ εἶναί φησι μῶρον, εἰ λαβὼν
νέαν ἐς οἴκους παρθένον μὴ θιγγάνω,
γνώμης πονηροῖς κανόσιν ἀναμετρούμενος
τὸ σῶφρον, ἴστω καὐτὸς αὖ τοιοῦτος ὤν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὦ νὺξ μέλαινα, χρυσέων ἄστρων τροφέ,
ἐν ᾗ τόδ᾽ ἄγγος τῷδ᾽ ἐφεδρεῦον κάρᾳ
φέρουσα πηγὰς ποταμίας μετέρχομαι-
οὐ δή τι χρείας ἐς τοσόνδ᾽ ἀφιγμένη,
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ὕβριν δείξωμεν Αἰγίσθου θεοῖς-
γόους τ᾽ ἀφίημ᾽ αἰθέρ᾽ ἐς μέγαν πατρί.
ἡ γὰρ πανώλης Τυνδαρίς, μήτηρ ἐμή,
ἐξέβαλέ μ᾽ οἴκων, χάριτα τιθεμένη πόσει·
τεκοῦσα δ᾽ ἄλλους παῖδας Αἰγίσθῳ πάρα
πάρεργ᾽ Ὀρέστην κἀμὲ ποιεῖται δόμων . . .

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ
τί γὰρ τάδ᾽, ὦ δύστην᾽, ἐμὴν μοχθεῖς χάριν
πόνους ἔχουσα, πρόσθεν εὖ τεθραμμένη,
καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἐμοῦ λέγοντος οὐκ ἀφίστασαι;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἐγώ σ’ ἴσον θεοῖσιν ἡγοῦμαι φίλον·
ἐν τοῖς ἐμοῖς γὰρ οὐκ ἐνύβρισας κακοῖς.
μεγάλη δὲ θνητοῖς μοῖρα συμφορᾶς κακῆς
ἰατρὸν εὑρεῖν, ὡς ἐγὼ σὲ λαμβάνω.
δεῖ δή με κἀκέλευστον εἰς ὅσον σθένω
μόχθου ‘πικουφίζουσαν, ὡς ῥᾷον φέρῃς,
συνεκκομίζειν σοι πόνους. ἅλις δ’ ἔχεις
τἄξωθεν ἔργα· τἀν δόμοις δ’ ἡμᾶς χρεὼν
ἐξευτρεπίζειν. εἰσιόντι δ’ ἐργάτῃ
θύραθεν ἡδὺ τἄνδον εὐρίσκειν καλῶς.

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ
εἴ τοι δοκεῖ σοι, στεῖχε· καὶ γὰρ οὐ πρόσω
πηγαὶ μελάθρων τῶνδ’. ἐγὼ δ’ ἅμ’ ἡμέρᾳ
βοῦς εἰς ἀρούρας ἐσβαλὼν σπερῶ γύας.
ἀργὸς γὰρ οὐδεὶς θεοὺς ἔχων ἀνὰ στόμα
βίον δύναιτ’ ἂν ξυλλέγειν ἄνευ πόνου.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
Πυλάδη, σὲ γὰρ δὴ πρῶτον ἀνθρώπων ἐγὼ
πιστὸν νομίζω καὶ φίλον ξένον τ’ ἐμοί·
μόνος δ’ Ὀρέστην τόνδ’ ἐθαύμαζες φίλων,
πράσσονθ’ ἃ πράσσω δείν’ ὑπ’ Αἰγίσθου παθών,
ὅς μου κατέκτα πατέρα . . . χἡ πανώλεθρος
μήτηρ. ἀφῖγμαι δ’ ἐκ θεοῦ μυστηρίων
Ἀργεῖον οὖδας οὐδενὸς ξυνειδότος,
φόνον φονεῦσι πατρὸς ἀλλάξων ἐμοῦ.
νυκτὸς δὲ τῆσδε πρὸς τάφον μολὼν πατρὸς
δάκρυά τ’ ἔδωκα καὶ κόμης ἀπηρξάμην
πυρᾷ τ’ ἐπέσφαξ’ αἷμα μηλείου φόνου,
λαθὼν τυράννους οἳ κρατοῦσι τῆσδε γῆς.
καὶ τειχέων μὲν ἐντὸς οὐ βαίνω πόδα,
δυοῖν δ’ ἅμιλλαν ξυντιθεὶς ἀφικόμην
πρὸς τέρμονας γῆς τῆσδ’, ἵν’ ἐκβάλω ποδὶ
ἄλλην ἐπ’ αἶαν, εἴ μέ τις γνοίη σκοπῶν,
ζητῶν τ’ ἀδελφήν· φασὶ γάρ νιν ἐν γάμοις

ζευχθεῖσαν οἰκεῖν οὐδὲ παρθένον μένειν·
ὡς συγγένωμαι καὶ φόνου ξυνεργάτιν
λαβὼν τά γ’ εἴσω τειχέων σαφῶς μάθω.
νῦν οὖν-Ἕως γὰρ λευκὸν ὄμμ’ ἀναίρεται-
ἔξω τρίβου τοῦδ’ ἴχνος ἀλλαξώμεθα.
ἢ γάρ τις ἀροτὴρ ἤ τις οἰκέτις γυνὴ
φανήσεται νῷν, ἥντιν’ ἱστορήσομεν
εἰ τούσδε ναίει σύγγονος τόπους ἐμή.
ἀλλ’-εἰσορῶ γὰρ τήνδε προσπόλον τινά,
πηγαῖον ἄχθος ἐν κεκαρμένῳ κάρᾳ
φέρουσαν-ἐζώμεσθα κἀκπυθώμεθα
δούλης γυναικός, ἤν τι δεξώμεσθ’ ἔπος
ἐφ’ οἷσι, Πυλάδη, τήνδ’ ἀφίγμεθα χθόνα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
σύντειν’-ὥρα-ποδὸς ὁρμάν· ὤ, {[στρ.}
ἔμβα, ἔμβα κατακλαίουσα·
ἰώ μοί μοι.
ἐγενόμαν Ἀγαμέμνονος
καί μ’ ἔτεκεν Κλυταιμήστρα
στυγνὰ Τυνδάρεω κόρα,
κικλήσκουσι δέ μ’ ἀθλίαν
Ἠλέκτραν πολιῆται.
φεῦ φεῦ σχετλίων πόνων
καὶ στυγερᾶς ζόας.
ὦ πάτερ, σὺ δ’ ἐν Ἀΐδα
κεῖσαι, σᾶς ἀλόχου σφαγαῖς
Αἰγίσθου τ’, Ἀγάμεμνον.
ἴθι τὸν αὐτὸν ἔγειρε γόον,
ἄναγε πολύδακρυν ἀδονάν.

σύντειν’-ὥρα-ποδὸς ὁρμάν· ὤ, {[ἀντ.}
ἔμβα, ἔμβα, κατακλαίουσα·
ἰώ μοί μοι.
τίνα πόλιν, τίνα δ’ οἶκον, ὦ
τλᾶμον σύγγον’, ἀλατεύεις
οἰκτρὰν ἐν θαλάμοις λιπὼν

πατρῴοις ἐπὶ συμφοραῖς
ἀλγίσταισιν ἀδελφάν;
ἔλθοις τῶνδε πόνων ἐμοὶ
τᾷ μελέᾳ λυτήρ,
ὦ Ζεῦ Ζεῦ, πατρί θ’ αἱμάτων
ἐχθίστων ἐπίκουρος, Ἄρ-
γει κέλσας πόδ’ ἀλάταν.

θὲς τόδε τεῦχος ἐμῆς ἀπὸ κρατὸς ἑ- {[στρ.}
λοῦσ’, ἵνα πατρὶ γόους νυχίους
ἐπορθροβοάσω,
ἰαχάν, Ἄΐδα μέλος,
Ἄΐδα, πάτερ, σοι
κατὰ γᾶς ἐνέπω γόους
οἷς ἀεὶ τὸ κατ’ ἦμαρ
διέπομαι, κατὰ μὲν φίλαν
ὄνυχι τεμνομένα δέραν
χέρα τε κρᾶτ’ ἐπὶ κούριμον
τιθεμένα θανάτῳ σῷ.
αἲ αἲ, δρύπτε κάρα·
οἷα δέ τις κύκνος ἀχέτας
ποταμίοις παρὰ χεύμασιν
πατέρα φίλτατον καλεῖ,
ὀλόμενον δολίοις βρόχων
ἕρκεσιν, ὡς σὲ τὸν ἄθλιον,
πάτερ, ἐγὼ κατακλαίομαι,

λουτρὰ πανύσταθ’ ὑδρανάμενον χροὶ {[ἀντ.}
κοίτᾳ ἐν οἰκτροτάτᾳ θανάτου.
ἰώ μοι, <ἰώ> μοι
πικρᾶς μὲν πελέκεως τομᾶς
σᾶς, πάτερ, πικρᾶς δ’ ἐκ
Τροΐας ὁδίου βουλᾶς·
οὐ μίτραισι γυνή σε
δέξατ’ οὐδ’ ἐπὶ στεφάνοις,
ξίφεσι δ’ ἀμφιτόμοις λυγρὰν

Αἰγίσθου λώβαν θεμένα
δόλιον ἔσχεν ἀκοίταν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
Ἀγαμέμνονος ὦ κόρα, {[στρ.}
ἤλυθον, Ἠλέκτρα, ποτὶ
σὰν ἀγρότειραν αὐλάν.
ἔμολέ τις ἔμολεν γαλακτοπότας ἀνὴρ
Μυκηναῖος ὀρειβάτας· 170
ἀγγέλλει δ' ὅτι νῦν τριταί-
αν καρύσσουσιν θυσίαν
Ἀργεῖοι, πᾶσαι δὲ παρ' Ἥ-
ραν μέλλουσιν παρθενικαὶ στείχειν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐκ ἐπ' ἀγλαΐαις, φίλαι,
θυμὸν οὐδ' ἐπὶ χρυσέοις
ὅρμοις ἐκπεπόταμαι
τάλαιν', οὐδ' ἱστᾶσα χοροὺς
Ἀργείαις ἅμα νύμφαις
εἱλικτὸν κρούσω πόδ' ἐμόν. 180
δάκρυσι νυχεύ-
ω, δακρύων δέ μοι μέλει
δειλαίᾳ τὸ κατ' ἦμαρ.
σκέψαι μου πιναρὰν κόμαν
καὶ τρύχη τάδ' ἐμῶν πέπλων,
εἰ πρέποντ' Ἀγαμέμνονος
κούρᾳ 'σται βασιλείᾳ
τᾷ Τροίᾳ θ', ἃ 'μοῦ πατέρος
μέμναταί ποθ' ἁλοῦσα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
μεγάλα θεός· ἀλλ' ἴθι, {[ἀντ.}
καὶ παρ' ἐμοῦ χρῆσαι πολύ-
πηνα φάρεα δῦναι, 190
χρύσεά τε-χαρίσαι-προσθήματ' ἀγλαΐας.
δοκεῖς τοῖσι σοῖς δακρύοις

μὴ τιμῶσα θεούς, κρατή-
σειν ἐχθρῶν; οὔτοι στοναχαῖς,
ἀλλ᾽ εὐχαῖσι θεοὺς σεβί-
ζουσ᾽ ἕξεις εὐαμερίαν, ὦ παῖ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐδεὶς θεῶν ἐνοπᾶς κλύει
τᾶς δυσδαίμονος, οὐ παλαι-
ῶν πατρὸς σφαγιασμῶν.
οἴμοι τοῦ καταφθιμένου
τοῦ τε ζῶντος ἀλάτα,
ὅς που γᾶν ἄλλαν κατέχει,
μέλεος ἀλαί-
νων ποτὶ θῆσσαν ἑστίαν,
τοῦ κλεινοῦ πατρὸς ἐκφύς.
αὐτὰ δ᾽ ἐν χερνῆσι δόμοις
ναίω ψυχὰν τακομένα
δωμάτων πατρίων φυγάς,
οὐρείας ἀν᾽ ἐρίπνας.
μάτηρ δ᾽ ἐν λέκτροις φονίοις
ἄλλῳ σύγγαμος οἰκεῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
πολλῶν κακῶν Ἕλλησιν αἰτίαν ἔχει
σῆς μητρὸς Ἑλένη σύγγονος δόμοις τε σοῖς

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οἴμοι, γυναῖκες, ἐξέβην θρηνημάτων.
ξένοι τινὲς παρ᾽ οἶκον οἵδ᾽ ἐφεστίους
εὐνὰς ἔχοντες ἐξανίστανται λόχου·
φυγῇ σὺ μὲν κατ᾽ οἶμον, ἐς δόμους δ᾽ ἐγὼ
φῶτας κακούργους ἐξαλύξωμεν ποδί.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
μέν᾽, ὦ τάλαινα· μὴ τρέσῃς ἐμὴν χέρα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὦ Φοῖβ᾽ Ἄπολλον· προσπίτνω σε μὴ θανεῖν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἄλλους κτάνοιμι μᾶλλον ἐχθίους σέθεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἄπελθε, μὴ ψαῦ᾽ ὧν σε μὴ ψαύειν χρεών.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅτου θίγοιμ᾽ ἂν ἐνδικώτερον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
καὶ πῶς ξιφήρης πρὸς δόμοις λοχᾷς ἐμοῖς;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
μείνασ᾽ ἄκουσον, καὶ τάχ᾽ οὐκ ἄλλως ἐρεῖς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἔστηκα· πάντως δ᾽ εἰμὶ σή· κρείσσων γὰρ εἶ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἥκω φέρων σοι σοῦ κασιγνήτου λόγους.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὦ φίλτατ᾽, ἆρα ζῶντος ἢ τεθνηκότος;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ζῇ· πρῶτα γάρ σοι τἀγάθ᾽ ἀγγέλλειν θέλω. 230

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
εὐδαιμονοίης, μισθὸν ἡδίστων λόγων.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
κοινῇ δίδωμι τοῦτο νῷν ἀμφοῖν ἔχειν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ποῦ γῆς ὁ τλήμων τλήμονας φυγὰς ἔχων;
{Ορ.} οὐχ ἕνα νομίζων φθείρεται πόλεως νόμον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὗ που σπανίζων τοῦ καθ᾽ ἡμέραν βίου;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἔχει μέν, ἀσθενὴς δὲ δὴ φεύγων ἀνήρ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
λόγον δὲ δὴ τίν’ ἦλθες ἐκ κείνου φέρων;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
εἰ ζῇς, ὅπου τε ζῶσα συμφορᾶς ἔχεις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐκοῦν ὁρᾷς μου πρῶτον ὡς ξηρὸν δέμας.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
λύπαις γε συντετηκός, ὥστε με στένειν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
καὶ κρᾶτα πλόκαμόν τ’ ἐσκυθισμένον ξυρῷ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
δάκνει σ’ ἀδελφὸς ὅ τε θανὼν ἴσως πατήρ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οἴμοι, τί γάρ μοι τῶνδέ γ’ ἐστὶ φίλτερον;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
φεῦ φεῦ· τί δαὶ σὺ σῷ κασιγνήτῳ, δοκεῖς;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἀπὼν ἐκεῖνος, οὐ παρὼν ἡμῖν φίλος.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἐκ τοῦ δὲ ναίεις ἐνθάδ’ ἄστεως ἑκάς;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἐγημάμεσθ’, ὦ ξεῖνε, θανάσιμον γάμον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ὤμωξ’ ἀδελφὸν σόν. Μυκηναίων τίνι;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐχ ᾧ πατήρ μ᾽ ἤλπιζεν ἐκδώσειν ποτέ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
εἴφ᾽, ὡς ἀκούσας σῷ κασιγνήτῳ λέγω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἐν τοῖσδ᾽ ἐκείνου τηλορὸς ναίω δόμοις.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
σκαφεύς τις ἢ βουφορβὸς ἄξιος δόμων.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
πένης ἀνὴρ γενναῖος ἔς τ᾽ ἔμ᾽ εὐσεβής.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἡ δ᾽ εὐσέβεια τίς πρόσεστι σῷ πόσει;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐπώποτ᾽ εὐνῆς τῆς ἐμῆς ἔτλη θιγεῖν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἄγνευμ᾽ ἔχων τι θεῖον ἢ σ᾽ ἀπαξιῶν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
γονέας ὑβρίζειν τοὺς ἐμοὺς οὐκ ἠξίου.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
καὶ πῶς γάμον τοιοῦτον οὐχ ἥσθη λαβών;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐ κύριον τὸν δόντα μ᾽ ἡγεῖται, ξένε.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ξυνῆκ᾽· Ὀρέστῃ μή ποτ᾽ ἐκτείσῃ δίκην.
{**ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ**
τοῦτ᾽ αὐτὸ ταρβῶν, πρὸς δὲ καὶ σώφρων ἔφυ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
φεῦ·
γενναῖον ἄνδρ’ ἔλεξας, εὖ τε δραστέον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
εἰ δή ποθ’ ἥξει γ’ ἐς δόμους ὁ νῦν ἀπών.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
μήτηρ δέ σ’ ἡ τεκοῦσα ταῦτ’ ἠνέσχετο;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
γυναῖκες ἀνδρῶν, ὦ ξέν’, οὐ παίδων φίλαι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τίνος δέ σ’ οὕνεχ’ ὕβρισ’ Αἴγισθος τάδε;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τεκεῖν μ’ ἐβούλετ’ ἀσθενῆ, τοιῷδε δούς.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ὡς δῆθε παῖδας μὴ τέκοις ποινάτορας;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τοιαῦτ’ ἐβούλευσ’· ὧν ἐμοὶ δοίη δίκην.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
οἶδεν δέ σ’ οὖσαν παρθένον μητρὸς πόσις;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐκ οἶδε· σιγῇ τοῦθ’ ὑφαιρούμεσθά νιν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
αἵδ’ οὖν φίλαι σοι τούσδ’ ἀκούουσιν λόγους;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὥστε στέγειν γε τἀμὰ καὶ σ’ ἔπη καλῶς.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τί δῆτ’ Ὀρέστης πρὸς τόδ’, Ἄργος ἢν μόλῃ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἤρου τόδ’; αἰσχρόν γ’ εἶπας· οὐ γὰρ νῦν ἀκμή;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἐλθὼν δὲ δὴ πῶς φονέας ἂν κτάνοι πατρός;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τολμῶν ὑπ’ ἐχθρῶν οἵ’ ἐτολμήθη πατήρ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἦ καὶ μετ’ αὐτοῦ μητέρ’ ἂν τλαίης κτανεῖν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ταὐτῷ γε πελέκει τῷ πατὴρ ἀπώλετο.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
λέγω τάδ’ αὐτῷ, καὶ βέβαια τἀπὸ σοῦ; 280

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
θάνοιμι μητρὸς αἷμ’ ἐπισφάξασ’ ἐμῆς.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
φεῦ·
εἴθ’ ἦν Ὀρέστης πλησίον κλύων τάδε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἀλλ’, ὦ ξέν’, οὐ γνοίην ἂν εἰσιδοῦσά νιν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
νέα γάρ, οὐδὲν θαῦμ’, ἀπεζεύχθης νέου.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
εἷς ἂν μόνος νιν τῶν ἐμῶν γνοίη φίλων.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἆρ’ ὃν λέγουσιν αὐτὸν ἐκκλέψαι φόνου;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
πατρός γε παιδαγωγὸς ἀρχαῖος γέρων.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ὁ κατθανὼν δὲ σὸς πατὴρ τύμβου κυρεῖ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἔκυρσεν ὡς ἔκυρσεν, ἐκβληθεὶς δόμων.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
οἴμοι, τόδ' οἷον εἶπας· . . . αἴσθησις γὰρ οὖν
κἀκ τῶν θυραίων πημάτων δάκνει βροτούς.
λέξον δ', ἵν' εἰδὼς σῷ κασιγνήτῳ φέρω
λόγους ἀτερπεῖς, ἀλλ' ἀναγκαίους κλύειν.
ἔνεστι δ' οἶκτος ἀμαθίᾳ μὲν οὐδαμοῦ,
σοφοῖσι δ' ἀνδρῶν· καὶ γὰρ οὐδ' ἀζήμιον
γνώμην ἐνεῖναι τοῖς σοφοῖς λίαν σοφήν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
κἀγὼ τὸν αὐτὸν τῷδ' ἔρον ψυχῆς ἔχω.
πρόσω γὰρ ἄστεως οὖσα τἀν πόλει κακὰ
οὐκ οἶδα, νῦν δὲ βούλομαι κἀγὼ μαθεῖν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
λέγοιμ' ἄν, εἰ χρή-χρὴ δὲ πρὸς φίλον λέγειν-
τύχας βαρείας τὰς ἐμὰς κἀμοῦ πατρός.
ἐπεὶ δὲ κινεῖς μῦθον, ἱκετεύω, ξένε,
ἄγγελλ' Ὀρέστῃ τἀμὰ καὶ κείνου κακά,
πρῶτον μὲν οἵοις ἐν πέπλοις αὐλίζομαι,
πίνῳ θ' ὅσῳ βέβριθ', ὑπὸ στέγαισί τε
οἵαισι ναίω βασιλικῶν ἐκ δωμάτων,
αὐτὴ μὲν ἐκμοχθοῦσα κερκίσιν πέπλους,
ἢ γυμνὸν ἔξω σῶμα κἀστερήσομαι,
αὐτὴ δὲ πηγὰς ποταμίους φορουμένη,
ἀνέορτος ἱερῶν καὶ χορῶν τητωμένη.
ἀναίνομαι γυναῖκας οὖσα παρθένος,
ἀναίνομαι δὲ Κάστορ', ᾧ πρὶν ἐς θεοὺς
ἐλθεῖν ἔμ' ἐμνήστευον, οὖσαν ἐγγενῆ.
μήτηρ δ' ἐμὴ Φρυγίοισιν ἐν σκυλεύμασιν
θρόνῳ κάθηται, πρὸς δ' ἕδραισιν Ἀσίδες
δμωαὶ στατίζουσ', ἃς ἔπερσ' ἐμὸς πατήρ,

Ἰδαῖα φάρη χρυσέαις ἐζευγμέναι
πόρπαισιν. αἷμα δ᾽ ἔτι πατρὸς κατὰ στέγας
μέλαν σέσηπεν, ὃς δ᾽ ἐκεῖνον ἔκτανεν,
ἐς ταὐτὰ βαίνων ἅρματ᾽ ἐκφοιτᾷ πατρί,
καὶ σκῆπτρ᾽ ἐν οἷς Ἕλλησιν ἐστρατηλάτει
μιαιφόνοισι χερσὶ γαυροῦται λαβών.
Ἀγαμέμνονος δὲ τύμβος ἠτιμασμένος
οὔπω χοάς ποτ᾽ οὐδὲ κλῶνα μυρσίνης
ἔλαβε, πυρὰ δὲ χέρσος ἀγλαϊσμάτων.
μέθῃ δὲ βρεχθεὶς τῆς ἐμῆς μητρὸς πόσις
ὁ κλεινός, ὡς λέγουσιν, ἐνθρῴσκει τάφῳ
πέτροις τε λεύει μνῆμα λάινον πατρός,
καὶ τοῦτο τολμᾷ τοὔπος εἰς ἡμᾶς λέγειν·
Ποῦ παῖς Ὀρέστης; ἆρά σοι τύμβῳ καλῶς
παρὼν ἀμύνει; -ταῦτ᾽ ἀπὼν ὑβρίζεται.
ἀλλ᾽, ὦ ξέν᾽, ἱκετεύω σ᾽, ἀπάγγειλον τάδε.
πολλοὶ δ᾽ ἐπιστέλλουσιν, ἑρμηνεὺς δ᾽ ἐγώ,
αἱ χεῖρες ἡ γλῶσσ᾽ ἡ ταλαίπωρός τε φρήν,
κάρα τ᾽ ἐμὸν ξυρῆκες, ὅ τ᾽ ἐκεῖνον τεκών.
αἰσχρὸν γάρ, εἰ πατὴρ μὲν ἐξεῖλεν Φρύγας,
ὁ δ᾽ ἄνδρ᾽ ἕν᾽ εἷς ὢν οὐ δυνήσεται κτανεῖν,
νέος πεφυκὼς κἀξ ἀμείνονος πατρός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
καὶ μὴν δέδορκα τόνδε, σὸν λέγω πόσιν,
λήξαντα μόχθου πρὸς δόμους ὡρμημένον.

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ
ἔα· τίνας τούσδ᾽ ἐν πύλαις ὁρῶ ξένους;
τίνος δ᾽ ἕκατι τάσδ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀγραύλους πύλας
προσῆλθον; ἦ ‘μοῦ δεόμενοι; γυναικί τοι
αἰσχρὸν μετ᾽ ἀνδρῶν ἑστάναι νεανιῶν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὦ φίλτατ᾽, εἰς ὕποπτα μὴ μόλῃς ἐμοί·
τὸν ὄντα δ᾽ εἴσῃ μῦθον· οἵδε γὰρ ξένοι

ἤκουσ’ Ὀρέστου πρός με κήρυκες λόγων.
ἀλλ’, ὦ ξένοι, σύγγνωτε τοῖς εἰρημένοις.

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ
τί φασίν; ἀνὴρ ἔστι καὶ λεύσσει φάος;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἔστιν λόγῳ γοῦν, φασὶ δ’ οὐκ ἄπιστ’ ἐμοί.

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ
ἦ καί τι πατρὸς σῶν τε μέμνηται κακῶν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἐν ἐλπίσιν ταῦτ’· ἀσθενὴς φεύγων ἀνήρ.

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ
ἦλθον δ’ Ὀρέστου τίν’ ἀγορεύοντες λόγον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
σκοποὺς ἔπεμψε τούσδε τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν.

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ
οὐκοῦν τὰ μὲν λεύσσουσι, τὰ δὲ σύ που λέγεις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἴσασιν, οὐδὲν τῶνδ’ ἔχουσιν ἐνδεές.

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ
οὐκοῦν πάλαι χρῆν τοῖσδ’ ἀνεπτύχθαι πύλας;
χωρεῖτ’ ἐς οἴκους· ἀντὶ γὰρ χρηστῶν λόγων
ξενίων κυρήσεθ’, οἷ’ ἐμὸς κεύθει δόμος.
αἴρεσθ’, ὀπαδοί, τῶνδ’ ἔσω τεύχη δόμων.
καὶ μηδὲν ἀντείπητε, παρὰ φίλου φίλοι
μολόντες ἀνδρός· καὶ γὰρ εἰ πένης ἔφυν,
οὔτοι τό γ’ ἦθος δυσγενὲς παρέξομαι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
πρὸς θεῶν, ὅδ’ ἀνὴρ ὃς συνεκκλέπτει γάμους

τοὺς σούς, Ὀρέστην οὐ καταισχύνειν θέλων;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὗτος κέκληται πόσις ἐμὸς τῆς ἀθλίας.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
φεῦ·
οὐκ ἔστ᾽ ἀκριβὲς οὐδὲν εἰς εὐανδρίαν·
ἔχουσι γὰρ ταραγμὸν αἱ φύσεις βροτῶν.
ἤδη γὰρ εἶδον ἄνδρα γενναίου πατρὸς
τὸ μηδὲν ὄντα, χρηστά τ᾽ ἐκ κακῶν τέκνα,
λιμόν τ᾽ ἐν ἀνδρὸς πλουσίου φρονήματι,
γνώμην τε μεγάλην ἐν πένητι σώματι.
πῶς οὖν τις αὐτὰ διαλαβὼν ὀρθῶς κρινεῖ;
πλούτῳ; πονηρῷ τἄρα χρήσεται κριτῇ.
ἢ τοῖς ἔχουσι μηδέν; ἀλλ᾽ ἔχει νόσον
πενία, διδάσκει δ᾽ ἄνδρα τῇ χρείᾳ κακόν.
ἀλλ᾽ εἰς ὅπλ᾽ ἔλθω; τίς δὲ πρὸς λόγχην βλέπων
μάρτυς γένοιτ᾽ ἂν ὅστις ἐστὶν ἀγαθός;
κράτιστον εἰκῇ ταῦτ᾽ ἐᾶν ἀφειμένα.
οὗτος γὰρ ἀνὴρ οὔτ᾽ ἐν Ἀργείοις μέγας
οὔτ᾽ αὖ δοκήσει δωμάτων ὠγκωμένος,
ἐν τοῖς δὲ πολλοῖς ὤν, ἄριστος ηὑρέθη.
οὐ μὴ φρονήσεθ᾽, οἳ κενῶν δοξασμάτων
πλήρεις πλανᾶσθε, τῇ δ᾽ ὁμιλίᾳ βροτοὺς
κρινεῖτε καὶ τοῖς ἤθεσιν τοὺς εὐγενεῖς;
οἱ γὰρ τοιοῦτοι καὶ πόλεις οἰκοῦσιν εὖ
καὶ δώμαθ᾽· αἱ δὲ σάρκες αἱ κεναὶ φρενῶν
ἀγάλματ᾽ ἀγορᾶς εἰσιν. οὐδὲ γὰρ δόρυ
μᾶλλον βραχίων σθεναρὸς ἀσθενοῦς μένει·
ἐν τῇ φύσει δὲ τοῦτο κἀν εὐψυχίᾳ.
ἀλλ᾽-ἄξιος γὰρ ὅ τε παρὼν ὅ τ᾽ οὐ παρὼν
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖς, οὗπερ οὕνεχ᾽ ἥκομεν-
δεξώμεθ᾽ οἴκων καταλύσεις. χωρεῖν χρεών,
δμῶες, δόμων τῶνδ᾽ ἐντός. ὡς ἐμοὶ πένης
εἴη πρόθυμος πλουσίου μᾶλλον ξένος.
αἰνῶ μὲν οὖν τοῦδ᾽ ἀνδρὸς ἐσδοχὰς δόμων,

ἐβουλόμην δ’ ἄν, εἰ κασίγνητός με σὸς
ἐς εὐτυχοῦντας ἦγεν εὐτυχῶν δόμους.
ἴσως δ’ ἂν ἔλθοι· Λοξίου γὰρ ἔμπεδοι
χρησμοί, βροτῶν δὲ μαντικὴν χαίρειν ἐῶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
νῦν ἢ πάροιθεν μᾶλλον, Ἠλέκτρα, χαρᾷ
θερμαινόμεσθα καρδίαν· ἴσως γὰρ ἂν
μόλις προβαίνουσ’ ἡ τύχη σταίη καλῶς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὦ τλῆμον, εἰδὼς δωμάτων χρείαν σέθεν
τί τούσδ’ ἐδέξω μείζονας σαυτοῦ ξένους;

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ
τί δ’; εἴπερ εἰσὶν ὡς δοκοῦσιν εὐγενεῖς,
οὐκ ἔν τε μικροῖς ἔν τε μὴ στέρξουσ’ ὁμῶς;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἐπεί νυν ἐξήμαρτες ἐν σμικροῖσιν ὤν,
ἔλθ’ ὡς παλαιὸν τροφὸν ἐμοῦ φίλον πατρός,
ὃς ἀμφὶ ποταμὸν Τάναον Ἀργείας ὅρους
τέμνοντα γαίας Σπαρτιάτιδός τε γῆς
ποίμναις ὁμαρτεῖ πόλεος ἐκβεβλημένος·
κέλευε δ’ αὐτὸν τῶνδ’ ἐμοὐσαφιγμένων
ἐλθεῖν, ξένων τ’ ἐς δαῖτα πορσῦναί τινα.
ἡσθήσεταί τοι καὶ προσεύξεται θεοῖς,
ζῶντ’ εἰσακούσας παῖδ’ ὃν ἐκσῴζει ποτέ.
οὐ γὰρ πατρῴων ἐκ δόμων μητρὸς πάρα
λάβοιμεν ἄν τι· πικρὰ δ’ ἀγγείλαιμεν ἄν,
εἰ ζῶντ’ Ὀρέστην ἡ τάλαιν’ αἴσθοιτ’ ἔτι.

ΑΥΤΟΥΡΓΟΣ
ἀλλ’, εἰ δοκεῖ σοι, τούσδ’ ἀπαγγελῶ λόγους
γέροντι· χώρει δ’ ἐς δόμους ὅσον τάχος
καὶ τἄνδον ἐξάρτυε. πολλά τοι γυνὴ
χρῄζουσ’ ἂν εὕροι δαιτὶ προσφορήματα.
ἔστιν δὲ δὴ τοσαῦτά γ’ ἐν δόμοις ἔτι,

ὥσθ’ ἕν γ’ ἐπ’ ἦμαρ τούσδε πληρῶσαι βορᾶς.
ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις δ’ ἡνίκ’ ἂν γνώμης πέσω,
σκοπῶ τὰ χρήμαθ’ ὡς ἔχει μέγα σθένος,
ξένοις τε δοῦναι σῶμά τ’ ἐς νόσους πεσὸν
δαπάναισι σῳ̃σαι· τῆς δ’ ἐφ’ ἡμέραν βορᾶς
ἐς σμικρὸν ἥκει· πᾶς γὰρ ἐμπλησθεὶς ἀνὴρ
ὁ πλούσιός τε χὠ πένης ἴσον φέρει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
κλειναὶ νᾶες, αἵ ποτ’ ἔβατε Τροίαν {[στρ.}
τοῖς ἀμετρήτοις ἐρετμοῖς
πέμπουσαι χοροὺς μετὰ Νηρῇδων,
ἵν’ ὁ φίλαυλος ἔπαλλε δελ-
φὶς πρῴραις κυανεμβόλοι-
σιν εἱλισσόμενος,
πορεύων τὸν τᾶς Θέτιδος
κοῦφον ἅλμα ποδῶν Ἀχιλῆ
σὺν Ἀγαμέμνονι Τρωίας
ἐπὶ Σιμουντίδας ἀκτάς.

Νηρῆδες δ’ Εὐβοῖδας ἄκρας λιποῦσαι {[ἀντ.}
μόχθους ἀσπιστὰς ἀκμόνων
Ἡφαίστου χρυσέων ἔφερον τευχέων,
ἀνά τε Πήλιον ἀνά τε πρυ-
μνὰς Ὄσσας ἱερᾶς νάπας
† Νυμφαίας σκοπιὰς
κόρας μάτευσ’, † ἔνθα πατὴρ
ἱππότας τρέφεν Ἑλλάδι φῶς
Θέτιδος εἰνάλιον γόνον
ταχύπορον πόδ’ Ἀτρείδαις.
Ἰλιόθεν δ’ ἔκλυόν τινος ἐν λιμέσιν {[στρ.}
Ναυπλίοισι βεβῶτος
τᾶς σᾶς, ὦ Θέτιδος παῖ,
κλεινᾶς ἀσπίδος ἐν κύκλῳ
τοιάδε σήματα, δείματα
Φρύγια, τετύχθαι·
περιδρόμῳ μὲν ἴτυος ἕδρᾳ

Περσέα λαιμοτόμαν ὑπὲρ
ἁλὸς ποτανοῖσι πεδί-
λοισι φυὰν Γοργόνος ἴ-
σχειν, Διὸς ἀγγέλῳ σὺν Ἑρ-
μᾷ, τῷ Μαί-
ας ἀγροτῆρι κούρῳ·

ἐν δὲ μέσῳ κατέλαμπε σάκει φαέθων {[ἀντ.}
κύκλος ἀελίοιο
ἵπποις ἂμ πτεροέσσαις
ἄστρων τ' αἰθέριοι χοροί,
Πλειάδες, Ὑάδες, Ἔκτορος
ὄμμασι τροπαῖοι·
ἐπὶ δὲ χρυσοτύπῳ κράνει
Σφίγγες ὄνυξιν ἀοίδιμον
ἄγραν φέρουσαι· περιπλεύ-
ρῳ δὲ κύτει πύρπνοος ἔ-
σπευδε δρόμῳ λέαινα χαλ-
αῖς Πειρη-
ναῖον ὁρῶσα πῶλον.

ἄορι δ' ἐν φονίῳ τετραβάμονες ἵπποι ἔπαλ-
λον, κελαινὰ δ' ἀμφὶ νῶθ' ἵετο κόνις.
τοιῶνδ' ἄνακτα δοριπόνων
ἔκανεν ἀνδρῶν, Τυνδαρίς,
σὰ λέχεα, κακόφρων κούρα.
τοιγάρ σέ ποτ' οὐρανίδαι
πέμψουσιν θανάτοις· ἦ σὰν
ἔτ' ἔτι φόνιον ὑπὸ δέραν
ὄψομαι αἷμα χυθὲν σιδάρῳ.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
ποῦ ποῦ νεᾶνις πότνι' ἐμὴ δέσποινά τε,
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖς, ὅν ποτ' ἐξέθρεψ' ἐγώ;
ὡς πρόσβασιν τῶνδ' ὀρθίαν οἴκων ἔχει
ῥυσῷ γέροντι τῷδε προσβῆναι ποδί.
ὅμως δὲ πρός γε τοὺς φίλους ἐξελκτέον

διπλῆν ἄκανθαν καὶ παλίρροπον γόνυ.
ὦ θύγατερ-ἄρτι γάρ σε πρὸς δόμοις ὁρῶ-
ἥκω φέρων σοι τῶν ἐμῶν βοσκημάτων
ποίμνης νεογνὸν θρέμμ' ὑποσπάσας τόδε
στεφάνους τε τευχέων τ' ἐξελὼν τυρεύματα,
παλαιόν τε θησαύρισμα Διονύσου τόδε
ὀσμῇ κατῆρες, μικρόν, ἀλλ' ἐπεσβαλεῖν
ἡδὺ σκύφον τοῦδ' ἀσθενεστέρῳ ποτῷ.
ἴτω φέρων τις τοῖς ξένοις τάδ' ἐς δόμους·
ἐγὼ δὲ τρύχει τῷδ' ἐμῶν πέπλων κόρας
δακρύοισι τέγξας ἐξομόρξασθαι θέλω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τί δ', ὦ γεραιέ, διάβροχον τόδ' ὄμμ' ἔχεις;
μῶν τἀμὰ διὰ χρόνου σ' ἀνέμνησεν κακά;
ἢ τὰς Ὀρέστου τλήμονας φυγὰς στένεις
καὶ πατέρα τὸν ἐμόν, ὅν ποτ' ἐν χεροῖν ἔχων
ἀνόνητ' ἔθρεψας σοί τε καὶ τοῖς σοῖς φίλοις;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
ἀνόνηθ'· ὅμως δ' οὖν τοῦτό γ' οὐκ ἠνεσχόμην.
ἦλθον γὰρ αὐτοῦ πρὸς τάφον πάρεργ' ὁδοῦ
καὶ προσπεσὼν ἔκλαυσ' ἐρημίας τυχών,
σπονδάς τε, λύσας ἀσκὸν ὃν φέρω ξένοις,
ἔσπεισα, τύμβῳ δ' ἀμφέθηκα μυρσίνας.
πυρᾶς δ' ἐπ' αὐτῆς οἶν μελάγχιμον πόκῳ
σφάγιον ἐσεῖδον αἷμά τ' οὐ πάλαι χυθὲν
ξανθῆς τε χαίτης βοστρύχους κεκαρμένους.
κἀθαύμασ', ὦ παῖ, τίς ποτ' ἀνθρώπων ἔτλη
πρὸς τύμβον ἐλθεῖν· οὐ γὰρ Ἀργείων γέ τις.
ἀλλ' ἦλθ' ἴσως που σὸς κασίγνητος λάθρᾳ,
μολὼν δ' ἐθαύμασ' ἄθλιον τύμβον πατρός.
σκέψαι δὲ χαίτην προστιθεῖσα σῇ κόμῃ,
εἰ χρῶμα ταὐτὸν κουρίμης ἔσται τριχός·
φιλεῖ γάρ, αἷμα ταὐτὸν οἷς ἂν ᾖ πατρός,
τὰ πόλλ' ὅμοια σώματος πεφυκέναι.
{Ηλ.} οὐκ ἄξι' ἀνδρός, ὦ γέρον, σοφοῦ λέγεις,

εἰ κρυπτὸν ἐς γῆν τήνδ’ ἂν Αἰγίσθου φόβῳ
δοκεῖς ἀδελφὸν τὸν ἐμὸν εὐθαρσῆ μολεῖν.
ἔπειτα χαίτης πῶς συνοίσεται πλόκος,
ὁ μὲν παλαίστραις ἀνδρὸς εὐγενοῦς τραφείς,
ὁ δὲ κτενισμοῖς θῆλυς; ἀλλ’ ἀμήχανον.
πολλοῖς δ’ ἂν εὕροις βοστρύχους ὁμοπτέρους
καὶ μὴ γεγῶσιν αἵματος ταὐτοῦ, γέρον.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
σὺ δ’ εἰς ἴχνος βᾶσ’ ἀρβύλης σκέψαι βάσιν
εἰ σύμμετρος σῷ ποδὶ γενήσεται, τέκνον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
πῶς δ’ ἂν γένοιτ’ ἂν ἐν κραταιλέῳ πέδῳ
γαίας ποδῶν ἔκμακτρον; εἰ δ’ ἔστιν τόδε,
δυοῖν ἀδελφοῖν ποὺς ἂν οὐ γένοιτ’ ἴσος
ἀνδρός τε καὶ γυναικός, ἀλλ’ ἄρσην κρατεῖ.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
οὐκ ἔστιν, εἰ καὶ γῆν κασίγνητος μολών,
. . . . . .
κερκίδος ὅτῳ γνοίης ἂν ἐξύφασμα σῆς,
ἐν ᾧ ποτ’ αὐτὸν ἐξέκλεψα μὴ θανεῖν;
{**ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ**
οὐκ οἶσθ’, Ὀρέστης ἡνίκ’ ἐκπίπτει χθονός,
νέαν μ’ ἔτ’ οὖσαν; εἰ δὲ κἄκρεκον πέπλους,
πῶς ἂν τότ’ ὢν παῖς ταὐτὰ νῦν ἔχοι φάρη,
εἰ μὴ ξυναύξοινθ’ οἱ πέπλοι τῷ σώματι;
ἀλλ’ ἤ τις αὐτοῦ τάφον ἐποικτίρας ξένος
† ἐκείρατ’, ἢ τῆσδε σκοποὺς λαβὼν χθονὸς † . . .

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
οἱ δὲ ξένοι ποῦ; βούλομαι γὰρ εἰσιδὼν
αὐτοὺς ἔρεσθαι σοῦ κασιγνήτου πέρι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οἵδ’ ἐκ δόμων βαίνουσι λαιψηρῷ ποδί.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
ἀλλ᾽ εὐγενεῖς μέν, ἐν δὲ κιβδήλῳ τόδε·
πολλοὶ γὰρ ὄντες εὐγενεῖς εἰσιν κακοί.
ὅμως δέ. -χαίρειν τοὺς ξένους προσεννέπω.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
χαῖρ᾽, ὦ γεραιέ. -τοῦ ποτ᾽, Ἠλέκτρα, τόδε
παλαιὸν ἀνδρὸς λείψανον φίλων κυρεῖ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὗτος τὸν ἀμὸν πατέρ᾽ ἔθρεψεν, ὦ ξένε.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τί φῄς; ὅδ᾽ ὃς σὸν ἐξέκλεψε σύγγονον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὅδ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ὁ σώσας κεῖνον, εἴπερ ἔστ᾽ ἔτι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἔα·
τί μ᾽ ἐσδέδορκεν ὥσπερ ἀργύρου σκοπῶν
λαμπρὸν χαρακτῆρ᾽; ἢ προσεικάζει μέ τῳ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἴσως Ὀρέστου σ᾽ ἥλιχ᾽ ἥδεται βλέπων.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
φίλου γε φωτός. τί δὲ κυκλεῖ πέριξ πόδα;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ καὐτὴ τόδ᾽ εἰσορῶσα θαυμάζω, ξένε.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
ὦ πότνι᾽, εὔχου, θύγατερ Ἠλέκτρα, θεοῖς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τί τῶν ἀπόντων ἢ τί τῶν ὄντων πέρι;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
λαβεῖν φίλον θησαυρόν, ὃν φαίνει θεός.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἰδού· καλῶ θεούς. ἢ τί δὴ λέγεις, γέρον;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
βλέψον νυν ἐς τόνδ’, ὦ τέκνον, τὸν φίλτατον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
πάλαι δέδορκα, μὴ σύ γ’ οὐκέτ’ εὖ φρονῇς.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
οὐκ εὖ φρονῶ ‘γὼ σὸν κασίγνητον βλέπων; 570

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
πῶς εἶπας, ὦ γεραί’, ἀνέλπιστον λόγον;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
ὁρᾶν Ὀρέστην τόνδε τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ποῖον χαρακτῆρ’ εἰσιδών, ᾧ πείσομαι;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
οὐλὴν παρ’ ὀφρύν, ἥν ποτ’ ἐν πατρὸς δόμοις
νεβρὸν διώκων σοῦ μέθ’ ἡμάχθη πεσών.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
πῶς φῄς; ὁρῶ μὲν πτώματος τεκμήριον.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
ἔπειτα μέλλεις προσπίτνειν τοῖς φιλτάτοις;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἀλλ’ οὐκέτ’, ὦ γεραιέ· συμβόλοισι γὰρ
τοῖς σοῖς πέπεισμαι θυμόν. -ὦ χρόνῳ φανείς,
ἔχω σ’ ἀέλπτως . . .

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
κἀξ ἐμοῦ γ’ ἔχῃ χρόνῳ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐδέποτε δόξασα.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
οὐδ᾽ ἐγὼ γὰρ ἤλπισα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἐκεῖνος εἶ σύ;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
σύμμαχός γέ σοι μόνος.
ἢν δ᾽ ἀνσπάσωμαί γ᾽ ὃν μετέρχομαι βόλον . . .
πέποιθα δ᾽· ἢ χρὴ μηκέθ᾽ ἡγεῖσθαι θεούς,
εἰ τἄδικ᾽ ἔσται τῆς δίκης ὑπέρτερα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἔμολες ἔμολες, ὦ, χρόνιος ἀμέρα,
κατέλαμψας, ἔδειξας ἐμφανῆ
πόλει πυρσόν, ὃς παλαιᾷ φυγᾷ
πατρίων ἀπὸ δωμάτων τάλας
ἀλαίνων ἔβα.
θεὸς αὖ θεὸς ἀμετέραν τις ἄγει
νίκαν, ὦ φίλα.
ἄνεχε χέρας, ἄνεχε λόγον, ἵει λιτὰς
ἐς θεούς, τύχᾳ σοι τύχᾳ
κασίγνητον ἐμβατεῦσαι πόλιν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
εἶέν· φίλας μὲν ἡδονὰς ἀσπασμάτων
ἔχω, χρόνῳ δὲ καὖθις αὐτὰ δώσομεν.
σὺ δ᾽, ὦ γεραιέ-καίριος γὰρ ἤλυθες-
λέξον, τί δρῶν ἂν φονέα τεισαίμην πατρός;
[μητέρα τε κοινωνὸν ἀνοσίων γάμων;]
ἔστιν τί μοι κατ᾽ Ἄργος εὐμενὲς φίλων;
ἢ πάντ᾽ ἀνεσκευάσμεθ᾽, ὥσπερ αἱ τύχαι;
τῷ ξυγγένωμαι; νύχιος ἢ καθ᾽ ἡμέραν;
ποίαν ὁδὸν τραπώμεθ᾽ εἰς ἐχθροὺς ἐμούς;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
ὦ τέκνον, οὐδεὶς δυστυχοῦντί σοι φίλος.
εὕρημα γάρ τοι χρῆμα γίγνεται τόδε,
κοινῇ μετασχεῖν τἀγαθοῦ καὶ τοῦ κακοῦ.
σὺ δ'-ἐκ βάθρων γὰρ πᾶς ἀνῄρησαι φίλοις
οὐδ' ἐλλέλοιπας ἐλπίδ'-ἴσθι μου κλύων,
ἐν χειρὶ τῇ σῇ πάντ' ἔχεις καὶ τῇ τύχῃ,
πατρῷον οἶκον καὶ πόλιν λαβεῖν σέθεν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τί δῆτα δρῶντες τοῦδ' ἂν ἐξικοίμεθα;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
κτανὼν Θυέστου παῖδα σήν τε μητέρα.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἥκω 'πὶ τόνδε στέφανον· ἀλλὰ πῶς λάβω;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
τειχέων μὲν ἐλθὼν ἐντὸς οὐδ' ἂν εἰ θέλοις.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
φρουραῖς κέκασται δεξιαῖς τε δορυφόρων;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
ἔγνως· φοβεῖται γάρ σε κοὐχ εὕδει σαφῶς.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
εἶέν· σὺ δὴ τοὐνθένδε βούλευσον, γέρον.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
κἀμοῦ γ' ἄκουσον· ἄρτι γάρ μ' ἐσῆλθέ τι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἐσθλόν τι μηνύσειας, αἰσθοίμην δ' ἐγώ.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
Αἴγισθον εἶδον, ἡνίχ' εἶρπον ἐνθάδε.

{**ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ**
προσηκάμην τὸ ῥηθέν. ἐν ποίοις τόποις;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
ἀγρῶν πέλας τῶνδ’ ἱπποφορβίων ἔπι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τί δρῶνθ’; ὁρῶ γὰρ ἐλπίδ’ ἐξ ἀμηχάνων.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
Νύμφαις ἐπόρσυν’ ἔροτιν, ὡς ἔδοξέ μοι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τροφεῖα παίδων ἢ πρὸ μέλλοντος τόκου;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἕν· βουσφαγεῖν ὡπλίζετο.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
πόσων μετ’ ἀνδρῶν; ἢ μόνος δμώων μέτα;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
οὐδεὶς παρῆν Ἀργεῖος, οἰκεία δὲ χείρ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
οὔ πού τις ὅστις γνωριεῖ μ’ ἰδών, γέρον; 630

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
δμῶες μέν εἰσιν, οἳ σέ γ’ οὐκ εἶδόν ποτε.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἡμῖν ἂν εἶεν, εἰ κρατοῖμεν, εὐμενεῖς;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
δούλων γὰρ ἴδιον τοῦτο, σοὶ δὲ σύμφορον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
πῶς οὖν ἂν αὐτῷ πλησιασθείην ποτέ;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
στείχων ὅθεν σε βουθυτῶν ἐσόψεται.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ὁδὸν παρ᾽ αὐτήν, ὡς ἔοικ᾽, ἀγροὺς ἔχει;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
ὅθεν γ᾽ ἰδών σε δαιτὶ κοινωνὸν καλεῖ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
πικρόν γε συνθοινάτορ᾽, ἢν θεὸς θέλῃ.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
τοὐνθένδε πρὸς τὸ πῖπτον αὐτὸς ἐννόει.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
καλῶς ἔλεξας. -ἡ τεκοῦσα δ᾽ ἐστὶ ποῦ; 640

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
Ἄργει· παρέσται δ᾽ οὖν πόσει θοίνην ἔπι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τί δ᾽ οὐχ ἅμ᾽ ἐξωρμᾶτ᾽ ἐμὴ μήτηρ πόσει;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
ψόγον τρέμουσα δημοτῶν ἐλείπετο.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ξυνῆχ᾽· ὕποπτος οὖσα γιγνώσκει πόλει.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
τοιαῦτα· μισεῖται γὰρ ἀνόσιος γυνή.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
πῶς οὖν ἐκείνην τόνδε τ᾽ ἐν ταὐτῷ κτενῶ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἐγὼ φόνον γε μητρὸς ἐξαρτύσομαι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
καὶ μὴν ἐκεῖνά γ’ ἡ τύχη θήσει καλῶς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὑπηρετείτω μὲν δυοῖν ὄντοιν ὅδε.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
ἔσται τάδ’· εὑρίσκεις δὲ μητρὶ πῶς φόνον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
λέγ’, ὦ γεραιέ, τάδε Κλυταιμήστρᾳ μολών·
λεχώ μ’ ἀπάγγελλ’ οὖσαν ἄρσενος τόκῳ.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
πότερα πάλαι τεκοῦσαν ἢ νεωστὶ δή;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
δέχ’ ἡλίους, ἐν οἷσιν ἀγνεύει λεχώ.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
καὶ δὴ τί τοῦτο μητρὶ προσβάλλει φόνον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἥξει κλύουσα λόχιά μου νοσήματα.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
πόθεν; τί δ’ αὐτῇ σοῦ μέλειν δοκεῖς, τέκνον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ναί· καὶ δακρύσει γ’ ἀξίωμ’ ἐμῶν τόκων.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
ἴσως· πάλιν τοι μῦθον ἐς καμπὴν ἄγε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἐλθοῦσα μέντοι δῆλον ὡς ἀπόλλυται.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
καὶ μὴν ἐπ’ αὐτάς γ’ εἶσι σῶν δόμων πύλας.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐκοῦν τραπέσθαι σμικρὸν εἰς Ἅιδου τόδε;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
εἰ γὰρ θάνοιμι τοῦτ᾽ ἰδὼν ἐγώ ποτε.
{Ηλ.} πρώτιστα μέν νυν τῷδ᾽ ὑφήγησαι, γέρον . . .

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
Αἴγισθος ἔνθα νῦν θυηπολεῖ θεοῖς;
{Ηλ.} ἔπειτ᾽ ἀπαντῶν μητρὶ τἀπ᾽ ἐμοῦ φράσον.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
ὥστ᾽ αὐτά γ᾽ ἐκ σοῦ στόματος εἰρῆσθαι δοκεῖν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
σὸν ἔργον ἤδη· πρόσθεν εἴληχας φόνου.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
στείχοιμ᾽ ἄν, εἴ τις ἡγεμὼν γίγνοιθ᾽ ὁδοῦ.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ πέμποιμ᾽ ἂν οὐκ ἀκουσίως. 670

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ὦ Ζεῦ Πατρῷε, καὶ Τροπαῖ᾽ ἐχθρῶν γενοῦ . . .

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οἴκτιρέ θ᾽ ἡμᾶς· οἰκτρὰ γὰρ πεπόνθαμεν . . .

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
οἴκτιρε δῆτα σούς γε φύντας ἐκγόνους.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
Ἥρα τε, βωμῶν ἣ Μυκηναίων κρατεῖς . . .

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
νίκην δὸς ἡμῖν, εἰ δίκαι᾽ αἰτούμεθα.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
δὸς δῆτα πατρὸς τοῖσδε τιμωρὸν δίκην.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
σύ τ', ὦ κάτω γῆς ἀνοσίως οἰκῶν πάτερ . . .

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
καὶ Γαῖ' ἄνασσα, χεῖρας ᾗ δίδωμ' ἐμὰς . . .

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
ἄμυν' ἄμυνε τοῖσδε φιλτάτοις τέκνοις.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
νῦν πάντα νεκρὸν ἐλθὲ σύμμαχον λαβών.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οἵπερ γε σὺν σοὶ Φρύγας ἀνήλωσαν δορὶ . . .

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
χὥσοι στυγοῦσιν ἀνοσίους μιάστορας.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἤκουσας, ὦ δείν' ἐξ ἐμῆς μητρὸς παθών;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ
πάντ', οἶδ', ἀκούει τάδε πατήρ· στείχειν δ' ἀκμή.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
καί σοι προφωνῶ πρὸς τάδ' Αἴγισθον θανεῖν·
ὡς εἰ παλαισθεὶς πτῶμα θανάσιμον πεσῇ,
τέθνηκα κἀγώ, μηδέ με ζῶσαν λέγε·
παίσω γὰρ ἧπαρ τοὐμὸν ἀμφήκει ξίφει.
δόμων ἔσω βᾶσ' εὐτρεπὲς ποήσομαι.
ὡς ἢν μὲν ἔλθῃ πύστις εὐτυχὴς σέθεν,
ὀλολύξεται πᾶν δῶμα· θνῄσκοντος δέ σου
τἀναντί' ἔσται τῶνδε· ταῦτά σοι λέγω.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
πάντ’ οἶδα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
πρὸς τάδ’ ἄνδρα γίγνεσθαί σε χρή.
ὑμεῖς δέ μοι, γυναῖκες, εὖ πυρσεύετε
κραυγὴν ἀγῶνος τοῦδε· φρουρήσω δ’ ἐγὼ
πρόχειρον ἔγχος χειρὶ βαστάζουσ’ ἐμῇ.
οὐ γάρ ποτ’ ἐχθροῖς τοῖς ἐμοῖς νικωμένη
δίκην ὑφέξω, σῶμ’ ἐμὸν καθυβρίσαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἀταλᾶς ὑπὸ ματρὸς <ἄρν’> {[στρ.}
Ἀργείων
ὀρέων ποτὲ κληδὼν ἐν
πολιαῖσι μένει φήμαις
εὐαρμόστοις ἐν καλάμοις
Πᾶνα μοῦσαν ἡδύθροον
πνέοντ’, ἀγρῶν ταμίαν,
χρυσέαν καλλιπλόκαμον
πορεῦσαι. πετρίνοις δ’ ἐπι-
στὰς κᾶρυξ ἰάχει βάθροις·
Ἀγορὰν ἀγοράν, Μυκη-
ναῖοι, στείχετε μακαρίων
ὀψόμενοι τυράννων
φάσματα † δείματα. . . . χοροὶ δ’ Ἀτρει-
δᾶν † ἐγέραιρον οἴκους·

θυμέλαι δ’ ἐπίτναντο χρυ- {[ἀντ.}
σήλατοι,
σελαγεῖτο δ’ ἀν’ ἄστυ πῦρ
ἐπιβώμιον Ἀργείων·
λωτὸς δὲ φθόγγον κελάδει
κάλλιστον, Μουσᾶν θεράπων·
μολπαὶ δ’ ηὔξοντ’ ἐραταί,
χρυσέας ἀρνὸς ἐπίλογοι,
Θυέστου· κρυφίαις γὰρ εὐ-

ναῖς πείσας ἄλοχον φίλαν
Ἀτρέως, τέρας ἐκκομί-
ζει πρὸς δώματα· νεόμενος δ’
εἰς ἀγόρους ἀυτεῖ
τὰν κερόεσσαν ἔχειν χρυσεόμαλ-
λον κατὰ δῶμα ποίμναν.

τότε δὴ τότε φαεν- {[στρ.}
νὰς ἄστρων μετέβασ’ ὁδοὺς
Ζεὺς καὶ φέγγος ἀελίου
λευκόν τε πρόσωπον ἀ-
οῦς, τὰ δ’ ἕσπερα νῶτ’ ἐλαύ-
νει θερμᾷ φλογὶ θεοπύρῳ,
νεφέλαι δ’ ἔνυδροι πρὸς ἄρ-
κτον, ξηραί τ’ Ἀμμωνίδες ἕ-
δραι φθίνουσ’ ἀπειρόδροσοι,
καλλίστων ὄμβρων Διόθεν στερεῖσαι.

λέγεται, τὰν δὲ πί- {[ἀντ.}
στιν σμικρὰν παρ’ ἔμοιγ’ ἔχει,
στρέψαι θερμὰν ἀέλιον
χρυσωπὸν ἕδραν ἀλλά-
ξαντα δυστυχίᾳ βροτεί-
ῳ θνατᾶς ἕνεκεν δίκας.
φοβεροὶ δὲ βροτοῖσι μῦ-
θοι κέρδος πρὸς θεῶν θεραπεί-
αν. ὧν οὐ μνασθεῖσα πόσιν
κτείνεις, κλεινῶν συγγενέτειρ’ ἀδελφῶν.

{-} ἔα ἔα·
φίλαι, βοῆς ἠκούσατ’-ἢ δοκὼ κενὴ
ὑπῆλθέ μ’; -ὥστε νερτέρα βροντὴ Διός;
ἰδού, τάδ’ οὐκ ἄσημα πνεύματ’ αἴρεται·
δέσποιν’, ἄμειψον δώματ’, Ἠλέκτρα, τάδε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
φίλαι, τί χρῆμα; πῶς ἀγῶνος ἥκομεν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ
οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἔν· φόνιον οἰμωγὴν κλύω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἤκουσα κἀγώ, τηλόθεν μέν, ἀλλ’ ὅμως.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
μακρὰν γὰρ ἕρπει γῆρυς, ἐμφανής γε μήν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
Ἀργεῖος ὁ στεναγμός· ἦ φίλων ἐμῶν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ
οὐκ οἶδα· πᾶν γὰρ μείγνυται μέλος βοῆς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
σφαγὴν ἀυτεῖς τήνδε μοι· τί μέλλομεν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἔπισχε, τρανῶς ὡς μάθῃς τύχας σέθεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐκ ἔστι· νικώμεσθα· ποῦ γὰρ ἄγγελοι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἥξουσιν· οὗτοι βασιλέα φαῦλον κτανεῖν. 760

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
ὦ καλλίνικοι παρθένοι Μυκηνίδες,
νικῶντ’ Ὀρέστην πᾶσιν ἀγγέλλω φίλοις,
Ἀγαμέμνονος δὲ φονέα κείμενον πέδῳ
Αἴγισθον· ἀλλὰ θεοῖσιν εὔχεσθαι χρεών.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τίς δ’ εἶ σύ; πῶς μοι πιστὰ σημαίνεις τάδε;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
οὐκ οἶσθ’ ἀδελφοῦ μ’ εἰσορῶσα πρόσπολον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὦ φίλτατ’, ἔκ τοι δείματος δυσγνωσίαν
εἶχον προσώπου· νῦν δὲ γιγνώσκω σε δή.
τί φῄς; τέθνηκε πατρὸς ἐμοῦ στυγνὸς φονεύς;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
τέθνηκε· δίς σοι ταὔθ’, ἃ γοῦν βούλῃ, λέγω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὦ θεοί, Δίκη τε πάνθ’ ὁρῶσ’, ἦλθές ποτε.
ποίῳ τρόπῳ δὲ καὶ τίνι ῥυθμῷ φόνου
κτείνει Θυέστου παῖδα; βούλομαι μαθεῖν.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
ἐπεὶ μελάθρων τῶνδ’ ἀπήραμεν πόδα,
ἐσβάντες ἦμεν δίκροτον εἰς ἀμαξιτὸν
ἔνθ’ ἦν ὁ κλεινὸς τῶν Μυκηναίων ἄναξ.
κυρεῖ δὲ κήποις ἐν καταρρύτοις βεβώς,
δρέπων τερείνης μυρσίνης κάρᾳ πλόκους·
ἰδών τ’ ἀυτεῖ· Χαίρετ’, ὦ ξένοι· τίνες
πόθεν πορεύεσθ’; ἔστε τ’ ἐκ ποίας χθονός;
ὁ δ’ εἶπ’ Ὀρέστης· Θεσσαλοί· πρὸς δ’ Ἄλφειὸν
θύσοντες ἐρχόμεσθ’ Ὀλυμπίῳ Διί.
κλύων δὲ ταῦτ’ Αἴγισθος ἐννέπει τάδε·
Νῦν μὲν παρ’ ἡμῖν χρὴ συνεστίους ἐμοὶ
θοίνης γενέσθαι· τυγχάνω δὲ βουθυτῶν
Νύμφαις· ἑῷοι δ’ ἐξαναστάντες λέχους
ἐς ταὐτὸν ἥξετ’. ἀλλ’ ἴωμεν ἐς δόμους-
καὶ ταῦθ’ ἅμ’ ἡγόρευε καὶ χερὸς λαβὼν
παρῆγεν ἡμᾶς-οὐδ’ ἀπαρνεῖσθαι χρεών·
[ἐπεὶ δ’ ἐν οἴκοις ἦμεν, ἐννέπει τάδε·]
λούτρ’ ὡς τάχιστα τοῖς ξένοις τις αἰρέτω,
ὡς ἀμφὶ βωμὸν στῶσι χερνίβων πέλας.
ἀλλ’ εἶπ’ Ὀρέστης· Ἀρτίως ἡγνίσμεθα
λουτροῖσι καθαροῖς ποταμίων ῥείθρων ἄπο.
εἰ δὲ ξένους ἀστοῖσι συνθύειν χρεών,
Αἴγισθ’, ἕτοιμοι κοὐκ ἀπαρνούμεσθ’, ἄναξ.

τοῦτον μὲν οὖν μεθεῖσαν ἐκ μέσου λόγον·
λόγχας δὲ θέντες δεσπότου φρουρήματα
δμῶες πρὸς ἔργον πάντες ἵεσαν χέρας·
οἱ μὲν σφαγεῖον ἔφερον, οἱ δ' ἧρον κανᾶ,
ἄλλοι δὲ πῦρ ἀνῆπτον ἀμφί τ' ἐσχάρας
λέβητας ὤρθουν· πᾶσα δ' ἐκτύπει στέγη.
λαβὼν δὲ προχύτας μητρὸς εὐνέτης σέθεν
ἔβαλλε βωμούς, τοιάδ' ἐννέπων ἔπη·
Νύμφαι πετραῖαι, πολλάκις με βουθυτεῖν
καὶ τὴν κατ' οἴκους Τυνδαρίδα δάμαρτ' ἐμὴν
πράσσοντας ὡς νῦν, τοὺς δ' ἐμοὺς ἐχθροὺς κακῶς
-λέγων Ὀρέστην καὶ σέ. δεσπότης δ' ἐμὸς
τἀναντί' ηὔχετ', οὐ γεγωνίσκων λόγους,
λαβεῖν πατρῷα δώματ'. ἐκ κανοῦ δ' ἑλὼν
Αἴγισθος ὀρθὴν σφαγίδα, μοσχείαν τρίχα
τεμὼν ἐφ' ἁγνὸν πῦρ ἔθηκε δεξιᾷ,
κἄσφαξ' ἐπ' ὤμων μόσχον ὡς ἦραν χεροῖν
δμῶες, λέγει δὲ σῷ κασιγνήτῳ τάδε·
Ἐκ τῶν καλῶν κομποῦσι τοῖσι Θεσσαλοῖς
εἶναι τόδ', ὅστις ταῦρον ἀρταμεῖ καλῶς
ἵππους τ' ὀχμάζει· λαβὲ σίδηρον, ὦ ξένε,
δεῖξόν τε φήμην ἔτυμον ἀμφὶ Θεσσαλῶν.
ὁ δ' εὐκρότητον Δωρίδ' ἁρπάσας χεροῖν,
ῥίψας ἀπ' ὤμων εὐπρεπῆ πορπάματα,
Πυλάδην μὲν εἵλετ' ἐν πόνοις ὑπηρέτην,
δμῶας δ' ἀπωθεῖ· καὶ λαβὼν μόσχου πόδα,
λευκὰς ἐγύμνου σάρκας ἐκτείνων χέρα·
θᾶσσον δὲ βύρσαν ἐξέδειρεν ἢ δρομεὺς
δισσοὺς διαύλους ἵππιος διήνυσε,
κἀνεῖτο λαγόνας. ἱερὰ δ' ἐς χεῖρας λαβὼν
Αἴγισθος ἤθρει. καὶ λοβὸς μὲν οὐ προσῆν
σπλάγχνοις, πύλαι δὲ καὶ δοχαὶ χολῆς πέλας
κακὰς ἔφαινον τῷ σκοποῦντι προσβολάς.
χὠ μὲν σκυθράζει, δεσπότης δ' ἀνιστορεῖ·
Τί χρῆμ' ἀθυμεῖς; -Ὦ ξέν', ὀρρωδῶ τινα
δόλον θυραῖον. ἔστι δ' ἔχθιστος βροτῶν
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖς πολέμιός τ' ἐμοῖς δόμοις·

ὃ δ’ εἶπε· Φυγάδος δῆτα δειμαίνεις δόλον,
πόλεως ἀνάσσων; οὐχ, ὅπως παστήρια
θοινασόμεσθα, Φθιάδ’ ἀντὶ Δωρικῆς
οἴσει τις ἡμῖν κοπίδ’, ἀπορρήξω χέλυν;
λαβὼν δὲ κόπτει. σπλάγχνα δ’ Αἴγισθος λαβὼν
ἤθρει διαιρῶν. τοῦ δὲ νεύοντος κάτω
ὄνυχας ἐπ’ ἄκρους στὰς κασίγνητος σέθεν
ἐς σφονδύλους ἔπαισε, νωτιαῖα δὲ
ἔρρηξεν ἄρθρα· πᾶν δὲ σῶμ’ ἄνω κάτω
ἤσπαιρεν ἠλάλαζε δυσθνῄσκων φόνῳ.
δμῶες δ’ ἰδόντες εὐθὺς ᾔξαν ἐς δόρυ,
πολλοὶ μάχεσθαι πρὸς δύ’· ἀνδρείας δ’ ὕπο
ἔστησαν ἀντίπρῳρα σείοντες βέλη
Πυλάδης Ὀρέστης τ’. εἶπε δ’· Οὐχὶ δυσμενὴς
ἥκω πόλει τῇδ’ οὐδ’ ἐμοῖς ὀπάοσιν,
φονέα δὲ πατρὸς ἀντετιμωρησάμην
τλήμων Ὀρέστης· ἀλλὰ μή με καίνετε,
πατρὸς παλαιοὶ δμῶες. οἳ δ’, ἐπεὶ λόγων
ἤκουσαν, ἔσχον κάμακας· ἐγνώσθη δ’ ὑπὸ
γέροντος ἐν δόμοισιν ἀρχαίου τινός.
στέφουσι δ’ εὐθὺς σοῦ κασιγνήτου κάρα
χαίροντες ἀλαλάζοντες. ἔρχεται δὲ σοὶ
κάρα ‘πιδείξων οὐχὶ Γοργόνος φέρων,
ἀλλ’ ὃν στυγεῖς Αἴγισθον· αἷμα δ’ αἵματος
πικρὸς δανεισμὸς ἦλθε τῷ θανόντι νῦν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
θὲς ἐς χορόν, ὦ φίλα, ἴχνος, {[στρ.}
ὡς νεβρὸς οὐράνιον
πήδημα κουφίζουσα σὺν ἀγλαΐᾳ.
νικᾷ στεφαναφορίαν
† κρείσσω τοῖς † παρ’ Ἀλφειοῦ ῥεέθροισι τελέσσας
κασίγνητος σέθεν· ἀλλ’ ἐπάειδε
καλλίνικον ᾠδὰν ἐμῷ χορῷ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὦ φέγγος, ὦ τέθριππον ἡλίου σέλας,

ὦ γαῖα καὶ νὺξ ἣν ἐδερκόμην πάρος,
νῦν ὄμμα τοὐμὸν ἀμπτυχαί τ’ ἐλεύθεροι,
ἐπεὶ πατρὸς πέπτωκεν Αἴγισθος φονεύς.
φέρ’, οἷα δὴ ‘΄χω καὶ δόμοι κεύθουσί μου
κόμης ἀγάλματ’ ἐξενέγκωμαι, φίλαι,
στέψω τ’ ἀδελφοῦ κρᾶτα τοῦ νικηφόρου.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
σὺ μέν νυν ἀγάλματ’ ἄειρε {[ἀντ.}
κρατί· τὸ δ’ ἀμέτερον
χωρήσεται Μούσαισι χόρευμα φίλον.
νῦν οἱ πάρος ἀμέτεροι
γαίας τυραννεύσουσι φίλοι βασιλῆες,
δικαίως . . . τοὺς δ’ ἀδίκως καθελόντες.
ἀλλ’ ἴτω ξύναυλος βοὰ χαρᾷ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὦ καλλίνικε, πατρὸς ἐκ νικηφόρου
γεγώς, Ὀρέστα, τῆς ὑπ’ Ἰλίῳ μάχης,
δέξαι κόμης σῆς βοστρύχων ἀνδήματα.
ἥκεις γὰρ οὐκ ἀχρεῖον ἔκπλεθρον δραμὼν
ἀγῶν’ ἐς οἴκους, ἀλλὰ πολέμιον κτανὼν
Αἴγισθον, ὃς σὸν πατέρα κἀμὸν ὤλεσε.
σύ τ’, ὦ παρασπίστ’, ἀνδρὸς εὐσεβεστάτου
παίδευμα Πυλάδη, στέφανον ἐξ ἐμῆς χερὸς
δέχου· φέρῃ γὰρ καὶ σὺ τῷδ’ ἴσον μέρος
ἀγῶνος· αἰεὶ δ’ εὐτυχεῖς φαίνοισθέ μοι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
θεοὺς μὲν ἡγοῦ πρῶτον, Ἠλέκτρα, τύχης
ἀρχηγέτας τῆσδ’, εἶτα κἄμ’ ἐπαίνεσον
τὸν τῶν θεῶν τε τῆς τύχης θ’ ὑπηρέτην.
ἥκω γὰρ οὐ λόγοισιν ἀλλ’ ἔργοις κτανὼν
Αἴγισθον· ὡς δὲ τῷ σάφ’ εἰδέναι τάδε
προσθῶμεν, αὐτὸν τὸν θανόντα σοι φέρω,
ὃν εἴτε χρῄζεις θηρσὶν ἁρπαγὴν πρόθες,
ἢ σκῦλον οἰωνοῖσιν, αἰθέρος τέκνοις,

πήξασ᾽ ἔρεισον σκόλοπι· σὸς γάρ ἐστι νῦν
[δοῦλος, πάροιθε δεσπότης κεκλημένος.]

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
αἰσχύνομαι μέν, βούλομαι δ᾽ εἰπεῖν ὅμως.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τί χρῆμα; λέξον· ὡς φόβου γ᾽ ἔξωθεν εἶ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
νεκροὺς ὑβρίζειν, μή μέ τις φθόνῳ βάλῃ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς ὅστις ἂν μέμψαιτό σε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
δυσάρεστος ἡμῶν καὶ φιλόψογος πόλις.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
λέγ᾽, εἴ τι χρῄζεις, σύγγον᾽· ἀσπόνδοισι γὰρ
νόμοισιν ἔχθραν τῷδε συμβεβλήκαμεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
εἶέν· τίν᾽ ἀρχὴν πρῶτά σ᾽ ἐξείπω κακῶν,
ποίας τελευτάς; τίνα μέσον τάξω λόγον;
καὶ μὴν δι᾽ ὀρθρων γ᾽ οὔποτ᾽ ἐξελίμπανον
θρυλοῦσ᾽ ἅ γ᾽ εἰπεῖν ἤθελον κατ᾽ ὄμμα σόν,
εἰ δὴ γενοίμην δειμάτων ἐλευθέρα
τῶν πρόσθε. νῦν οὖν ἐσμεν· ἀποδώσω δέ σοι
ἐκεῖν᾽ ἅ σε ζῶντ᾽ ἤθελον λέξαι κακά.
ἀπώλεσάς με κὠρφανὴν φίλου πατρὸς
καὶ τόνδ᾽ ἔθηκας, οὐδὲν ἠδικημένος,
κἄγημας αἰσχρῶς μητέρ᾽ ἄνδρα τ᾽ ἔκτανες
στρατηλατοῦνθ᾽ Ἕλλησιν, οὐκ ἐλθὼν Φρύγας.
ἐς τοῦτο δ᾽ ἦλθες ἀμαθίας ὥστ᾽ ἤλπισας
ὡς ἐς σὲ ἐμὴν δὴ μητέρ᾽ οὐχ ἕξοις κακὴν
γήμας, ἐμοῦ δὲ πατρὸς ἠδίκεις λέχη.
ἴστω δ᾽, ὅταν τις διολέσας δάμαρτά του

κρυπταῖσιν εὐναῖς εἶτ᾽ ἀναγκασθῇ λαβεῖν,
δύστηνός ἐστιν, εἰ δοκεῖ τὸ σωφρονεῖν
ἐκεῖ μὲν αὐτὴν οὐκ ἔχειν, παρ᾽ οἷ δ᾽ ἔχειν.
ἄλγιστα δ᾽ ᾥκεις, οὐ δοκῶν οἰκεῖν κακῶς·
ᾔδησθα γὰρ δῆτ᾽ ἀνόσιον γήμας γάμον,
μήτηρ δὲ σ᾽ ἄνδρα δυσσεβῆ κεκτημένη.
ἄμφω πονηρὼ δ᾽ ὄντ᾽ ἀφαιρεῖσθον τύχην
† κείνη τε τὴν σὴν καὶ σὺ τοὐκείνης κακόν. †
πᾶσιν δ᾽ ἐν Ἀργείοισιν ἤκουες τάδε·
Ὁ τῆς γυναικός-οὐχὶ τἀνδρὸς ἡ γυνή.
καίτοι τόδ᾽ αἰσχρόν, προστατεῖν γε δωμάτων
γυναῖκα, μὴ τὸν ἄνδρα· κἀκείνους στυγῶ
τοὺς παῖδας, ὅστις τοῦ μὲν ἄρσενος πατρὸς
οὐκ ὠνόμασται, τῆς δὲ μητρὸς ἐν πόλει.
ἐπίσημα γὰρ γήμαντι καὶ μείζω λέχη
τἀνδρὸς μὲν οὐδείς, τῶν δὲ θηλειῶν λόγος.
ὃ δ᾽ ἠπάτα σε πλεῖστον οὐκ ἐγνωκότα,
ηὔχεις τις εἶναι τοῖσι χρήμασι σθένων·
τὰ δ᾽ οὐδὲν εἰ μὴ βραχὺν ὁμιλῆσαι χρόνον.
ἡ γὰρ φύσις βέβαιος, οὐ τὰ χρήματα.
ἣ μὲν γὰρ αἰεὶ παραμένουσ᾽ αἴρει κακά·
ὁ δ᾽ ὄλβος ἀδίκως καὶ μετὰ σκαιῶν ξυνὼν
ἐξέπτατ᾽ οἴκων, σμικρὸν ἀνθήσας χρόνον.
ἃ δ᾽ ἐς γυναῖκας-παρθένῳ γὰρ οὐ καλὸν
λέγειν-σιωπῶ, γνωρίμως δ᾽ αἰνίξομαι.
ὕβριζες, ὡς δὴ βασιλικοὺς ἔχων δόμους
κάλλει τ᾽ ἀραρώς. ἀλλ᾽ ἔμοιγ᾽ εἴη πόσις
μὴ παρθενωπός, ἀλλὰ τἀνδρείου τρόπου.
τὰ γὰρ τέκν᾽ αὐτῶν Ἄρεος ἐκκρεμάννυται,
τὰ δ᾽ εὐπρεπῆ δὴ κόσμος ἐν χοροῖς μόνον.
ἔρρ᾽, οὐδὲν εἰδὼς ὧν ἐφευρεθεὶς χρόνῳ
δίκην δέδωκας. -ὧδέ τις κακοῦργος ὢν
μή μοι τὸ πρῶτον βῆμ᾽ ἐὰν δράμῃ καλῶς,
νικᾶν δοκείτω τὴν Δίκην, πρὶν ἂν πέλας
γραμμῆς ἵκηται καὶ τέλος κάμψῃ βίου.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἔπραξε δεινά, δεινὰ δ’ ἀντέδωκε σοὶ
καὶ τῷδ’· ἔχει γὰρ ἡ Δίκη μέγα σθένος.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
εἶέν· κομίζειν τοῦδε σῶμ’ ἔσω χρεὼν
σκότῳ τε δοῦναι, δμῶες, ὡς, ὅταν μόλῃ
μήτηρ, σφαγῆς πάροιθε μὴ εἰσίδῃ νεκρόν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἐπίσχες· ἐμβάλωμεν εἰς ἄλλον λόγον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τί δ’; ἐκ Μυκηνῶν μῶν βοηδρόμους ὁρῶ;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
οὔκ, ἀλλὰ τὴν τεκοῦσαν ἥ μ’ ἐγείνατο.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
καλῶς ἄρ’ ἄρκυν ἐς μέσην πορεύεται . . .
καὶ μὴν ὄχοις γε καὶ στολῇ λαμπρύνεται.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τί δῆτα δρῶμεν μητέρ’; ἦ φονεύσομεν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
μῶν σ’ οἶκτος εἶλε, μητρὸς ὡς εἶδες δέμας;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
φεῦ·
πῶς γὰρ κτάνω νιν, ἥ μ’ ἔθρεψε κἄτεκεν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὥσπερ πατέρα σὸν ἥδε κἀμὸν ὤλεσεν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ὦ Φοῖβε, πολλήν γ’ ἀμαθίαν ἐθέσπισας . . .

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὅπου δ᾽ Ἀπόλλων σκαιὸς ᾖ, τίνες σοφοί;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ὅστις μ᾽ ἔχρησας μητέρ᾽, ἣν οὐ χρῆν, κτανεῖν.
{**ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ**
βλάπτῃ δὲ δὴ τί πατρὶ τιμωρῶν σέθεν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
μητροκτόνος νῦν φεύξομαι, τόθ᾽ ἁγνὸς ὤν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
καὶ μή γ᾽ ἀμύνων πατρὶ δυσσεβὴς ἔσῃ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἐγὼ δὲ μητρὸς-; τῷ φόνου δώσω δίκας;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τῷ δ᾽ ἦν πατρῴαν διαμεθῇς τιμωρίαν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἆρ᾽ αὖτ᾽ ἀλάστωρ εἶπ᾽ ἀπεικασθεὶς θεῷ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἱερὸν καθίζων τρίποδ᾽; ἐγὼ μὲν οὐ δοκῶ. 980

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
οὐδ᾽ ἂν πιθοίμην εὖ μεμαντεῦσθαι τάδε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐ μὴ κακισθεὶς εἰς ἀνανδρίαν πεσῇ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἀλλ᾽ ἦ τὸν αὐτὸν τῇδ᾽ ὑποστήσω δόλον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ᾧ καὶ πόσιν καθεῖλες, Αἴγισθον κτανών.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἔσειμι· δεινοῦ δ’ ἄρχομαι προβλήματος
καὶ δεινὰ δράσω γε-εἰ θεοῖς δοκεῖ τάδε,
ἔστω· πικρὸν δὲ χἠδὺ τἀγώνισμά μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
[ἰώ,]
βασίλεια γύναι χθονὸς Ἀργείας,
παῖ Τυνδάρεω,
καὶ τοῖν ἀγαθοῖν ξύγγονε κούροιν
Διός, οἳ φλογερὰν αἰθέρ’ ἐν ἄστροις
ναίουσι, βροτῶν ἐν ἁλὸς ῥοθίοις
τιμὰς σωτῆρας ἔχοντες·
χαῖρε, σεβίζω σ’ ἴσα καὶ μάκαρας
πλούτου μεγάλης τ’ εὐδαιμονίας.
τὰς σὰς δὲ τύχας θεραπεύεσθαι
καιρός. <χαῖρ’,> ὦ βασίλεια.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ
ἔκβητ’ ἀπήνης, Τρῳάδες, χειρὸς δ’ ἐμῆς
λάβεσθ’, ἵν’ ἔξω τοῦδ’ ὄχου στήσω πόδα.
σκύλοισι μὲν γὰρ θεῶν κεκόσμηνται δόμοι
Φρυγίοις, ἐγὼ δὲ τάσδε, Τρῳάδος χθονὸς
ἐξαίρετ’, ἀντὶ παιδὸς ἣν ἀπώλεσα
σμικρὸν γέρας, καλὸν δὲ κέκτημαι δόμοις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὔκουν ἐγώ-δούλη γὰρ ἐκβεβλημένη
δόμων πατρῴων δυστυχεῖς οἰκῶ δόμους-
μῆτερ, λάβωμαι μακαρίας τῆς σῆς χερός;

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ
δοῦλαι πάρεισιν αἵδε, μὴ σύ μοι πόνει.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τί δ’; αἰχμάλωτόν τοί μ’ ἀπῴκισας δόμων,
ἠρημένων δὲ δωμάτων ἠρήμεθα,
ὡς αἵδε, πατρὸς ὀρφαναὶ λελειμμέναι.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

τοιαῦτα μέντοι σὸς πατὴρ βουλεύματα
ἐς οὓς ἐχρῆν ἥκιστ᾽ ἐβούλευσεν φίλων.
λέξω δὲ . . . καίτοι δόξ᾽ ὅταν λάβῃ κακὴ
γυναῖκα, γλώσσῃ πικρότης ἔνεστί τις.
ὡς μὲν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν, οὐ καλῶς· τὸ πρᾶγμα δὲ
μαθόντας, ἢν μὲν ἀξίως μισεῖν ἔχῃς,
στυγεῖν δίκαιον· εἰ δὲ μή, τί δεῖ στυγεῖν;
ἡμᾶς ἔδωκε Τυνδάρεως τῷ σῷ πατρί,
οὐχ ὥστε θνῄσκειν, οὐδ᾽ ἃ γειναίμην ἐγώ.
κεῖνος δὲ παῖδα τὴν ἐμὴν Ἀχιλλέως
λέκτροισι πείσας ᾠχετ᾽ ἐκ δόμων ἄγων
πρυμνοῦχον Αὖλιν, ἔνθ᾽ ὑπερτείνας πυρᾶς
λευκὴν διήμησ᾽ Ἰφιγόνης παρηΐδα.
κεἰ μὲν πόλεως ἅλωσιν ἐξιώμενος,
ἢ δῶμ᾽ ὀνήσων τἄλλα τ᾽ ἐκσῴζων τέκνα,
ἔκτεινε πολλῶν μίαν ὕπερ, συγγνώστ᾽ ἂν ἦν·
νῦν δ᾽ οὕνεχ᾽ Ἑλένη μάργος ἦν ὅ τ᾽ αὖ λαβὼν
ἄλοχον κολάζειν προδότιν οὐκ ἠπίστατο,
τούτων ἕκατι παῖδ᾽ ἐμὴν διώλεσεν.
ἐπὶ τοῖσδε τοίνυν καίπερ ἠδικημένη
οὐκ ἠγριώμην οὐδ᾽ ἂν ἔκτανον πόσιν·
ἀλλ᾽ ἦλθ᾽ ἔχων μοι μαινάδ᾽ ἔνθεον κόρην
λέκτροις τ᾽ ἐπεισέφρηκε, καὶ νύμφα δύο
ἐν τοῖσιν αὐτοῖς δώμασιν κατείχομεν.
μῶρον μὲν οὖν γυναῖκες, οὐκ ἄλλως λέγω·
ὅταν δ᾽, ὑπόντος τοῦδ᾽, ἁμαρτάνῃ πόσις
τἄνδον παρώσας λέκτρα, μιμεῖσθαι θέλει
γυνὴ τὸν ἄνδρα χἄτερον κτᾶσθαι φίλον.
κἄπειτ᾽ ἐν ἡμῖν ὁ ψόγος λαμπρύνεται,
οἱ δ᾽ αἴτιοι τῶνδ᾽ οὐ κλύουσ᾽ ἄνδρες κακῶς.
εἰ δ᾽ ἐκ δόμων ἥρπαστο Μενέλεως λάθρᾳ,
κτανεῖν μ᾽ Ὀρέστην χρῆν, κασιγνήτης πόσιν
Μενέλαον ὡς σώσαιμι; σὸς δὲ πῶς πατὴρ
ἠνέσχετ᾽ ἂν ταῦτ᾽; εἶτα τὸν μὲν οὐ θανεῖν
κτείνοντα χρῆν τἄμ᾽, ἐμὲ δὲ πρὸς κείνου παθεῖν;
ἔκτειν᾽, ἐτρέφθην ἥνπερ ἦν πορεύσιμον

πρὸς τοὺς ἐκείνῳ πολεμίους. φίλων γὰρ ἂν
τίς ἂν πατρὸς σοῦ φόνον ἐκοινώνησέ μοι;
λέγ', εἴ τι χρῄζεις, κἀντίθες παρρησίᾳ,
ὅπως τέθνηκε σὸς πατὴρ οὐκ ἐνδίκως.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
δίκαι' ἔλεξας· ἡ δίκη δ' αἰσχρῶς ἔχει.
γυναῖκα γὰρ χρὴ πάντα συγχωρεῖν πόσει,
ἥτις φρενήρης· ᾗ δὲ μὴ δοκεῖ τάδε,
οὐδ' εἰς ἀριθμὸν τῶν ἐμῶν ἥκει λόγων.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
μέμνησο, μῆτερ, οἷς ἔλεξας ὑστάτους
λόγους, διδοῦσα πρὸς σέ μοι παρρησίαν.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ
καὶ νῦν γέ φημι κοὐκ ἀπαρνοῦμαι, τέκνον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
† ἆρα † κλύουσα, μῆτερ, εἶτ' ἔρξεις κακῶς;

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ
οὐκ ἔστι, τῇ σῇ δ' ἡδὺ προσθήσω φρενί.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
λέγοιμ' ἄν· ἀρχὴ δ' ἥδε μοι προοιμίου·
εἴθ' εἶχες, ὦ τεκοῦσα, βελτίους φρένας.
τὸ μὲν γὰρ εἶδος αἶνον ἄξιον φέρειν
Ἑλένης τε καὶ σοῦ, δύο δ' ἔφυτε συγγόνω,
ἄμφω ματαίω Κάστορός τ' οὐκ ἀξίω.
ἣ μὲν γὰρ ἁρπασθεῖσ' ἑκοῦσ' ἀπώλετο,
σὺ δ' ἄνδρ' ἄριστον Ἑλλάδος διώλεσας,
σκῆψιν προτείνουσ', ὡς ὑπὲρ τέκνου πόσιν
ἔκτεινας· οὐ γάρ σ' ὡς ἔγωγ' ἴσασιν εὖ.
ἥτις, θυγατρὸς πρὶν κεκυρῶσθαι σφαγάς,
νέον τ' ἀπ' οἴκων ἀνδρὸς ἐξωρμημένου,
ξανθὸν κατόπτρῳ πλόκαμον ἐξήσκεις κόμης.
γυνὴ δ', ἀπόντος ἀνδρός, ἥτις ἐκ δόμων

ἐς κάλλος ἀσκεῖ, διάγραφ᾽ ὡς οὖσαν κακήν.
οὐδὲν γὰρ αὐτὴν δεῖ θύρασιν εὐπρεπὲς
φαίνειν πρόσωπον, ἤν τι μὴ ζητῇ κακόν.
μόνη δὲ πασῶν οἶδ᾽ ἐγὼ σ᾽ Ἑλληνίδων,
εἰ μὲν τὰ Τρώων εὐτυχοῖ, κεχαρμένην,
εἰ δ᾽ ἥσσον᾽ εἴη, συννεφοῦσαν ὄμματα,
Ἀγαμέμνον᾽ οὐ χρῄζουσαν ἐκ Τροίας μολεῖν.
καίτοι καλῶς γε σωφρονεῖν παρεῖχέ σοι·
ἄνδρ᾽ εἶχες οὐ κακίον᾽ Αἰγίσθου πόσιν,
ὃν Ἑλλὰς αὐτῆς εἵλετο στρατηλάτην·
Ἑλένης δ᾽ ἀδελφῆς τοιάδ᾽ ἐξειργασμένης
ἐξῆν κλέος σοι μέγα λαβεῖν· τὰ γὰρ κακὰ
παράδειγμα τοῖς ἐσθλοῖσιν εἴσοψίν τ᾽ ἔχει.
εἰ δ᾽, ὡς λέγεις, σὴν θυγατέρ᾽ ἔκτεινεν πατήρ,
ἐγὼ τί σ᾽ ἠδίκησ᾽ ἐμός τε σύγγονος;
πῶς οὐ πόσιν κτείνασα πατρῴους δόμους
ἡμῖν προσῆψας, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπηνέγκω λέχει
τἀλλότρια, μισθοῦ τοὺς γάμους ὠνουμένη;
κοὔτ᾽ ἀντιφεύγει παιδὸς ἀντὶ σοῦ πόσις,
οὔτ᾽ ἀντ᾽ ἐμοῦ τέθνηκε, δὶς τόσως ἐμὲ
κτείνας ἀδελφῆς ζῶσαν. εἰ δ᾽ ἀμείψεται
φόνον δικάζων φόνος, ἀποκτενῶ σ᾽ ἐγὼ
καὶ παῖς Ὀρέστης πατρὶ τιμωρούμενοι·
εἰ γὰρ δίκαι᾽ ἐκεῖνα, καὶ τάδ᾽ ἔνδικα.
[ὅστις δὲ πλοῦτον ἢ εὐγένειαν εἰσιδὼν
γαμεῖ πονηράν, μῶρός ἐστι· μικρὰ γὰρ
μεγάλων ἀμείνω σώφρον᾽ ἐν δόμοις λέχη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τύχη γυναικῶν ἐς γάμους. τὰ μὲν γὰρ εὖ,
τὰ δ᾽ οὐ καλῶς πίπτοντα δέρκομαι βροτῶν.]

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ

ὦ παῖ, πέφυκας πατέρα σὸν στέργειν ἀεί·
ἔστιν δὲ καὶ τόδ᾽· οἳ μέν εἰσιν ἀρσένων,
οἳ δ᾽ αὖ φιλοῦσι μητέρας μᾶλλον πατρός.
συγγνώσομαί σοι· καὶ γὰρ οὐχ οὕτως ἄγαν

χαίρω τι, τέκνον, τοῖς δεδραμένοις ἐμοί.
σὺ δ’ ὧδ’ ἄλουτος καὶ δυσείματος χρόα
λεχὼ νεογνῶν ἐκ τόκων πεπαυμένη;
οἴμοι τάλαινα τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων·
ὡς μᾶλλον ἢ χρῆν ἤλασ’ εἰς ὀργὴν πόσιν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὀψὲ στενάζεις, ἡνίκ’ οὐκ ἔχεις ἄκη.
πατὴρ μὲν οὖν τέθνηκε· τὸν δ’ ἔξω χθονὸς
πῶς οὐ κομίζῃ παῖδ’ ἀλητεύοντα σόν;

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ
δέδοικα· τοὐμὸν δ’, οὐχὶ τοὐκείνου, σκοπῶ.
πατρὸς γάρ, ὡς λέγουσι, θυμοῦται φόνῳ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τί δαὶ πόσιν σὸν ἄγριον εἰς ἡμᾶς ἔχεις;

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ
τρόποι τοιοῦτοι· καὶ σὺ δ’ αὐθάδης ἔφυς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἀλγῶ γάρ· ἀλλὰ παύσομαι θυμουμένη.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ
καὶ μὴν ἐκεῖνος οὐκέτ’ ἔσται σοι βαρύς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
φρονεῖ μέγ’· ἐν γὰρ τοῖς ἐμοῖς ναίει δόμοις.
{**ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ**
ὁρᾷς; ἀν’ αὖ σὺ ζωπυρεῖς νείκη νέα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
σιγῶ· δέδοικα γάρ νιν ὡς δέδοικ’ ἐγώ.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ
παῦσαι λόγων τῶνδε. ἀλλὰ τί μ’ ἐκάλεις, τέκνον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἤκουσας, οἶμαι, τῶν ἐμῶν λοχευμάτων·
τούτων ὕπερ μοι θῦσον-οὐ γὰρ οἶδ' ἐγώ-
δεκάτῃ σελήνῃ παιδὸς ὡς νομίζεται·
τρίβων γὰρ οὐκ εἴμ', ἄτοκος οὖσ' ἐν τῷ πάρος.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ
ἄλλης τόδ' ἔργον, ἥ σ' ἔλυσεν ἐκ τόκων.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
αὐτὴ 'λόχευον κἄτεκον μόνη βρέφος.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ
οὕτως ἀγείτων οἶκος ἵδρυται φίλων;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
πένητας οὐδεὶς βούλεται κτᾶσθαι φίλους.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ
ἀλλ' εἶμι, παιδὸς ἀριθμὸν ὡς τελεσφόρον
θύσω θεοῖσι· σοὶ δ' ὅταν πράξω χάριν
τήνδ', εἶμ' ἐπ' ἀγρὸν οὗ πόσις θυηπολεῖ
Νύμφαισιν. ἀλλὰ τούσδ' ὄχους, ὀπάονες,
φάτναις ἄγοντες πρόσθεθ'· ἡνίκ' ἂν δέ με
δοκῆτε θυσίας τῆσδ' ἀπηλλάχθαι θεοῖς,
πάρεστε· δεῖ γὰρ καὶ πόσει δοῦναι χάριν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
χώρει πένητας ἐς δόμους· φρούρει δέ μοι
μή σ' αἰθαλώσῃ πολύκαπνον στέγος πέπλους.
θύσεις γὰρ οἷα χρή σε δαίμοσιν θύη.
κανοῦν δ' ἐνῆρκται καὶ τεθηγμένη σφαγίς,
ἥπερ καθεῖλε ταῦρον, οὗ πέλας πεσῇ
πληγεῖσα· νυμφεύσῃ δὲ κἀν Ἅιδου δόμοις
ᾧπερ ξυνηῦδες ἐν φάει. τοσήνδ' ἐγὼ
δώσω χάριν σοι, σὺ δὲ δίκην ἐμοὶ πατρός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἀμοιβαὶ κακῶν· μετάτροποι πνέου- {[στρ.}
σιν αὖραι δόμων. τότε μὲν <ἐν> λουτροῖς
ἔπεσεν ἐμὸς ἐμὸς ἀρχέτας,
ἰάχησε δὲ στέγα λάινοί τε θριγκοὶ δόμων,
τάδ' ἐνέποντος· Ὦ σχέτλια· τί με, γύναι, φονεύσεις φίλαν
πατρίδα δεκέτεσιν σποραῖσιν ἐλθόντ' ἐμάν;
{-} . . . . . .
. . . . . .
παλίρρους δὲ τάνδ' ὑπάγεται δίκαν {[ἀντ.}
διαδρόμου λέχους μέλεον, ἃ πόσιν
χρόνιον ἱκόμενον εἰς οἴκους
Κυκλώπειά τ' οὐράνια τείχε' ὀξυθήκτου βέλους
ἔκανεν αὐτόχειρ, πέλεκυν ἐν χεροῖν λαβοῦσ'· ἆ τλάμων
πόσις, ὅ τί ποτε τὰν τάλαιναν ἔσχεν κακόν;
{-} ὀρεία τις ὡς λέαιν' ὀργάδων
δρύοχα νεμομένα, τάδε κατήνυσεν.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ
{<ἔσωθεν>}
ὦ τέκνα, πρὸς θεῶν, μὴ κτάνητε μητέρα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
κλύεις ὑπώροφον βοάν;

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΗΣΤΡΑ
ἰώ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ᾤμωξα κἀγὼ πρὸς τέκνων χειρουμένης.
{-} νέμει τοι δίκαν θεός, ὅταν τύχῃ·
σχέτλια μὲν ἔπαθες, ἀνόσια δ' εἰργάσω,
τάλαιν', εὐνέταν.

{-} ἀλλ' οἵδε μητρὸς νεοφόνοις ἐν αἵμασι
πεφυρμένοι βαίνουσιν ἐξ οἴκων πόδα,
τροπαῖα δείγματ' ἀθλίων προσφθεγμάτων.

οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς οἶκος ἀθλιώτερος
τῶν Ταντα λείων οὐδ’ ἔφυ ποτ’ ἐκγόνων.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἰὼ Γᾶ καὶ Ζεῦ πανδερκέτα {[στρ.}
βροτῶν, ἴδετε τάδ’ ἔργα φόνι-
α μυσαρά, δίγονα σώματ’ ἐν
χθονὶ κείμενα πλαγᾷ
χερὸς ὑπ’ ἐμᾶς, ἄποιν’ ἐμῶν
πημάτων. . . .
. . . . .

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
δακρύτ’ ἄγαν, ὦ σύγγον’, αἰτία δ’ ἐγώ.
διὰ πυρὸς ἔμολον ἁ τάλαινα ματρὶ τᾷδ’,
ἅ μ’ ἔτικτε κούραν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἰὼ τύχας, σᾶς τύχας,
μᾶτερ τεκοῦσ’ <ἄλαστα>,
ἄλαστα μέλεα καὶ πέρα
παθοῦσα σῶν τέκνων ὑπαί.
πατρὸς δ’ ἔτεισας φόνον δικαίως.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἰὼ Φοῖβ’, ἀνύμνησας δίκαι’ {[ἀντ.}
ἄφαντα, φανερὰ δ’ ἐξέπρα-
ξας ἄχεα, φόνια δ’ ὤπασας
λάχε’ ἀπὸ γᾶς [τᾶς] Ἑλλανίδος.
τίνα δ’ ἑτέραν μόλω πόλιν;
τίς ξένος, τίς εὐσεβὴς
ἐμὸν κάρα προσόψεται
ματέρα κτανόντος;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἰὼ ἰώ μοι. ποῖ δ’ ἐγώ, τίν’ ἐς χορόν,
τίνα γάμον εἶμι; τίς πόσις με δέξεται
νυμφικὰς ἐς εὐνάς;

ΧΟΡΟΣ
πάλιν, πάλιν φρόνημα σὸν
μετεστάθη πρὸς αὔραν·
φρονεῖς γὰρ ὅσια νῦν, τότ᾽ οὐ
φρονοῦσα, δεινὰ δ᾽ εἰργάσω,
φίλα, κασίγνητον οὐ θέλοντα.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
κατεῖδες, οἷον ἁ τάλαιν᾽ ἔξω πέπλων {[στρ.}
ἔβαλεν, ἔδειξε μαστὸν ἐν φοναῖσιν,
ἰώ μοι, πρὸς πέδῳ
τιθεῖσα γόνιμα μέλεα; τὰν κόμαν δ᾽ ἐγὼ . . .

ΧΟΡΟΣ
σάφ᾽ οἶδα, δι᾽ ὀδύνας ἔβας,
ἰήιον κλύων γόον 1210
ματρός, ἅ σ᾽ ἔτικτε.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
βοὰν δ᾽ ἔλασκε τάνδε, πρὸς γένυν ἐμὰν {[ἀντ.}
τιθεῖσα χεῖρα· Τέκος ἐμόν, λιταίνω·
παρῄδων τ᾽ ἐξ ἐμᾶν
ἐκρίμναθ᾽, ὥστε χέρας ἐμὰς λιπεῖν βέλος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
τάλαινα· πῶς ἔτλας φόνον
δι᾽ ὀμμάτων ἰδεῖν σέθεν
ματρὸς ἐκπνεούσας; 1220

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἐγὼ μὲν ἐπιβαλὼν φάρη κόραις ἐμαῖς {[στρ.}
φασγάνῳ κατηρξάμαν
ματέρος ἔσω δέρας μεθείς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐπεγκέλευσά σοι
ξίφους τ᾽ ἐφηψάμαν ἅμα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
δεινότατον παθέων ἔρεξας.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
λαβοῦ, κάλυπτε μέλεα ματέρος πέπλοις {[ἀντ.}
<καὶ> καθάρμοσον σφαγάς.
φονέας ἔτικτες ἆρά σοι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἰδού, φίλᾳ τε κοὐ φίλᾳ
φάρεα τάδ' ἀμφιβάλλομεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
τέρμα κακῶν μεγάλων δόμοισιν.

{-} ἀλλ' οἵδε δόμων ὑπὲρ ἀκροτάτων
φαίνουσι τίνες-δαίμονες ἢ θεῶν
τῶν οὐρανίων; οὐ γὰρ θνητῶν γ'
ἥδε κέλευθος· τί ποτ' ἐς φανερὰν
ὄψιν βαίνουσι βροτοῖσιν;

ΔΙΟΣΚΟΥΡΟΙ
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖ, κλῦθι· δίπτυχοι δέ σε
καλοῦσι μητρὸς σύγγονοι Διόσκοροι,
Κάστωρ κασίγνητός τε Πολυδεύκης ὅδε.
δεινὸν δὲ ναὸς ἀρτίως πόντου σάλον
παύσαντ' ἀφίγμεθ' Ἄργος, ὡς ἐσείδομεν
σφαγὰς ἀδελφῆς τῆσδε, μητέρος δὲ σῆς.
δίκαια μέν νυν ἥδ' ἔχει, σὺ δ' οὐχὶ δρᾷς·
Φοῖβός τε, Φοῖβος-ἀλλ' ἄναξ γάρ ἐστ' ἐμός,
σιγῶ· σοφὸς δ' ὢν οὐκ ἔχρησέ σοι σοφά.
αἰνεῖν δ' ἀνάγκη ταῦτα· τἀντεῦθεν δὲ χρὴ
πράσσειν ἃ Μοῖρα Ζεύς τ' ἔκρανε σοῦ πέρι.
Πυλάδῃ μὲν Ἠλέκτραν δὸς ἄλοχον ἐς δόμους,
σὺ δ' Ἄργος ἔκλιπ'· οὐ γὰρ ἔστι σοι πόλιν
τήνδ' ἐμβατεύειν, μητέρα κτείναντι σήν.
δειναὶ δὲ κῆρές <σ'> αἱ κυνώπιδες θεαὶ
τροχηλατήσουσ' ἐμμανῆ πλανώμενον.

ἐλθὼν δ’ Ἀθήνας Παλλάδος σεμνὸν βρέτας
πρόσπτυξον· εἵρξει γάρ νιν ἐπτοημένας
δεινοῖς δράκουσιν ὥστε μὴ ψαύειν σέθεν,
γοργῶφ’ ὑπερτείνουσα σῷ κάρᾳ κύκλον.
ἔστιν δ’ Ἄρεώς τις ὄχθος, οὗ πρῶτον θεοὶ
ἔζοντ’ ἐπὶ ψήφοισιν αἵματος πέρι,
Ἁλιρρόθιον ὅτ’ ἔκταν’ ὠμόφρων Ἄρης,
μῆνιν θυγατρὸς ἀνοσίων νυμφευμάτων,
πόντου κρέοντος παῖδ’, ἵν’ εὐσεβεστάτη
ψῆφος βεβαία τ’ ἐστὶν † ἔκ τε τοῦ † θεοῖς.
ἐνταῦθα καὶ σὲ δεῖ δραμεῖν φόνου πέρι.
ἴσαι δέ σ’ ἐκσῴζουσι μὴ θανεῖν δίκῃ
ψῆφοι τεθεῖσαι· Λοξίας γὰρ αἰτίαν
ἐς αὐτὸν οἴσει, μητέρος χρήσας φόνον.
καὶ τοῖσι λοιποῖς ὅδε νόμος τεθήσεται,
νικᾶν ἴσαις ψήφοισι τὸν φεύγοντ’ ἀεί.
δειναὶ μὲν οὖν θεαὶ τῷδ’ ἄχει πεπληγμέναι
πάγον παρ’ αὐτὸν χάσμα δύσονται χθονός,
σεμνὸν βροτοῖσιν εὐσεβὲς χρηστήριον·
σὲ δ’ Ἀρκάδων χρὴ πόλιν ἐπ’ Ἀλφειοῦ ῥοαῖς
οἰκεῖν Λυκαίου πλησίον σηκώματος·
ἐπώνυμος δὲ σοῦ πόλις κεκλήσεται.
σοὶ μὲν τάδ’ εἶπον· τόνδε δ’ Αἰγίσθου νέκυν
Ἄργους πολῖται γῆς καλύψουσιν τάφῳ.
μητέρα δὲ τὴν σὴν ἄρτι Ναυπλίαν παρὼν
Μενέλαος, ἐξ οὗ Τρωικὴν εἶλε χθόνα,
Ἑλένη τε θάψει· Πρωτέως γὰρ ἐκ δόμων
ἥκει λιποῦσ’ Αἴγυπτον οὐδ’ ἦλθεν Φρύγας·
Ζεὺς δ’, ὡς ἔρις γένοιτο καὶ φόνος βροτῶν,
εἴδωλον Ἑλένης ἐξέπεμψ’ ἐς Ἴλιον.
Πυλάδης μὲν οὖν κόρην τε καὶ δάμαρτ’ ἔχων
Ἀχαιίδος γῆς οἴκαδ’ ἐσπορευέτω,
καὶ τὸν λόγῳ σὸν πενθερὸν κομιζέτω
Φωκέων ἐς αἶαν καὶ δότω πλούτου βάρος·
σὺ δ’ Ἰσθμίας γῆς αὐχέν’ ἐμβαίνω ποδὶ
χώρει πρὸς ὄχθον Κεκροπίας εὐδαίμονα.

πεπρωμένην γὰρ μοῖραν ἐκπλήσας φόνου
εὐδαιμονήσεις τῶνδ᾽ ἀπαλλαχθεὶς πόνων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ὦ παῖδε Διός, θέμις ἐς φθογγὰς
τὰς ὑμετέρας ἡμῖν πελάθειν;

ΔΙΟΣΚΟΥΡΟΙ
θέμις, οὐ μυσαραῖς τοῖσδε σφαγίοις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
κἀμοὶ μύθου μέτα, Τυνδαρίδαι;

ΔΙΟΣΚΟΥΡΟΙ
καὶ σοί· Φοίβῳ τήνδ᾽ ἀναθήσω
πρᾶξιν φονίαν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
πῶς ὄντε θεὼ τῆσδέ τ᾽ ἀδελφὼ
τῆς καπφθιμένης
οὐκ ἠρκέσατον κῆρας μελάθροις;

ΔΙΟΣΚΟΥΡΟΙ
μοῖρά τ᾽ ἀνάγκης ἦγ᾽ ᾗ τὸ χρεών,
Φοίβου τ᾽ ἄσοφοι γλώσσης ἐνοπαί.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τίς δ᾽ ἔμ᾽ Ἀπόλλων, ποῖοι χρησμοὶ
φονίαν ἔδοσαν μητρὶ γενέσθαι;

ΔΙΟΣΚΟΥΡΟΙ
κοιναὶ πράξεις, κοινοὶ δὲ πότμοι,
μία δ᾽ ἀμφοτέρους
ἄτη πατέρων διέκναισεν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ὦ σύγγονέ μοι, χρονίαν σ᾽ ἐσιδὼν

τῶν σῶν εὐθὺς φίλτρων στέρομαι
καὶ σ᾽ ἀπολείψω σοῦ λειπόμενος.

ΔΙΟΣΚΟΥΡΟΙ
πόσις ἔστ᾽ αὐτῇ καὶ δόμος· οὐχ ἥδ᾽
οἰκτρὰ πέπονθεν, πλὴν ὅτι λείπει
πόλιν Ἀργείων.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
καὶ τίνες ἄλλαι στοναχαὶ μείζους
ἢ γῆς πατρίας ὅρον ἐκλείπειν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ οἴκων ἔξειμι πατρὸς
καὶ ἐπ᾽ ἀλλοτρίαις ψήφοισι φόνον
μητρὸς ὑφέξω.

ΔΙΟΣΚΟΥΡΟΙ
θάρσει· Παλλάδος
ὁσίαν ἥξεις πόλιν· ἀλλ᾽ ἀνέχου.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
περί μοι στέρνοις στέρνα πρόσαψον,
σύγγονε φίλτατε·
διὰ γὰρ ζευγνῦσ᾽ ἡμᾶς πατρίων
μελάθρων μητρὸς φόνιοι κατάραι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
βάλε, πρόσπτυξον σῶμα· θανόντος δ᾽
ὡς ἐπὶ τύμβῳ καταθρήνησον.

ΔΙΟΣΚΟΥΡΟΙ
φεῦ φεῦ· δεινὸν τόδ᾽ ἐγηρύσω
καὶ θεοῖσι κλύειν.
ἔνι γὰρ κἀμοὶ τοῖς τ᾽ οὐρανίδαις
οἶκτοι θνητῶν πολυμόχθων.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
οὐκέτι σ' ὄψομαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
οὐδ' ἐγὼ ἐς σὸν βλέφαρον πελάσω.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
τάδε λοίσθιά μοι προσφθέγματά σου.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ὦ χαῖρε, πόλις·
χαίρετε δ' ὑμεῖς πολλά, πολίτιδες.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ὦ πιστοτάτη, στείχεις ἤδη;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
στείχω βλέφαρον τέγγουσ' ἁπαλόν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
Πυλάδη, χαίρων ἴθι, νυμφεύου
δέμας Ἠλέκτρας.

ΔΙΟΣΚΟΥΡΟΙ

τοῖσδε μελήσει γάμος· ἀλλὰ κύνας
τάσδ' ὑποφεύγων στεῖχ' ἐπ' Ἀθηνῶν·
δεινὸν γὰρ ἴχνος βάλλουσ' ἐπὶ σοὶ
χειροδράκοντες χρῶτα κελαιναί,
δεινῶν ὀδυνῶν καρπὸν ἔχουσαι·
νὼ δ' ἐπὶ πόντον Σικελὸν σπουδῇ
σώσοντε νεῶν πρῴρας ἐνάλους.
διὰ δ' αἰθερίας στείχοντε πλακὸς
τοῖς μὲν μυσαροῖς οὐκ ἐπαρήγομεν,
οἷσιν δ' ὅσιον καὶ τὸ δίκαιον
φίλον ἐν βιότῳ, τούτους χαλεπῶν
ἐκλύοντες μόχθων σῴζομεν.
οὕτως ἀδικεῖν μηδεὶς θελέτω

μηδ’ ἐπιόρκων μέτα συμπλείτω·
θεὸς ὢν θνητοῖς ἀγορεύω.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
χαίρετε· χαίρειν δ’ ὅστις δύναται
καὶ ξυντυχίᾳ μή τινι κάμνει
θνητῶν, εὐδαίμονα πράσσει.

HERACLES

Ἀμφιτρυ΄ων

Τι΄ς τὸν Διὸς συ΄λλεκτρον οὐκ οἶδεν βροτῶν,
Ἀργεῖον Ἀμφιτρυ΄ων’, ὃν Ἀλκαῖο΄ς ποτε
ἐ΄τιχθ’ ὁ Περσε΄ως, πατε΄ρα το΄νδ’ Ἡρακλε΄ους;
ὃς τα΄σδε Θη΄βας ἐ΄σχον, ἐ΄νθ’ ὁ γηγενὴς
σπαρτῶν στα΄χυς ἐ΄βλαστεν, ὧν γε΄νους Ἄρης
ἐ΄σωσ’ ἀριθμὸν ὀλι΄γον, οἳ Κα΄δμου πο΄λιν
τεκνοῦσι παι΄δων παισι΄ν. ἐ΄νθεν ἐξε΄φυ
Κρε΄ων Μενοικε΄ως παῖς, ἀ΄ναξ τῆσδε χθονο΄ς.
Κρε΄ων δὲ Μεγα΄ρας τῆσδε γι΄γνεται πατη΄ρ,
ἣν πα΄ντες ὑμεναι΄οισι Καδμεῖοι΄ ποτε
λωτῷ συνηλα΄λαξαν, ἡνι΄κ’ εἰς ἐμοὺς
δο΄μους ὁ κλεινὸς Ἡρακλῆς νιν ἠ΄γετο.
Λιπὼν δὲ Θη΄βας, οὗ κατῳκι΄σθην ἐγω΄,
Μεγα΄ραν τε τη΄νδε πενθερου΄ς τε παῖς ἐμὸς
Ἀργεῖα τει΄χη καὶ Κυκλωπι΄αν πο΄λιν
ὠρε΄ξατ’ οἰκεῖν, ἣν ἐγὼ φευ΄γω κτανὼν
Ἠλεκτρυ΄ωνα· συμφορὰς δὲ τὰς ἐμὰς
ἐξευμαρι΄ζων καὶ πα΄τραν οἰκεῖν θε΄λων,
καθο΄δου δι΄δωσι μισθὸν Εὐρυσθεῖ με΄γαν,
ἐξημερῶσαι γαῖαν, εἰθ’ ῞Ηρας ὑ΄πο
κε΄ντροις δαμασθεὶς εἰτε τοῦ χρεὼν με΄τα.
Καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἀ΄λλους ἐξεμο΄χθησεν πο΄νους,
τὸ λοι΄σθιον δὲ Ταινα΄ρου διὰ στο΄μα
βε΄βηκ’ ἐς Ἀιδου, τὸν τρισω΄ματον κυ΄να
ἐς φῶς ἀνα΄ξων, ἐ΄νθεν οὐχ ἡ΄κει πα΄λιν.
Γε΄ρων δὲ δη΄ τις ἐ΄στι Καδμει΄ων λο΄γος
ὡς ἦν πα΄ρος Δι΄ρκης τις εὐνη΄τωρ Λυ΄κος
τὴν ἑπτα΄πυργον τη΄νδε δεσπο΄ζων πο΄λιν,
τὼ λευκοπω΄λω πρὶν τυραννῆσαι χθονὸς
Ἀμφι΄ον’ ἠδὲ Ζῆθον, ἐκγο΄νω Διο΄ς.
Οὗ ταὐτὸν ὀ΄νομα παῖς πατρὸς κεκλημε΄νος,
Καδμεῖος οὐκ ὢ΄ν, ἀλλ’ ἀπ’ Εὐβοι΄ας μολω΄ν,
κτει΄νει Κρε΄οντα καὶ κτανὼν ἀ΄ρχει χθονο΄ς,

στα΄σει νοσοῦσαν τη΄νδ’ ἐπεσπεσὼν πο΄λιν.
Ἡμῖν δὲ κῆδος ἐς Κρε΄οντ’ ἀνημμε΄νον
κακὸν με΄γιστον, ὡς ἐ΄οικε, γι΄γνεται.
τοὐμοῦ γὰρ ὀ΄ντος παιδὸς ἐν μυχοῖς χθονὸς
ὁ καινὸς οὗτος τῆσδε γῆς ἀ΄ρχων Λυ΄κος
τοὺς Ἡρακλει΄ους παῖδας ἐξελεῖν θε΄λει
κτανὼν δα΄μαρτα΄ <θ’>, ὡς φο΄νῳ σβε΄σῃ φο΄νον,
κἀ΄μ’ — εἰ τι δὴ χρὴ κἀ΄μ’ ἐν ἀνδρα΄σιν λε΄γειν
γε΄ροντ’ ἀχρεῖον — μη΄ ποθ’ οἱ΄δ’ ἠνδρωμε΄νοι
μη΄τρωσιν ἐκπρα΄ξωσιν αἱ΄ματος δι΄κην.
Ἐγὼ δε΄ — λει΄πει γα΄ρ με τοῖσδ’ ἐν δω΄μασιν
τροφὸν τε΄κνων οἰκουρο΄ν, ἡνι΄κα χθονὸς
με΄λαιναν ὀ΄ρφνην εἰσε΄βαινε, παῖς ἐμο΄ς —
σὺν μητρι΄, τε΄κνα μὴ θα΄νωσ’ Ἡρακλε΄ους,
βωμὸν καθι΄ζω το΄νδε σωτῆρος Διο΄ς,
ὃν καλλινι΄κου δορὸς ἀ΄γαλμ’ ἱδρυ΄σατο
Μινυ΄ας κρατη΄σας οὑμὸς εὐγενὴς το΄κος.
Πα΄ντων δὲ χρεῖοι τα΄σδ’ ἑ΄δρας φυλα΄σσομεν,
σι΄των ποτῶν ἐσθητος, ἀστρω΄τῳ πε΄δῳ
πλευρὰς τιθε΄ντες· ἐκ γὰρ ἐσφραγισμε΄νοι
δο΄μων καθη΄μεθ’ ἀπορι΄ᾳ σωτηρι΄ας.
Φι΄λων δὲ τοὺς μὲν οὐ σαφεῖς ὁρῶ φι΄λους,
οἳ δ’ ὀ΄ντες ὀρθῶς ἀδυ΄νατοι προσωφελεῖν.
Τοιοῦτον ἀνθρω΄ποισιν ἡ δυσπραξι΄α·
ἧς μη΄ποθ’ ὁ΄στις καὶ με΄σως εὐ΄νους ἐμοὶ
τυ΄χοι, φι΄λων ἐ΄λεγχον ἀψευδε΄στατον.

Μεγα΄ρα
Ὦ πρε΄σβυ, Ταφι΄ων ὁ΄ς ποτ’ ἐξεῖλες πο΄λιν
στρατηλατη΄σας κλεινὰ Καδμει΄ων δορο΄ς,
ὡς οὐδὲν ἀνθρω΄ποισι τῶν θει΄ων σαφε΄ς.
Ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐ΄τ’ ἐς πατε΄ρ’ ἀπηλα΄θην τυ΄χης,
ὃς οὐ΄νεκ’ ὀ΄λβου με΄γας ἐκομπα΄σθη ποτε΄,
ἐ΄χων τυραννι΄δ’, ἧς μακραὶ λο΄γχαι πε΄ρι
πηδῶσ’ ἐ΄ρωτι σω΄ματ’ εἰς εὐδαι΄μονα,
ἐ΄χων δὲ τε΄κνα· κἀ΄μ’ ἐ΄δωκε παιδὶ σῷ
ἐπι΄σημον εὐνὴν Ἡρακλεῖ συνοικι΄σας.

Καὶ νῦν ἐκεῖνα μὲν θανό΄ντ᾽ ἀνε΄πτατο,
ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ σὺ με΄λλομεν θνη΄ῳσκειν, γε΄ρον,
Οἱ΄ θ᾽ Ἡρα΄κλειοι παῖδες, οὓς ὑπὸ πτεροῖς
σω΄ζω νεοσσοὺς ὀ΄ρνις ὡς ὑφειμε΄νη.
οἳ δ᾽ εἰς ἐ΄λεγχον ἀ΄λλος ἀ΄λλοθεν πι΄τνων,
Ὦ μῆτερ, αὐδᾷ, ποῖ πατὴρ ἀ΄πεστι γῆς;
τι΄ δρᾷ, πο΄θ᾽ ἡ΄ξει; τῷ νε΄ῳ δ᾽ ἐσφαλμε΄νοι
ζητοῦσι τὸν τεκο΄ντ᾽· ἐγὼ δὲ διαφε΄ρω
λο΄γοισι, μυθευ΄ουσα. Θαυμα΄ζων δ᾽ ὁ΄ταν
πυ΄λαι ψοφῶσι, πᾶς ἀνι΄στησιν πο΄δα,
ὡς πρὸς πατρῷον προσπεσου΄μενοι γο΄νυ.
Νῦν οὖν τι΄ν᾽ ἐλπι΄δ᾽ ἢ πε΄δον σωτηρι΄ας
ἐξευμαρι΄ζῃ, πρε΄σβυ; πρὸς σὲ γὰρ βλε΄πω.
ὡς οὐ΄τε γαι΄ας ὀ΄ρι᾽ ἂν ἐκβαῖμεν λα΄θρᾳ·
φυλακαὶ γὰρ ἡμῶν κρει΄σσονες κατ᾽ ἐξο΄δους·
οὐ΄τ᾽ ἐν φι΄λοισιν ἐλπι΄δες σωτηρι΄ας
ἐ΄τ᾽ εἰσὶν ἡμῖν. Ἥ΄ντιν᾽ οὖν γνω΄μην ἐ΄χεις
λε΄γ᾽ ἐς τὸ κοινο΄ν, μὴ θανεῖν ἑ΄τοιμον ᾖ.

Ἀμφιτρυ΄ων
Ὦ θυ΄γατερ, οὐ΄τοι ῥα΄διον τὰ τοια΄δε
φαυ΄λως παραινεῖν, σπουδα΄σαντ᾽ ἀ΄νευ πο΄νου·
χρο΄νον δὲ μηκυ΄νωμεν ὀ΄ντες ἀσθενεῖς.

Μεγα΄ρα
Λυ΄πης τι προσδεῖς ἢ φιλεῖς οὐ΄τω φα΄ος;

Ἀμφιτρυ΄ων
Καὶ τῷδε χαι΄ρω καὶ φιλῶ τὰς ἐλπι΄δας.

Μεγα΄ρα
Κἀγω΄· δοκεῖν δὲ τἀδο΄κητ᾽ οὐ χρη΄, γε΄ρον.

Ἀμφιτρυ΄ων
Ἐν ταῖς ἀναβολαῖς τῶν κακῶν ἐ΄νεστ᾽ ἀ΄κη.

Μεγα΄ρα
Ὅ΄ δ᾽ ἐν με΄σῳ με λυπρὸς ὢν δα΄κνει χρο΄νος.

Ἀμφιτρυ΄ων
Γε΄νοιτο ἂν, ὦ θυ΄γατερ, οὐ΄ριος δρο΄μος
ἐκ τῶν παρο΄ντων τῶνδ’ ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ κακῶν,
ἐ΄λθοι τ’ ἐ΄τ’ ἂν παῖς οὑμο΄ς, εὐνη΄τωρ δὲ σο΄ς.
Ἀλλ’ ἡσυ΄χαζε καὶ δακρυρρο΄ους τε΄κνων
πηγὰς ἀφαι΄ρει καὶ παρευκη΄λει λο΄γοις,
κλε΄πτουσα μυ΄θοις ἀθλι΄ους κλοπὰς ὁ΄μως.
Κα΄μνουσι γα΄ρ τοι καὶ βροτῶν αἱ συμφοραι΄,
καὶ πνευ΄ματ’ ἀνε΄μων οὐκ ἀεὶ ῥω΄μην ἐ΄χει·
οἱ΄ τ’ εὐτυχοῦντες διὰ τε΄λους οὐκ εὐτυχεῖς.
Ἐξι΄σταται γὰρ πα΄ντ’ ἀπ’ ἀλλη΄λων δι΄χα.
οὗτος δ’ ἀνὴρ ἀ΄ριστος ὁ΄στις ἐλπι΄σι
πε΄ποιθεν αἰει΄· τὸ δ’ ἀπορεῖν ἀνδρὸς κακοῦ.

Χορο΄ς
Ὑπω΄ροφα με΄λαθρα καὶ
γεραιὰ δε΄μνι’, ἀμφὶ βα΄κτροις
ἐ΄ρεισμα θε΄μενος, ἐστα΄λην
ἰηλε΄μων γο΄ων ἀοι-
δὸς ὡ΄στε πολιὸς ὀ΄ρνις,
ἐ΄πεα μο΄νον καὶ δο΄κη-
μα νυκτερωπὸν ἐννυ΄χων ὀνει΄ρων,
τρομερὰ με΄ν, ἀλλ’ ὁ΄μως προ΄θυμ’.
Ὦ τε΄κεα, τε΄κεα πατρὸς ἀπα΄τορ’,
ὦ γεραιὲ συ΄ τε τα΄λαινα μᾶ-
τερ, ἃ τὸν Ἀι΄δα δο΄μοις
πο΄σιν ἀναστενα΄ζεις.
Μὴ προκα΄μητε πο΄δα βαρυ΄ τε
κῶλον ὡ΄στε πρὸς πετραῖον
λε΄πας † ζυγηφο΄ρον πῶλον
ἀνε΄ντες ὡς βα΄ρος φε΄ρον
τροχηλα΄τοιο πω΄λου †.
Λαβοῦ χερῶν καὶ πε΄πλων,
ὁ΄του λε΄λοιπε ποδὸς ἀμαυρὸν ἰχνος·
γε΄ρων γε΄ροντα παρακο΄μιζ’,
ὦ ξυ΄νοπλα δο΄ρατα νε΄α νε΄ῳ
τὸ πα΄ρος ἐν ἡλι΄κων πο΄νοις

ξυνῆν ποτ’, εὐκλεεστα´τας
πατρι´δος οὐκ ὀνει´δη.
Ἰδετε, πατε´ρος ὡς γορ-
γῶπες αἱ´δε προσφερεῖς
ὀμμα´των αὐγαι´,
τὸ δὲ κακοτυχὲς οὐ λε´λοιπεν ἐκ τε´κνων
οὐδ’ ἀποι´χεται χα´ρις.
Ἑλλὰς ὠ ξυμμα´χους
οἱ´ους οἱ´ους ὀλε´σασα του´σδ’ ἀποστερη´σῃ.
Ἀλλ’ εἰσορω γὰρ τῆσδε κοι´ρανον χθονὸς
Λυ´κον περῶντα τῶνδε δωμα´των πε´λας.

Λυ´κος
Τὸν Ἡρα´κλειον πατε´ρα καὶ ξυνα´ορον,
εἰ χρη´ μ’, ἐρωτω χρὴ δ’, ἐπει´ γε δεσπο´της
ὑμῶν καθε´στηχ’, ἱστορεῖν ἃ βου´λομαι.
Νι´ν’ ἐς χρο´νον ζητεῖτε μηκῦναι βι´ον;
τι´ν’ ἐλπι´δ’ ἀλκη´ν τ’ εἰσορᾶτε μὴ θανεῖν;
ἢ τὸν παρ’ Ἅιδῃ πατε´ρα τῶνδε κει´μενον
πιστευ´εθ’ ἡ´ξειν; ὡς ὑπὲρ τὴν ἀξι´αν
τὸ πε´νθος αἱρεσθ’, εἰ θανεῖν ὑμᾶς χρεω´ν,
σὺ μὲν καθ’ Ἑλλα´δ’ ἐκβαλὼν κο´μπους κενου´ς,
ὡς συ´γγαμο´ς σοι Ζεὺς τε´κ<νου τε κ>οινεω´ν,
σὺ δ’ ὡς ἀρι´στου φωτὸς ἐκλη´θης δα´μαρ.
Τι´ δὴ τὸ σεμνὸν σῷ κατει´ργασται πο´σει,
ὑ´δραν ἑ´λειον εἰ διω´λεσε κτανὼν
ἢ τὸν Νε´μειον θῆρα; ὃν ἐν βρο´χοις ἑλὼν
βραχι´ονο´ς φησ’ ἀγχο´ναισιν ἐξελεῖν.
Τοῖσδ’ ἐξαγωνι´ζεσθε; τῶνδ’ ἀ´ρ’ οὑ´νεκα
τοὺς Ἡρακλει´ους παῖδας οὐ θνη´σκειν χρεω´ν;
ὃς ἐ´σχε δο´ξαν οὐδὲν ὢν εὐψυχι´ας
θηρῶν ἐν αἰχμῇ, τἀ´λλα δ’ οὐδὲν ἀ´λκιμος,
ὃς οὐ´ποτ’ ἀσπι´δ’ ἐ´σχε πρὸς λαιᾷ χερὶ
οὐδ’ ἦλθε λο´γχης ἐγγυ´ς, ἀλλὰ το´ξ’ ἐ´χων,
κα´κιστον ὀ´πλον, τῇ φυγῇ προ´χειρος ἦν.
Ἀνδρὸς δ’ ἐ´λεγχος οὐχὶ το´ξ’ εὐψυχι´ας,

ἀλλ᾽ ὃς με΄νων βλε΄πει τε κἀντιδε΄ρκεται
δορὸς ταχεῖαν ἀ΄λοκα τα΄ξιν ἐμβεβω΄ς.
Ἔ΄χει δὲ τοὐμὸν οὐκ ἀναι΄δειαν, γε΄ρον,
ἀλλ᾽ εὐλα΄βειαν· οἶδα γὰρ κατακτανὼν
Κρε΄οντα πατε΄ρα τῆσδε καὶ θρο΄νους ἐ΄χων.
Οὐ΄κουν τραφε΄ντων τῶνδε τιμωροὺς ἐμοὺς
χρη΄ζω λιπε΄σθαι τῶν δεδραμε΄νων δι΄κην.

Ἀμφιτρυ΄ων

Τῷ τοῦ Διὸς μὲν Ζεὺς ἀμυνε΄τω με΄ρει
παιδο΄ς· τὸ δ᾽ εἰς ἐ΄μ᾽, Ἡρα΄κλεις, ἐμοὶ με΄λει
λο΄γοισι τὴν τοῦδ᾽ ἀμαθι΄αν ὑπὲρ σε΄θεν
δεῖξαι· κακῶς γα΄ρ σ᾽ οὐκ ἐατε΄ον κλυ΄ειν.
Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν τἀ΄ρρητ᾽ — ἐν ἀρρη΄τοισι γὰρ
τὴν σὴν νομι΄ζω δειλι΄αν, Ἡρα΄κλεες —
σὺν μα΄ρτυσιν θεοῖς δεῖ μ᾽ ἀπαλλα΄ξαι σε΄θεν.
Διὸς κεραυνο΄ν τ᾽ ἠρο΄μην τε΄θριππα΄ τε,
ἐν οἷς βεβηκὼς τοῖσι γῆς βλαστη΄μασιν
Γι΄γασι πλευροῖς πτη΄ν᾽ ἐναρμο΄σας βε΄λη
τὸν καλλι΄νικον μετὰ θεῶν ἐκω΄μασεν·
τετρασκελε΄ς θ᾽ ὑ΄βρισμα, Κενταυ΄ρων γε΄νος,
Φολο΄ην ἐπελθω΄ν, ὦ κα΄κιστε βασιλε΄ων,
ἐρου΄τι΄ν᾽ ἀ΄νδρ᾽ ἀ΄ριστον ἐγκρι΄νειαν ἀ΄ν,
ἢ οὐ παῖδα τὸν ἐμο΄ν, ὃν σὺ φῂς εἶναι δοκεῖν.
Δι΄ρφυν τ᾽ ἐρωτῶν ἡ΄ σ᾽ ἐ΄θρεψ᾽ Ἀβαντι΄δα,
οὐκ ἀ΄ν σ᾽ ἐπαινε΄σειεν· οὐ γὰρ ἐ΄σθ᾽ ὁ΄που
ἐσθλο΄ν τι δρα΄σας μα΄ρτυρ᾽ ἂν λα΄βοις πα΄τραν.
Τὸ πα΄νσοφον δ᾽ εὑ΄ρημα, τοξη΄ρη σαγη΄ν,
με΄μφῃ· κλυ΄ων νυῖ τἀπ᾽ ἐμοῦ σοφὸς γενοῦ.
Ἀνὴρ ὁπλι΄της δουῦλο΄ς ἐστι τῶν ὁ΄πλων
καὶ τοῖσι συνταχθεῖσιν οὖσι μὴ ἀγαθοῖς
αὐτὸς τε΄θνηκε δειλι΄ᾳ τῇ τῶν πε΄λας,
θραυ΄σας τε λο΄γχην οὐκ ἐ΄χει τῷ σω΄ματι
θα΄νατον ἀμῦναι, μι΄αν ἐ΄χων ἀλκὴν μο΄νον·
ὁ΄σοι δὲ το΄ξοις χεῖρ᾽ ἐ΄χουσιν εὐ΄στοχον,
ἓν μὲν τὸ λῷστον, μυρι΄ους οἱστοὺς ἀφεὶς
ἀ΄λλοις τὸ σῶμα ῥυ΄εται μὴ κατθανεῖν,
ἑκὰς δ᾽ ἀφεστὼς πολεμι΄ους ἀμυ΄νεται

τυφλοῖς ὁρῶντας οὐτα΄σας τοξευ΄μασιν
τὸ σῶμα΄ τ᾽ οὐ δι΄δωσι τοῖς ἐναντι΄οις,
ἐν εὐφυλα΄κτῳ δ᾽ ἐστι΄· τοῦτο δ᾽ ἐν μα΄χη
σοφὸν μα΄λιστα, δρῶντα πολεμι΄ους κακῶς
σω΄ζειν τὸ σῶμα, μὴ ‘κ τυ΄χης ὡρμισμε΄νον.
Λο΄γοι μὲν οἱ΄δε τοῖσι σοῖς ἐναντι΄αν
γνω΄μην ἐ΄χουσι τῶν καθεστω΄των πε΄ρι.
Παῖδας δὲ δὴ τι΄ του΄σδ᾽ ἀποκτεῖναι θε΄λεις;
τι΄ σ᾽ οἱ΄δ᾽ ἐ΄δρασαν; ἐ΄ν τι΄ σ᾽ ἡγοῦμαι σοφο΄ν,
εἰ τῶν ἀρι΄στων τἀ΄κγον᾽ αὐτὸς ὢν κακὸς
δε΄δοικας. Ἀλλὰ τοῦθ᾽ ὁ΄μως ἡμῖν βαρυ΄,
εἰ δειλι΄ας σῆς κατθανου΄μεθ᾽ εἵ΄νεκα,
ὃ χρῆν σ᾽ ὑφ᾽ ἡμῶν τῶν ἀμεινο΄νων παθεῖν,
εἰ Ζεὺς δικαι΄ας εἶχεν εἰς ἡμᾶς φρε΄νας.
εἰ δ᾽ οὖν ἐ΄χειν γῆς σκῆπτρα τῆσδ᾽ αὐτὸς θε΄λεις,
ἐ΄ασον ἡμᾶς φυγα΄δας ἐξελθεῖν χθονο΄ς·
βι΄ᾳ δὲ δρα΄σῃς μηδε΄ν, ἢ πει΄σῃ βι΄αν,
ὁ΄ταν θεοῦ σοι πνεῦμα μεταβαλὸν τυ΄χη.
Φευ·
ὢ γαῖα Κα΄δμου· καὶ γὰρ ἐς σὲ ἀφι΄ξομαι
λο΄γους ὀνειδιστῆρας ἐνδατου΄μενος·
τοιαῦτ᾽ ἀμυ΄νεθ᾽ Ἡρακλεῖ τε΄κνοισι΄ τε;
ὃς εἷς Μινυ΄αισι πᾶσι διὰ μα΄χης μολὼν
Θη΄βαις ἐ΄θηκεν ὀ΄μμ᾽ ἐλευ΄θερον βλε΄πειν.
Οὐδ᾽ Ἑλλα΄δ᾽ ἠ΄νεσ᾽, οὐδ᾽ ἀνε΄ξομαι΄ ποτε
σιγῶν, κακι΄στην λαμβα΄νων ἐς παῖδ᾽ ἐμο΄ν,
ἣν χρῆν νεοσσοῖς τοῖσδε πῦρ λο΄γχας ὁ΄πλα
φε΄ρουσαν ἐλθεῖν, ποντι΄ων καθαρμα΄των
χε΄ρσου τ᾽ ἀμοιβα΄ς, ὧν ἐμο΄χθησας χα΄ριν.
Τὰ δ᾽, ὦ τε΄κν᾽, ὑμῖν οὐ΄τε Θηβαι΄ων πο΄λις
οὐ΄θ᾽ Ἑλλὰς ἀρκεῖ· πρὸς δ᾽ ἐ΄μ᾽ ἀσθενῆ φι΄λον
δεδο΄ρκατ᾽, οὐδὲν ὀ΄ντα πλὴν γλω΄σσης ψο΄φον.
ῥω΄μη γὰρ ἐκλε΄λοιπεν ἣν πρὶν εἰχομεν,
γη΄ρᾳ δὲ τρομερὰ γυῖα κἀμαυρὸν σθε΄νος.
εἰ δ᾽ ἦ νε΄ος τε κἀ΄τι σω΄ματος κρατῶν,
λαβὼν ἂν ἐ΄γχος τοὐδε τοὺς ξανθοὺς πλο΄κους

καθημα΄τωσ᾽ ἀ΄ν, ὡ΄στ᾽ Ἀτλαντικῶν πε΄ραν
φευ΄γειν ὀ΄ρων ἂν δειλι΄ᾳ τοὐμὸν δο΄ρυ.

Χορο΄ς
Ἆρ᾽ οὐκ ἀφορμὰς τοῖς λο΄γοισιν ἀγαθοὶ
θνητῶν ἐ΄χουσι, κἂν βραδυ΄ς τις ᾖ λε΄γειν;

Λυ΄κος
Σὺ μὲν λε΄γ᾽ ἡμᾶς οἷς πεπυ΄ργωσαι λο΄γοις,
ἐγὼ δὲ δρα΄σω σ᾽ ἀντὶ τῶν λο΄γων κακῶς.
Ἄ΄γ᾽, οἳ μὲν Ἑλικῶν᾽, οἳ δὲ Παρνασοῦ πτυχὰς
τε΄μνειν ἀ΄νωχθ᾽ ἐλθο΄ντες ὑλουργοὺς δρυὸς
κορμου΄ς· ἐπειδὰν δ᾽ ἐσκομισθῶσιν πο΄λει,
βωμὸν πε΄ριξ νη΄σαντες ἀμφη΄ρη ξυ΄λα
ἐμπι΄μπρατ᾽ αὐτῶν καὶ πυροῦτε σω΄ματα
πα΄ντων, ἵ΄ν᾽ εἰδῶσ᾽ οὑ΄νεκ᾽ οὐχ ὁ κατθανὼν
κρατεῖ χθονὸς τῆσδ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ τὰ νῦν τα΄δε.
Ὑ΄μεῖς δε΄, πρε΄σβεις, ταῖς ἐμαῖς ἐναντι΄οι
γνω΄μαισιν ὀ΄ντες, οὐ μο΄νον στενα΄ξετε
τοὺς Ἡρακλει΄ους παῖδας, ἀλλὰ καὶ δο΄μου
τυ΄χας, ὁ΄ταν πα΄σχῃ τι, μεμνη΄σεσθε δὲ
δοῦλοι γεγῶτες τῆς ἐμῆς τυραννι΄δος.

Χορός
Ὦ γῆς λοχεύμαθ᾽, οὓς Ἄρης σπείρει ποτὲ
λάβρον δράκοντος ἐξερημώσας γένυν,
οὐ σκῆπτρα, χειρὸς δεξιᾶς ἐρείσματα,
ἀρεῖτε καὶ τοῦδ᾽ ἀνδρὸς ἀνόσιον κάρα
καθαιματώσεθ᾽, ὅστις οὐ Καδμεῖος ὢν
ἄρχει κάκιστος τῶν νέων ἔπηλυς ὤν;
Ἄλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐμοῦ γε δεσπόσεις χαίρων ποτέ.
οὐδ᾽ ἀπόνησα πόλλ᾽ ἐγὼ καμὼν χερὶ
ἕξεις. ἀπέρρων δ᾽ ἔνθεν ἦλθες ἐνθάδε,
ὕβριζ᾽. ἐμοῦ γὰρ ζῶντος οὐ κτενεῖς ποτε
τοὺς Ἡρακλείους παῖδας. οὐ τοσόνδε γῆς
ἔνερθ᾽ ἐκεῖνος κρύπτεται λιπὼν τέκνα.
Ἐπεὶ σὺ μὲν γῆν τήνδε διολέσας ἔχεις,

ὃ δ’ ὠφελήσας ἀξίων οὐ τυγχάνει.
κἄπειτα πράσσω πόλλ’ ἐγώ, φίλους ἐμοὺς
θανόντας εὖ δρῶν, οὗ φίλων μάλιστα δεῖ;
Ὦ δεξιὰ χείρ, ὡς ποθεῖς λαβεῖν δόρυ,
ἐν δ’ ἀσθενείᾳ τὸν πόθον διώλεσας.
Ἐπεί σ’ ἔπαυσ’ ἂν δοῦλον ἐννέποντά με
καὶ τάσδε Θήβας εὐκλεῶς ᾠκήσαμεν.
ἐν αἷς σὺ χαίρεις· οὐ γὰρ εὖ φρονεῖ πόλις
στάσει νοσοῦσα καὶ κακοῖς βουλεύμασιν.
οὐ γάρ ποτ’ ἂν σὲ δεσπότην ἐκτήσατο.

Μεγάρα

Γέροντες, αἰνῶ· τῶν φίλων γὰρ οὕνεκα
ὀργὰς δικαίας τοὺς φίλους ἔχειν χρεών·
ἡμῶν δ’ ἕκατι δεσπόταις θυμούμενοι
πάθητε μηδέν. Τῆς δ’ ἐμῆς, Ἀμφιτρύων,
γνώμης ἄκουσον, ἤν τί σοι δοκῶ λέγειν.
Ἐγὼ φιλῶ μὲν τέκνα· πῶς γὰρ οὐ φιλῶ
ἄτικτον, ἀμόχθησα; καὶ τὸ κατθανεῖν
δεινὸν νομίζω· τῷ δ’ ἀναγκαίῳ τρόπῳ
ὃς ἀντιτείνει σκαιὸν ἡγοῦμαι βροτόν.
Ἡμᾶς δ’, ἐπειδὴ δεῖ θανεῖν, θνῄσκειν χρεὼν
μὴ πυρὶ καταξανθέντας, ἐχθροῖσιν γέλων
διδόντας, οὐμοὶ τοῦ θανεῖν μεῖζον κακόν.
Ὀφείλομεν γὰρ πολλὰ δώμασιν καλά·
σὲ μὲν δόκησις ἔλαβεν εὐκλεὴς δορός,
ὥστ’ οὐκ ἀνεκτὸν δειλίας θανεῖν σ’ ὕπο·
οὑμὸς δ’ ἀμαρτύρητος εὐκλεὴς πόσις,
ὡς τούσδε παῖδας οὐκ ἂν ἐκσῶσαι θέλοι
δόξαν κακὴν λαβόντας· οἱ γὰρ εὐγενεῖς
κάμνουσι τοῖς αἰσχροῖσι τῶν τέκνων ὕπερ,
ἐμοί τε μίμημ’ ἀνδρὸς οὐκ ἀπωστέον.
Σκέψαι δὲ τὴν σὴν ἐλπίδ’ ᾗ λογίζομαι·
Ἥξειν νομίζεις παῖδα σὸν γαίας ὕπο;
καὶ τίς θανόντων ἦλθεν ἐξ Ἅιδου πάλιν;
ἀλλ’ ὡς λόγοισι τόνδε μαλθάξαιμεν ἄν;
ἥκιστα· φεύγειν σκαιὸν ἄνδρ’ ἐχθρὸν χρεών,

σοφοῖσι δ’ εἴκειν καὶ τεθραμμένοις καλῶς·
ῥᾷον γὰρ αἰδοῦς ὑπολαβὼν φίλ’ ἂν τέμοις.
Ἤδη δ’ ἐσῆλθέ μ’ εἰ παραιτησαίμεθα
φυγὰς τέκνων τῶνδ’· ἀλλὰ καὶ τόδ’ ἄθλιον,
πενίᾳ σὺν οἰκτρᾷ περιβαλεῖν σωτηρίαν·
ὡς τὰ ξένων πρόσωπα φεύγουσιν φίλοις
ἓν ἦμαρ ἡδὺ βλέμμ’ ἔχειν φασὶν μόνον.
Τόλμα μεθ’ ἡμῶν θάνατον, ὃς μένει σ’ ὅμως.
προκαλούμεθ’ εὐγένειαν, ὦ γέρον, σέθεν.
Τὰς τῶν θεῶν γὰρ ὅστις ἐκμοχθεῖ τύχας,
πρόθυμός ἐστιν, ἡ προθυμία δ’ ἄφρων·
ὃ χρὴ γὰρ οὐδεὶς μὴ χρεὼν θήσει ποτέ.

Χορός
Εἰ μὲν σθενόντων τῶν ἐμῶν βραχιόνων
ἦν τίς σ’ ὑβρίζων, ῥᾳδίως ἐπαύσατ’ ἄν·
νῦν δ’ οὐδέν ἐσμεν. Σὸν δὲ τοὐντεῦθεν σκοπεῖν
ὅπως διώσῃ τὰς τύχας, Ἀμφιτρύων.

Ἀμφιτρύων
Οὗτοι τὸ δειλὸν οὐδὲ τοῦ βίου πόθος
θανεῖν ἐρύκει μ’, ἀλλὰ παιδὶ βούλομαι
σῶσαι τέκν’· ἄλλως δ’ ἀδυνάτων ἔοικ’ ἐρᾶν.
Ἰδοὺ πάρεστιν ἥδε φασγάνῳ δέρη
κεντεῖν φονεύειν, ἰέναι πέτρας ἄπο.
Μίαν δὲ νῷν δὸς χάριν, ἄναξ, ἱκνούμεθα·
κτεῖνόν με καὶ τήνδ’ ἀθλίαν παίδων πάρος,
ὡς μὴ τέκν’ εἰσίδωμεν, ἀνόσιον θέαν,
ψυχορραγοῦντα καὶ καλοῦντα μητέρα
πατρός τε πατέρα. Τἄλλα δ’, εἰ πρόθυμος εἶ,
πρᾶσσ’· οὐ γὰρ ἀλκὴν ἔχομεν ὥστε μὴ θανεῖν.

Μεγάρα
Κἀγώ σ’ ἱκνοῦμαι χάριτι προσθεῖναι χάριν,
<ἡμῖν> ἵν’ ἀμφοῖν εἷς ὑπουργήσῃς διπλᾶ·
κόσμον πάρες μοι παισὶ προσθεῖναι νεκρῶν,

δόμους ἀνοίξας — νῦν γὰρ ἐκκεκλῄμεθα —
ὡς ἀλλὰ ταῦτά γ᾽ ἀπολάχωσ᾽ οἴκων πατρός.

Λύκος
Ἔσται τάδ᾽· οἴγειν κλῆθρα προσπόλοις λέγω.
κοσμεῖσθ᾽ ἔσω μολόντες· οὐ φθονῶ πέπλων.
Ὅταν δὲ κόσμον περιβάλησθε σώμασιν,
ἥξω πρὸς ὑμᾶς νερτέρᾳ δώσων χθονί.

Μεγάρα
ὦ τέκν᾽, ὁμαρτεῖτ᾽ ἀθλίῳ μητρὸς ποδὶ
πατρῷον ἐς μέλαθρον, οὗ τῆς οὐσίας
ἄλλοι κρατοῦσι, τὸ δ᾽ ὄνομ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ἡμῶν ἔτι.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Ὦ Ζεῦ, μάτην ἄρ᾽ ὁμόγαμόν σ᾽ ἐκτησάμην,
μάτην δὲ παιδὸς κοινεῶν᾽ ἐκλῄζομεν·
σὺ δ᾽ ἦσθ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἥσσων ἢ ‘δόκεις εἶναι φίλος.
Ἀρετῇ σε νικῶ θνητὸς ὢν θεὸν μέγαν·
παῖδας γὰρ οὐ προύδωκα τοὺς ῾Ηρακλέους.
Σὺ δ᾽ ἐς μὲν εὐνὰς κρύφιος ἠπίστω μολεῖν,
τἀλλότρια λέκτρα δόντος οὐδενὸς λαβών,
σῴζειν δὲ τοὺς σοὺς οὐκ ἐπίστασαι φίλους.
Ἀμαθής τις εἶ θεός, ἢ δίκαιος οὐκ ἔφυς.

Χορός
Αἴλινον μὲν ἐπ᾽ εὐτυχεῖ
μολπᾷ Φοῖβος ἰαχεῖ
τὸν κάλλει φθιτόν, κιθάραν
ἐλαύνων πλήκτρῳ χρυσέῳ·
ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν γᾶς ἐνέρων τ᾽
ἐς ὄρφναν μολόντα, παῖδ᾽
εἴτε Διός νιν εἴπω,
εἴτ᾽ ᾽Αμφιτρύωνος ἶνιν,
ὑμνῆσαι στεφάνωμα μό-
χθων δι᾽ εὐλογίας θέλω.
Γενναίων δ᾽ ἀρεταὶ πόνων
τοῖς θανοῦσιν ἄγαλμα.

Πρῶτον μὲν Διὸς ἄλσος
ἠρήμωσε λέοντος,
πυρσῷ δ᾽ ἀμφεκαλύφθη
ξανθὸν κρᾶτ᾽ ἐπινωτίσας
δεινῷ χάσματι θηρός.

Τάν τ᾽ ὀρεινόμον ἀγρίων
Κενταύρων ποτὲ γένναν
ἔστρωσεν τόξοις φονίοις,
ἐναίρων πτανοῖς βέλεσιν.
Ξύνοιδε Πηνειὸς ὁ καλ-
λιδίνας μακραί τ᾽ ἄρου-
ραι πεδίων ἄκαρποι
καὶ Πηλιάδες θεράπναι
σύγχορτοί τ᾽ ᾽Ομόλας ἔναυ-
λοι, πεύκαισιν ὅθεν χέρας
πληροῦντες χθόνα Θεσσαλῶν
ἱππείαις ἐδάμαζον.

Τάν τε χρυσοκάρανον
δόρκαν ποικιλόνωτον
συλήτειραν ἀγρωστᾶν
κτείνας, θηροφόνον θεὰν
Οἰνωᾶτιν ἀγάλλει.

Τεθρίππων τ᾽ ἐπέβα
καὶ ψαλίοις ἐδάμασε πώλους
Διομήδεος, αἳ φονίαισι φάτναις ἀχάλιν᾽ ἐθόαζον
κάθαιμα σῖτα γένυσι, χαρμοναῖσιν ἀν-
δροβρῶσι δυστράπεζοι·
πέραν δ᾽ ἀργυρορρύτων Ἔβρου
διεπέρασεν ὄχθων,
Μυκηναίῳ πονῶν τυράννῳ.
Ἄν τε Πηλιάδ᾽ ἀκτὰν
᾽Αναύρου παρὰ πηγὰς
Κύκνον ξεινοδαΐκταν

τόξοις ὤλεσεν, ᾽Αμφαναί-
ας οἰκήτορ᾽ ἄμεικτον.

Ὑμνῳδούς τε κόρας
ἦλυθεν ἐσπέριον ἐς αὐλάν, χρυσέων πετά-
λων ἄπο μηλοφόρον χερὶ καρπὸν ἀμέρξων,
δράκοντα πυρσόνωτον, ὅς <σφ᾽> ἄπλατον ἀμ-
φελικτὸς ἕλικ᾽ ἐφρούρει,
κτανών· ποντίας θ᾽ ἁλὸς μυχοὺς
εἰσέβαινε, θνατοῖς
γαλανείας τιθεὶς ἐρετμοῖς.
Οὐρανοῦ θ᾽ ὑπὸ μέσσαν
ἐλαύνει χέρας ἕδραν,
῞Ατλαντος δόμον ἐλθών,
ἀστρωπούς τε κατέσχεν οἴ-
κους εὐανορίᾳ θεῶν.

Τὸν ἱππευτάν τ᾽ ᾽Αμαζόνων στρατὸν
Μαιῶτιν ἀμφὶ πολυπόταμον
ἔβα δι᾽ ῞Αξεινον οἶδμα λίμνας,
τίν᾽ οὐκ ἀφ᾽ Ἑλλανίας
ἄγορον ἁλίσας φίλων,
κόρας ᾽Αρείας πέπλων
χρυσεόστολον φάρος,
ζωστῆρος ὀλεθρίους ἄγρας.
Τὰ κλεινὰ δ᾽ Ἑλλὰς ἔλαβε βαρβάρου κόρας
λάφυρα, καὶ σῴζεται Μυκήναις.

Τάν τε μυριόκρανον
πολύφονον κύνα Λέρνας
ὕδραν ἐξεπύρωσεν,
βέλεσί τ᾽ ἀμφέβαλ᾽ <ἰόν>,
τὸν τρισώματον οἷσιν ἔ-
κτα βοτῆρ᾽ ᾽Ερυθείας.

Δρόμων τ᾽ ἄλλων ἀγάλματ᾽ εὐτυχῆ
διῆλθε· τόν τε πολυδάκρυον
ἔπλευσ᾽ ἐς ῞Αιδαν, πόνων τελευτάν,

ἵν’ ἐκπεραίνει τάλας
βίοτον, οὐδ’ ἔβα πάλιν.
στέγαι δ’ ἔρημοι φίλων,
τὰν δ’ ἀνόστιμον τέκνων
Χάρωνος ἐπιμένει πλάτα
βίου κέλευθον ἄθεον ἄδικον· ἐς δὲ σὰς
χέρας βλέπει δώματ’ οὐ παρόντος.

Εἰ δ’ ἐγὼ σθένος ἤβων
δόρυ τ’ ἔπαλλον ἐν αἰχμᾷ,
Καδμείων τε σύνηβοι,
τέκεσιν ἂν προπαρέσταν
ἀλκᾷ· νῦν δ’ ἀπολείπομαι
τᾶς εὐδαίμονος ἥβας.

Ἀλλ’ ἐσορῶ γὰρ τούσδε φθιμένων
ἔνδυτ’ ἔχοντας, τοὺς τοῦ μεγάλου
δή ποτε παῖδας τὸ πρὶν ῾Ηρακλέους,
ἄλοχόν τε φίλην ὑπὸ σειραίοις
ποσὶν ἕλκουσαν τέκνα, καὶ γεραιὸν
πατέρ’ ῾Ηρακλέους. Δύστηνος ἐγώ,
δακρύων ὡς οὐ δύναμαι κατέχειν
γραίας ὄσσων ἔτι πηγάς.

Μεγάρα
Εἶέν· τίς ἱερεύς, τίς σφαγεὺς τῶν δυσπότμων
ἢ τῆς ταλαίνης τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς φονεύς;
ἕτοιμ’ ἄγειν τὰ θύματ’ εἰς ῞Αιδου τάδε.
῏Ω τέκν’, ἀγόμεθα ζεῦγος οὐ καλὸν νεκρῶν,
ὁμοῦ γέροντες καὶ νέοι καὶ μητέρες.
῏Ω μοῖρα δυστάλαιν’ ἐμή τε καὶ τέκνων
τῶνδ’, οὓς πανύστατ’ ὄμμασιν προσδέρκομαι.
῞Ετεκον μὲν ὑμᾶς, πολεμίοις δ’ ἐθρεψάμην
ὕβρισμα κἀπίχαρμα καὶ διαφθοράν.
Φεῦ·
ἦ πολύ με δόξης ἐξέπαισαν ἐλπίδες,
ἣν πατρὸς ὑμῶν ἐκ λόγων ποτ’ ἤλπισα.

Σοὶ μὲν γὰρ ῎Αργος ἔνεμ᾽ ὁ κατθανὼν πατήρ,
Εὐρυσθέως δ᾽ ἔμελλες οἰκήσειν δόμους
τῆς καλλικάρπου κράτος ἔχων Πελασγίας,
στολήν τε θηρὸς ἀμφέβαλλε σῷ κάρᾳ
λέοντος, ᾗπερ αὐτὸς ἐξωπλίζετο.
Σὺ δ᾽ ἦσθα Θηβῶν τῶν φιλαρμάτων ἄναξ,
ἔγκληρα πεδία τἀμὰ γῆς κεκτημένος,
ὡς ἐξέπειθες τὸν κατασπείραντά σε·
ἐς δεξιάν τε σὴν ἀλεξητήριον
ξύλον καθίει δαίδαλον, ψευδῆ δόσιν.
Σοὶ δ᾽ ἦν ἔπερσε τοῖς ἑκηβόλοις ποτὲ
τόξοισι δώσειν Οἰχαλίαν ὑπέσχετο.
Τρεῖς δ᾽ ὄντας <ὑμᾶς> τριπτύχοις τυραννίσι
πατὴρ ἐπύργου, μέγα φρονῶν εὐανδρίᾳ.
Ἐγὼ δὲ νύμφας ἠκροθινιαζόμην,
κήδη συνάψουσ᾽, ἔκ τ᾽ ᾽Αθηναίων χθονὸς
Σπάρτης τε Θηβῶν θ᾽, ὡς ἀνημμένοι κάλῳς
πρυμνησίοισι βίον ἔχοιτ᾽ εὐδαίμονα.
Καὶ ταῦτα φροῦδα· μεταβαλοῦσα δ᾽ ἡ τύχη
νύμφας μὲν ὑμῖν Κῆρας ἀντέδωκ᾽ ἔχειν,
ἐμοὶ δὲ δάκρυα λουτρά — δύστηνος φρενῶν.
Πατὴρ δὲ πατρὸς ἑστιᾷ γάμους ὅδε,
῎Αιδην νομίζων πενθερόν, κῆδος πατρός.
῍Ωμοι, τίν᾽ ὑμῶν πρῶτον ἢ τίν᾽ ὕστατον
πρὸς στέρνα θῶμαι; τῷ προσαρμόσω στόμα;
τίνος λάβωμαι; πῶς ἂν ὡς ξουθόπτερος
μέλισσα συνενέγκαιμ᾽ ἂν ἐκ πάντων γόους,
ἐς ἓν δ᾽ ἐνεγκοῦσ᾽ ἀθρόον ἀποδοίην δάκρυ;
῏Ω φίλτατ᾽, εἴ τις φθόγγος εἰσακούεται
θνητῶν παρ᾽ ῎Αιδῃ, σοὶ τάδ᾽, ῾Ηράκλεις, λέγω·
θνῄσκει πατὴρ σὸς καὶ τέκν᾽, ὄλλυμαι δ᾽ ἐγώ,
ἢ πρὶν μακαρία διὰ σ᾽ ἐκλῃζόμην βροτοῖς.
ἄρηξον, ἐλθέ· καὶ σκιὰ φάνηθί μοι·
ἅλις γὰρ ἐλθὼν κἂν ὄναρ γένοιο σύ·
κακοὶ γάρ εἰσιν οἳ τέκνα κτείνουσι σά.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Σὺ μὲν τὰ νέρθεν εὐτρεπῆ ποιοῦ, γύναι.
Ἐγὼ δὲ σέ, ὦ Ζεῦ, χεῖρ᾽ ἐς οὐρανὸν δικὼν
αὐδῶ, τέκνοισιν εἴ τι τοισίδ᾽ ὠφελεῖν
μέλλεις, ἀμύνειν, ὡς τάχ᾽ οὐδὲν ἀρκέσεις.
Καίτοι κέκλησαι πολλάκις· μάτην πονῶ·
θανεῖν γάρ, ὡς ἔοικ᾽, ἀναγκαίως ἔχει.
Ἀλλ᾽, ὦ γέροντες, μικρὰ μὲν τὰ τοῦ βίου,
τοῦτον δ᾽ ὅπως ἥδιστα διαπεράσετε,
ἐξ ἡμέρας ἐς νύκτα μὴ λυπούμενοι.
Ὡς ἐλπίδας μὲν ὁ χρόνος οὐκ ἐπίσταται
σῴζειν, τὸ δ᾽ αὐτοῦ σπουδάσας διέπτατο.
Ὁρᾶτ᾽ ἔμ᾽ ὅσπερ ἦ περίβλεπτος βροτοῖς
ὀνομαστὰ πράσσων, καί μ᾽ ἀφείλεθ᾽ ἡ τύχη
ὥσπερ πτερὸν πρὸς αἰθέρ᾽ ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ.
Ὁ δ᾽ ὄλβος ὁ μέγας ἥ τε δόξ᾽ οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ὅτῳ
βέβαιός ἐστι. χαίρετ᾽· ἄνδρα γὰρ φίλον
πανύστατον νῦν, ἥλικες, δεδόρκατε.

Μεγάρα
Ἔα·
ὦ πρέσβυ, λεύσσω τἀμὰ φίλτατ᾽· ἢ τί φῶ;

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Οὐκ οἶδα, θύγατερ· ἀφασία δὲ κἄμ᾽ ἔχει.

Μεγάρα
Ὅδ᾽ ἐστὶν ὃν γῆς νέρθεν εἰσηκούομεν,
εἰ μή γ᾽ ὄνειρον ἐν φάει τι λεύσσομεν.
Τί φημί; ποῖ᾽ ὄνειρα κηραίνουσ᾽ ὁρῶ;
οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅδ᾽ ἄλλος ἀντὶ σοῦ παιδός, γέρον.
Δεῦρ᾽, ὦ τέκν᾽, ἐκκρίμνασθε πατρῴων πέπλων,
ἴτ᾽ ἐγκονεῖτε, μὴ μεθῆτ᾽, ἐπεὶ Διὸς
σωτῆρος ὑμῖν οὐδέν ἐσθ᾽ ὅδ᾽ ὕστερος.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Ὦ χαῖρε, μέλαθρον πρόπυλά θ᾽ ἑστίας ἐμῆς,
ὡς ἄσμενός σ᾽ ἐσεῖδον ἐς φάος μολών.

Ἔα· τί χρῆμα; τέκν᾽ ὁρῶ πρὸ δωμάτων
στολμοῖσι νεκρῶν κρᾶτας ἐξεστεμμένα,
ὄχλῳ τ᾽ ἐν ἀνδρῶν τὴν ἐμὴν ξυνάορον,
πατέρα τε δακρύοντα συμφορὰς τίνας;
Φέρ᾽ ἐκπύθωμαι τῶνδε πλησίον σταθείς·
γύναι, τί καινὸν ἦλθε δώμασιν χρέος;

Μεγάρα
Ὦ φίλτατ᾽ ἀνδρῶν ...

Ἀμφιτρύων
Ὦ φάος μολὼν πατρί ....

Μεγάρα
Ἥκεις, ἐσώθης εἰς ἀκμὴν ἐλθὼν φίλοις;

Ἡρακλῆς
Τί φῄς; τίν᾽ ἐς ταραγμὸν ἥκομεν, πάτερ;

Μεγάρα
Διολλύμεσθα· σὺ δέ, γέρον, σύγγνωθί μοι,
εἰ πρόσθεν ἥρπασ᾽ ἃ σὲ λέγειν πρὸς τόνδ᾽ ἐχρῆν·
τὸ θῆλυ γάρ πως μᾶλλον οἰκτρὸν ἀρσένων,
καὶ τἄμ᾽ ἔθνῃσκε τέκν᾽, ἀπωλλύμην δ᾽ ἐγώ.

Ἡρακλῆς
Ἄπολλον, οἵοις φροιμίοις ἄρχῃ λόγου.

Μεγάρα
Τεθνᾶσ᾽ ἀδελφοὶ καὶ πατὴρ οὑμὸς γέρων.

Ἡρακλῆς
Πῶς φῄς; τί δράσας ἢ δορὸς ποίου τυχών;

Μεγάρα
Λύκος σφ᾽ ὁ καινὸς γῆς ἄναξ διώλεσεν.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Ὅπλοις ἀπαντῶν ἢ νοσησάσης χθονός;

Μεγάρα
Στάσει· τὸ Κάδμου δ᾽ ἑπτάπυλον ἔχει κράτος.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Τί δῆτα πρὸς σὲ καὶ γέροντ᾽ ἦλθεν φόβος;

Μεγάρα
Κτείνειν ἔμελλε πατέρα κἀμὲ καὶ τέκνα.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Τί φῄς; τί ταρβῶν ὀρφάνευμ᾽ ἐμῶν τέκνων;

Μεγάρα
Μή ποτε Κρέοντος θάνατον ἐκτεισαίατο.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Κόσμος δὲ παίδων τίς ὅδε νερτέροις πρέπων;

Μεγάρα
Θανάτου τάδ᾽ ἤδη περιβόλαι᾽ ἀνήμμεθα.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Καὶ πρὸς βίαν ἐθνῄσκετ᾽; ὦ τλήμων ἐγώ.

Μεγάρα
Φίλων ἔρημοι· σὲ δὲ θανόντ᾽ ἠκούομεν.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Πόθεν δ᾽ ἐς ὑμᾶς ἥδ᾽ ἐσῆλθ᾽ ἀθυμία;

Μεγάρα
Εὐρυσθέως κήρυκες ἤγγελλον τάδε.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Τί δ᾽ ἐξελείπετ᾽ οἶκον ἑστίαν τ᾽ ἐμήν;

Μεγάρα
Βίᾳ, πατὴρ μὲν ἐκπεσὼν στρωτοῦ λέχους...

῾Ηρακλῆς
Κοὐκ ἔσχεν αἰδῶ τὸν γέροντ᾽ ἀτιμάσαι;

Μεγάρα
Αἰδώς γ᾽ ἀποικεῖ τῆσδε τῆς θεοῦ πρόσω.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Οὕτω δ᾽ ἀπόντες ἐσπανίζομεν φίλων;

Μεγάρα
Φίλοι γάρ εἰσιν ἀνδρὶ δυστυχεῖ τίνες;

῾Ηρακλῆς
Μάχας δὲ Μινυῶν ἃς ἔτλην ἀπέπτυσαν;

Μεγάρα
Ἄφιλον, ἵν᾽ αὖθίς σοι λέγω, τὸ δυστυχές.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Οὐ ῥίψεθ᾽ ῞Αιδου τάσδε περιβολὰς κόμης
καὶ φῶς ἀναβλέψεσθε, τοῦ κάτω σκότου
φίλας ἀμοιβὰς ὄμμασιν δεδορκότες;
Ἐγὼ δέ — νῦν γὰρ τῆς ἐμῆς ἔργον χερός —
πρῶτον μὲν εἶμι καὶ κατασκάψω δόμους
καινῶν τυράννων, κρᾶτα δ᾽ ἀνόσιον τεμὼν
ῥίψω κυνῶν ἕλκημα· Καδμείων δ᾽ ὅσους
κακοὺς ἐφηῦρον εὖ παθόντας ἐξ ἐμοῦ,
τῷ καλλινίκῳ τῷδ᾽ ὅπλῳ χειρώσομαι·
τοὺς δὲ πτερωτοῖς διαφορῶν τοξεύμασι
νεκρῶν ἅπαντ᾽ Ἰσμηνὸν ἐμπλήσω φόνου,
Δίρκης τε νᾶμα λευκὸν αἱμαχθήσεται.
Τῷ γάρ μ᾽ ἀμύνειν μᾶλλον ἢ δάμαρτι χρὴ
καὶ παισὶ καὶ γέροντι; χαιρόντων πόνοι·
μάτην γὰρ αὐτοὺς τῶνδε μᾶλλον ἤνυσα.
Καὶ δεῖ μ᾽ ὑπὲρ τῶνδ᾽, εἴπερ οἵδ᾽ ὑπὲρ πατρός,

θνῄσκειν ἀμύνοντ᾽· ἢ τί φήσομεν καλὸν
ὕδρᾳ μὲν ἐλθεῖν ἐς μάχην λέοντί τε
Εὐρυσθέως πομπαῖσι, τῶν δ᾽ ἐμῶν τέκνων
οὐκ ἐκπονήσω θάνατον; οὐκ ἄρ᾽ Ἡρακλῆς
ὁ καλλίνικος ὡς πάροιθε λέξομαι.

Χορός
Δίκαια τοὺς τεκόντας ὠφελεῖν τέκνα,
πατέρα τε πρέσβυν τήν τε κοινωνὸν γάμων.

Ἀμφιτρύων
Πρὸς σοῦ μέν, ὦ παῖ, τοῖς φίλοις εἶναι φίλον
τά τ᾽ ἐχθρὰ μισεῖν· ἀλλὰ μὴ ‘πείγου λίαν.

Ἡρακλῆς
Τί δ᾽ ἐστὶ τῶνδε θᾶσσον ἢ χρεών, πάτερ;

Ἀμφιτρύων
Πολλοὺς πένητας, ὀλβίους δὲ τῷ λόγῳ
δοκοῦντας εἶναι συμμάχους ἄναξ ἔχει,
οἳ στάσιν ἔθηκαν καὶ διώλεσαν πόλιν
ἐφ᾽ ἁρπαγαῖσι τῶν πέλας, τὰ δ᾽ ἐν δόμοις
δαπάναισι φροῦδα διαφυγόνθ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἀργίας.
Ἄφθης ἐσελθὼν πόλιν· ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἄφθης, ὅρα
ἐχθροὺς ἀθροίσας μὴ παρὰ γνώμην πέσῃς.

Ἡρακλῆς
Μέλει μὲν οὐδὲν εἴ με πᾶσ᾽ εἶδεν πόλις·
ὄρνιν δ᾽ ἰδών τιν᾽ οὐκ ἐν αἰσίοις ἕδραις,
ἔγνων πόνον τιν᾽ ἐς δόμους πεπτωκότα·
ὥστ᾽ ἐκ προνοίας κρύφιος εἰσῆλθον χθόνα.

Ἀμφιτρύων
Καλῶς· παρελθὼν νῦν πρόσειπέ θ᾽ ἑστίαν
καὶ δὸς πατρῴοις δώμασιν σὸν ὄμμ᾽ ἰδεῖν.
Ἥξει γὰρ αὐτὸς σὴν δάμαρτα καὶ τέκνα
ἕλξων φονεύσων κἄμ᾽ ἐπισφάξων ἄναξ·
μένοντι δ᾽ αὐτοῦ πάντα σοι γενήσεται

τῇ τ᾽ ἀσφαλείᾳ κερδανεῖς· πόλιν δὲ σὴν
μὴ πρὶν ταράξῃς πρὶν τόδ᾽ εὖ θέσθαι, τέκνον.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Δράσω τάδ᾽· εὖ γὰρ εἶπας· εἶμ᾽ ἔσω δόμων.
χρόνῳ δ᾽ ἀνελθὼν ἐξ ἀνηλίων μυχῶν
῞Αιδου Κόρης <τ᾽> ἔνερθεν, οὐκ ἀτιμάσω
θεοὺς προσειπεῖν πρῶτα τοὺς κατὰ στέγας.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
῏Ηλθες γὰρ ὄντως δώματ᾽ εἰς ῞Αιδου, τέκνον;

῾Ηρακλῆς
Καὶ θῆρά γ᾽ ἐς φῶς τὸν τρίκρανον ἤγαγον.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Μάχῃ κρατήσας ἢ θεᾶς δωρήμασιν;

῾Ηρακλῆς
Μάχῃ· τὰ μυστῶν δ᾽ ὄργι᾽ εὐτύχησ᾽ ἰδών.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
῏Η καὶ κατ᾽ οἴκους ἐστὶν Εὐρυσθέως ὁ θήρ;

῾Ηρακλῆς
Χθονίας νιν ἄλσος ῾Ερμιών τ᾽ ἔχει πόλις.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Οὐδ᾽ οἶδεν Εὐρυσθεύς σε γῆς ἥκοντ᾽ ἄνω;

῾Ηρακλῆς
Οὐκ οἶδ᾽· ἵν᾽ ἐλθὼν τἀνθάδ᾽ εἰδείην πάρος.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Χρόνον δὲ πῶς τοσοῦτον ἦσθ᾽ ὑπὸ χθονί;

῾Ηρακλῆς
Θησέα κομίζων ἐχρόνισ᾽ <ἐξ> ῞Αιδου, πάτερ.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Καὶ ποῦ ‘στιν; ἢ γῆς πατρίδος οἴχεται πέδον;

῾Ηρακλῆς
Βέβηκ᾽ ᾽Αθήνας νέρθεν ἄσμενος φυγών.
Ἀλλ᾽ εἶ᾽, ὁμαρτεῖτ᾽, ὦ τέκν᾽, ἐς δόμους πατρί·
καλλίονές τἄρ᾽ εἴσοδοι τῶν ἐξόδων
πάρεισιν ὑμῖν. ἀλλὰ θάρσος ἴσχετε
καὶ νάματ᾽ ὅσσων μηκέτ᾽ ἐξανίετε.
Σύ τ᾽, ὦ γύναι μοι, σύλλογον ψυχῆς λαβὲ
τρόμου τε παῦσαι, καὶ μέθεσθ᾽ ἐμῶν πέπλων·
οὐ γὰρ πτερωτὸς οὐδὲ φευξείω φίλους.
Ἆ,
οἵδ᾽ οὐκ ἀφιᾶσ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἀνάπτονται πέπλων
τοσῷδε μᾶλλον· ὦδ᾽ ἔβητ᾽ ἐπὶ ξυροῦ;
ἄξω λαβών γε τούσδ᾽ ἐφολκίδας χεροῖν,
ναῦς δ᾽ ὡς ἐφέλξω· καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἀναίνομαι
θεράπευμα τέκνων. Πάντα τἀνθρώπων ἴσα·
φιλοῦσι παῖδας οἵ τ᾽ ἀμείνονες βροτῶν
οἵ τ᾽ οὐδὲν ὄντες· χρήμασιν δὲ διάφοροι·
ἔχουσιν, οἳ δ᾽ οὔ· πᾶν δὲ φιλότεκνον γένος.

Χορός
Ἀ νεότας μοι φίλον αἰεί· τὸ δὲ γῆρας ἄχθος
βαρύτερον Αἴτνας σκοπέλων
ἐπὶ κρατὶ κεῖται, βλεφάρων σκοτεινὸν
φάος ἐπικαλύψαν.
Μή μοι μήτ᾽ ᾽Ασιήτιδος
τυραννίδος ὄλβος εἴη,
μὴ χρυσοῦ δώματα πλήρη
τᾶς ἥβας ἀντιλαβεῖν,
ἃ καλλίστα μὲν ἐν ὄλβῳ,
καλλίστα δ᾽ ἐν πενίᾳ.
Τὸ δὲ λυγρὸν φόνιόν τε γῆ-
ρας μισῶ· κατὰ κυμάτων δ᾽
ἔρροι, μηδέ ποτ᾽ ὤφελεν
θνατῶν δώματα καὶ πόλεις

ἐλθεῖν, ἀλλὰ κατ᾽ αἰθέρ᾽ αἰ-
εὶ πτεροῖσι φορείσθω.

Εἰ δὲ θεοῖς ἦν ξύνεσις καὶ σοφία κατ᾽ ἄνδρας,
δίδυμον ἂν ἤβαν ἔφερον
φανερὸν χαρακτῆρ᾽ ἀρετᾶς ὅσοισιν
μέτα, κατθανόντες τ᾽
εἰς αὐγὰς πάλιν ἁλίου
δισσοὺς ἂν ἔβαν διαύλους,
ἁ δυσγένεια δ᾽ ἁπλοῦν ἂν
εἶχεν ζόας βίοτον,
καὶ τῷδ᾽ ἦν τούς τε κακοὺς ἂν
γνῶναι καὶ τοὺς ἀγαθούς,
ἴσον ἅτ᾽ ἐν νεφέλαισιν ἄ-
στρων ναύταις ἀριθμὸς πέλει.
Νῦν δ᾽ οὐδεὶς ὅρος ἐκ θεῶν
χρηστοῖς οὐδὲ κακοῖς σαφής,
ἀλλ᾽ εἰλισσόμενός τις αἰ-
ὼν πλοῦτον μόνον αὔξει.

Οὐ παύσομαι τὰς Χάριτας
Μούσαις συγκαταμειγνύς,
ἀδίσταν συζυγίαν.
μὴ ζῴην μετ᾽ ἀμουσίας,
αἰεὶ δ᾽ ἐν στεφάνοισιν εἴην.
Ἔτι τοι γέρων ἀοιδὸς
κελαδεῖ Μναμοσύναν·
ἔτι τὰν Ἡρακλέους
καλλίνικον ἀείδω.
Παρά τε Βρόμιον οἰνοδόταν
παρά τε χέλυος ἑπτατόνου
μολπὰν καὶ Λίβυν αὐλόν·
οὔπω καταπαύσομεν
Μούσας, αἵ μ᾽ ἐχόρευσαν.

Παιᾶνα μὲν Δηλιάδες
ὑμνοῦσ᾽ ἀμφὶ πύλας τὸν

Λατοῦς εὔπαιδα γόνον
εἰλίσσουσαι καλλίχορον·
παιᾶνας δ' ἐπὶ σοῖς μελά-
θροις κύκνος ὣς γέρων ἀοι-
δὸς πολιᾶν ἐκ γενύων
κελαδήσω· τὸ γὰρ εὖ
τοῖς ὕμνοισιν ὑπάρχει·
Διὸς ὁ παῖς· τᾶς δ' εὐγενίας
πλέον ὑπερβάλλων <ἀρετᾷ>
μοχθήσας τὸν ἄκυμον
θῆκεν βίοτον βροτοῖς
πέρσας δείματα θηρῶν.

Λύκος
Ἐς καιρὸν οἴκων Ἀμφιτρύων ἔξω περᾷ·
χρόνος γὰρ ἤδη δαρὸς ἐξ ὅτου πέπλοις
κοσμεῖσθε σῶμα καὶ νεκρῶν ἀγάλμασιν.
Ἀλλ' εἶα, παῖδας καὶ δάμαρθ' Ἡρακλέους
ἔξω κέλευε τῶνδε φαίνεσθαι δόμων,
ἐφ' οἷς ὑπέστητ' αὐτεπάγγελτοι θανεῖν.

Ἀμφιτρύων
Ἄναξ, διώκεις μ' ἀθλίως πεπραγότα
ὕβριν θ' ὑβρίζεις ἐπὶ θανοῦσι τοῖς ἐμοῖς·
ἃ χρῆν σε μετρίως, κεἰ κρατεῖς, σπουδὴν ἔχειν.
Ἐπεὶ δ' ἀνάγκην προστίθης ἡμῖν θανεῖν,
στέργειν ἀνάγκη· δραστέον δ' ἃ σοὶ δοκεῖ.

Λύκος
Ποῦ δῆτα Μεγάρα; ποῦ τέκν' Ἀλκμήνης γόνου;

Ἀμφιτρύων
Δοκῶ μὲν αὐτήν, ὡς θύραθεν εἰκάσαι...

Λύκος
Τί χρῆμα δόξης; τοῦ δ' ἔχεις τεκμήριον;

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Ἱκέτιν πρὸς ἀγνοῖς ῾Εστίας θάσσειν βάθροις...

Λύκος
Ἀνόνητά γ᾽ ἱκετεύουσαν ἐκσῷσαι βίον.
᾽Αμφιτρύων
Λαὶ τὸν θανόντα γ᾽ ἀνακαλεῖν μάτην πόσιν.

Λύκος
Ὅ δ᾽ οὐ πάρεστιν οὐδὲ μὴ μόλῃ ποτέ.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Οὔκ, εἴ γε μή τις θεῶν ἀναστήσειέ νιν.

Λύκος
Χώρει πρὸς αὐτὴν κἀκκόμιζε δωμάτων.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Μέτοχος ἂν εἴην τοῦ φόνου δράσας τόδε.

Λύκος
Ἡμεῖς, ἐπειδὴ σοὶ τόδ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐνθύμιον,
οἱ δειμάτων ἔξωθεν ἐκπορεύσομεν
σὺν μητρὶ παῖδας. δεῦρ᾽ ἕπεσθε, πρόσπολοι,
ὡς ἂν σχολὴν λύσωμεν ἄσμενοι πόνων.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Σὺ δ᾽ οὖν ἴθ᾽, ἔρχῃ δ᾽ οἷ χρεών· τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ἴσως
ἄλλῳ μελήσει. Προσδόκα δὲ δρῶν κακῶς
κακόν τι πράξειν. Ὦ γέροντες, ἐς καλὸν
στείχει, βρόχοισι δ᾽ ἀρκύων γενήσεται
ξιφηφόροισι, τοὺς πέλας δοκῶν κτενεῖν
ὁ παγκάκιστος. Εἶμι δ᾽, ὡς ἴδω νεκρὸν
πίπτοντ᾽· ἔχει γὰρ ἡδονὰς θνῄσκων ἀνὴρ
ἐχθρὸς τίνων τε τῶν δεδραμένων δίκην.

Χορός
Μεταβολὰ κακῶν· μέγας ὁ πρόσθ᾽ ἄναξ

πάλιν ὑποστρέφει βίοτον ἐξ ῎Αιδα.
Ἰώ·
δίκα καὶ θεῶν παλίρρους πότμος.
῏Ηλθες χρόνῳ μὲν οὖ δίκην δώσεις θανών,
ὕβρεις ὑβρίζων εἰς ἀμείνονας σέθεν.
Χαρμοναὶ δακρύων ἔδοσαν ἐκβολάς·
πάλιν ἔμολεν, ἃ πάρος οὔποτε διὰ φρενὸς ἤλπισ᾽ ἂν
παθεῖν, γᾶς ἄναξ.
Ἀλλ᾽, ὦ γεραιοί, καὶ τὰ δωμάτων ἔσω
σκοπῶμεν, εἰ πράσσει τις ὡς ἐγὼ θέλω.

Λύκος
Ἰώ μοί μοι.

Χορός
Τόδε κατάρχεται μέλος ἐμοὶ κλύειν
φίλιον ἐν δόμοις· θάνατος οὐ πόρσω.
Βοᾷ
φόνου φροίμιον στενάζων ἄναξ.

Λύκος
῏Ω πᾶσα Κάδμου γαῖ᾽, ἀπόλλυμαι δόλῳ.

Χορός
Καὶ γὰρ διώλλυς· ἀντίποινα δ᾽ ἐκτίνων
τόλμα, διδούς γε τῶν δεδραμένων δίκην.
Τίς ὁ θεοὺς ἀνομίᾳ χραίνων, θνητὸς ὤν,
ἄφρονα λόγον οὐρανίων μακάρων κατέβαλ᾽, ὡς ἄρ᾽ οὐ
σθένουσιν θεοί;
Γέροντες, οὐκέτ᾽ ἔστι δυσσεβὴς ἀνήρ.
Σιγᾷ μέλαθρα· πρὸς χοροὺς τραπώμεθα.
[Φίλοι γὰρ εὐτυχοῦσιν οὓς ἐγὼ θέλω.]

Χοροὶ χοροὶ καὶ θαλίαι
μέλουσι Θήβας ἱερὸν κατ᾽ ἄστυ.
Μεταλλαγαὶ γὰρ δακρύων,
μεταλλαγαὶ συντυχίας
<νέας> ἔτεκον ἀοιδάς.

Βέβακ᾽ ἄναξ ὁ καινός, ὁ δὲ παλαίτερος
κρατεῖ, λιμένα λιπών γε τὸν ᾽Αχερόντιον.
δοκημάτων ἐκτὸς ἦλθεν ἐλπίς.

θεοὶ θεοὶ τῶν ἀδίκων
μέλουσι καὶ τῶν ὁσίων ἐπᾴειν.
Ὁ χρυσὸς ἅ τ᾽ εὐτυχία
φρενῶν βροτοὺς ἐξάγεται,
δύνασιν ἄδικον ἐφέλκων.
Χρόνου γὰρ οὔτις τὸ πάλιν εἰσορᾶν ἔτλα·
νόμον παρέμενος, ἀνομίᾳ χάριν διδοὺς
ἔθραυσεν ὄλβου κελαινὸν ἅρμα.

᾽Ισμήν᾽ ὦ στεφαναφόρει,
ξεσταί θ᾽ ἑπταπύλου πόλεως
ἀναχορεύσατ᾽ ἀγυιαί,
Δίρκα θ᾽ ἁ καλλιρρέεθρος,
σύν τ᾽ ᾽Ασωπιάδες κόραι,
πατρὸς ὕδωρ βᾶτε λιποῦσαι συναοιδοί,
Νύμφαι, τὸν ῾Ηρακλέους
καλλίνικον ἀγῶνα.
Πυθίου δενδρῶτι πέτρα
Μουσῶν θ᾽ ῾Ελικωνιάδων δώματα,
ἥξετ᾽ εὐγαθεῖ κελάδῳ
ἐμὰν πόλιν, ἐμὰ τείχη,
Σπαρτῶν ἵνα γένος ἔφανε
χαλκασπίδων λόχος, ὃς γᾶν
τέκνων τέκνοις μεταμείβει,
Θήβαις ἱερὸν φῶς.

Ὦ λέκτρων δύο συγγενεῖς
εὐναί, θνατογενοῦς τε καὶ
Διός, ὃς ἦλθεν ἐς εὐνὰν
Νύμφας τᾶς Περσηίδος· ὡς
πιστόν μοι τὸ παλαιὸν ἦ-
δη λέχος, ὦ Ζεῦ, σὸν ἐπ᾽ οὐκ ἐλπίδι φάνθη,
λαμπρὰν δ᾽ ἔδειξ᾽ ὁ χρόνος

τὰν ῾Ηρακλέος ἀλκάν·
ὃς γᾶς ἐξέβα θαλάμων
Πλούτωνος δῶμα λιπὼν νέρτερον.
Κρείσσων μοι τύραννος ἔφυς
ἢ δυσγένει᾽ ἀνάκτων,
ἃ νῦν ἐσορᾶν ἔφανε
ξιφηφόρων ἐς ἀγώνων
ἅμιλλαν, εἰ τὸ δίκαιον
θεοῖς ἔτ᾽ ἀρέσκει.

῎Εα ἔα·
ἆρ᾽ ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν πίτυλον ἥκομεν φόβου,
γέροντες, οἷον φάσμ᾽ ὑπὲρ δόμων ὁρῶ;
Φυγῇ φυγῇ
νωθὲς πέδαιρε κῶλον, ἐκποδὼν ἔλα.
῏Ωναξ Παιάν,
ἀπότροπος γένοιό μοι πημάτων.

῾Ίρις
Θαρσεῖτε Νυκτὸς τήνδ᾽ ὁρῶντες ἔκγονον
Λύσσαν, γέροντες, κἀμὲ τὴν θεῶν λάτριν
῾Ίριν· πόλει γὰρ οὐδὲν ἥκομεν βλάβος,
ἑνὸς δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀνδρὸς σῶμα συστρατεύομεν,
ὅν φασιν εἶναι Ζηνὸς ᾽Αλκμήνης τ᾽ ἄπο.
πρὶν μὲν γὰρ ἄθλους ἐκτελευτῆσαι πικρούς,
τὸ χρή νιν ἐξέσῳζεν, οὐδ᾽ εἴα πατὴρ
Ζεύς νιν κακῶς δρᾶν οὔτ᾽ ἔμ᾽ οὔθ᾽ ῞Ηραν ποτέ·
᾽Επεὶ δὲ μόχθους διεπέρασ᾽ Εὐρυσθέως,
῞Ηρα προσάψαι καινὸν αἶμ᾽ αὐτῷ θέλει
παῖδας κατακτείναντι, συνθέλω δ᾽ ἐγώ.
Ἀλλ᾽ εἶ᾽, ἄτεγκτον συλλαβοῦσα καρδίαν,
Νυκτὸς κελαινῆς ἀνυμέναιε παρθένε,
μανίας τ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀνδρὶ τῷδε καὶ παιδοκτόνους
φρενῶν ταραγμοὺς καὶ ποδῶν σκιρτήματα
ἔλαυνε, κίνει, φόνιον ἐξίει κάλων,
ὡς ἂν πορεύσας δι᾽ ᾽Αχερούσιον πόρον
τὸν καλλίπαιδα στέφανον αὐθέντῃ φόνῳ

γνῷ μὲν τὸν Ἥρας οἷός ἐστ᾽ αὐτῷ χόλος,
μάθῃ δὲ τὸν ἐμόν· ἢ θεοὶ μὲν οὐδαμοῦ,
τὰ θνητὰ δ᾽ ἔσται μεγάλα, μὴ δόντος δίκην.

Λύσσα
Ἐξ εὐγενοῦς μὲν πατρὸς ἔκ τε μητέρος
πέφυκα, Νυκτὸς Οὐρανοῦ τ᾽ ἀφ᾽ αἵματος·
τιμάς τ᾽ ἔχω τάσδ᾽ οὐκ ἀγασθῆναι φίλοις,
οὐδ᾽ ἥδομαι φοιτῶσ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀνθρώπων φίλους.
Παραινέσαι δέ, πρὶν σφαλεῖσαν εἰσιδεῖν,
Ἥρᾳ θέλω σοί τ᾽, ἢν πίθησθ᾽ ἐμοῖς λόγοις.
Ἀνὴρ ὅδ᾽ οὐκ ἄσημος οὔτ᾽ ἐπὶ χθονὶ
οὔτ᾽ ἐν θεοῖσιν, οὗ σύ μ᾽ ἐσπέμπεις δόμους·
ἄβατον δὲ χώραν καὶ θάλασσαν ἀγρίαν
ἐξημερώσας, θεῶν ἀνέστησεν μόνος
τιμὰς πιτνούσας ἀνοσίων ἀνδρῶν ὕπο·
σοί τ᾽ οὐ παραινῶ μεγάλα βούλεσθαι κακά.

Ἶρις
Μὴ σὺ νουθέτει τά θ᾽ Ἥρας κἀμὰ μηχανήματα.

Λύσσα
Ἐς τὸ λῷον ἐμβιβάζω σ᾽ ἴχνος ἀντὶ τοῦ κακοῦ.

Ἶρις
Οὐχὶ σωφρονεῖν γ᾽ ἔπεμψε δεῦρό σ᾽ ἡ Διὸς δάμαρ.

Λύσσα
Ἥλιον μαρτυρόμεσθα δρῶσ᾽ ἃ δρᾶν οὐ βούλομαι.
Εἰ δὲ δή μ᾽ Ἥρᾳ θ᾽ ὑπουργεῖν σοί τ᾽ ἀναγκαίως ἔχει
τάχος ἐπιρροίβδην θ᾽ ὁμαρτεῖν ὡς κυνηγέτῃ κύνας,
εἶμί γ᾽· οὔτε πόντος οὕτως κύμασιν στένων λάβρως
οὔτε γῆς σεισμὸς κεραυνοῦ τ᾽ οἶστρος ὠδῖνας πνέων,
οἷ᾽ ἐγὼ στάδια δραμοῦμαι στέρνον εἰς Ἡρακλέους·
καὶ καταρρήξω μέλαθρα καὶ δόμους ἐπεμβαλῶ,
τέκν᾽ ἀποκτείνασα πρῶτον· ὁ δὲ κανὼν οὐκ εἴσεται
παῖδας οὓς ἔτικτ᾽ ἐναίρων, πρὶν ἂν ἐμὰς λύσσας ἀφῇ.
Ἴθι ἰδού· καὶ δὴ τινάσσει κρᾶτα βαλβίδων ἄπο

καὶ διαστρόφους ἑλίσσει σῖγα γοργωποὺς κόρας.
Ἀμπνοὰς δ᾽ οὐ σωφρονίζει, ταῦρος ὣς ἐς ἐμβολὴν
δεινὰ μυκᾶται δὲ Κῆρας ἀνακαλῶν τὰς Ταρτάρου.
Τάχα σ᾽ ἐγὼ μᾶλλον χορεύσω καὶ καταυλήσω φόβῳ.
Στεῖχ᾽ ἐς Οὔλυμπον πεδαίρουσ᾽, Ἶρι, γενναῖον πόδα·
ἐς δόμους δ᾽ ἡμεῖς ἄφαντοι δυσόμεσθ᾽ Ἡρακλέους.

Χορός
Ὀτοτοτοτοῖ, στέναξον· ἀποκείρεται
σὸν ἄνθος πόλεος, ὁ Διὸς ἔκγονος.
Μέλεος Ἑλλάς, ἃ τὸν εὐεργέταν
ἀποβαλεῖς, ὀλεῖς μανίαισιν Λύσσας
χορευθέντ᾽ ἐναύλοις.

Βέβακεν ἐν δίφροισιν ἁ πολύστονος,
ἅρμασι δ᾽ ἐνδίδωσι
κέντρον ὡς ἐπὶ λώβᾳ
Νυκτὸς Γοργὼν ἑκατογκεφάλοις
ὄφεων ἰαχήμασι, Λύσσα μαρμαρωπός.

Ταχὺ τὸν εὐτυχῆ μετέβαλεν δαίμων,
ταχὺ δὲ πρὸς πατρὸς τέκν᾽ ἐκπνεύσεται.

Ἀμφιτρύων
Ἰώ μοι μέλεος.

Χορός
Ἰὼ Ζεῦ, τὸ σὸν γένος ἄγονον αὐτίκα
λυσσάδες ὠμοβρῶτες ἄδικοι Ποιναὶ
κακοῖσιν ἐκπετάσουσιν.

Ἀμφιτρύων
Ἰὼ στέγαι.

Χορός
Κατάρχεται χόρευμα τυμπάνων ἄτερ,
οὐ βρομίῳ κεχαρισμένα θύρσῳ . . .

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Ἰὼ δόμοι.

Χορός
Πρὸς αἵματ᾽, οὐχὶ τᾶς Διονυσιάδος
βοτρύων ἐπὶ χεύμασι λοιβᾶς.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Φυγῇ, τέκν᾽, ἐξορμᾶτε.

Χορός
Δάιον τόδε
δάιον μέλος ἐπαυλεῖται.
Κυναγετεῖ τέκνων διωγμόν· οὔποτ᾽ ἄκραντα δόμοισι
Λύσσα βακχεύσει.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Αἰαῖ κακῶν.

Χορός
Αἰαῖ δῆτα τὸν γεραιὸν ὡς στένω
πατέρα τάν τε παιδοτρόφον, <ᾇ > μάταν
τέκεα γεννᾶται.
Ἰδοὺ ἰδού,
θύελλα σείει δῶμα, συμπίπτει στέγη.

᾽Ηρακλῆς
Ἦ ἦ· τί δρᾷς, ὦ Διὸς παῖ, μελάθρῳ;
τάραγμα ταρτάρειον, ὡς ἐπ᾽ ᾽Εγκελάδῳ ποτέ, Παλλάς,
ἐς δόμους πέμπεις.

᾽Αγγελος
Ὦ λευκὰ γήρᾳ σώματ᾽

Χορός
Ἀνακαλεῖς με τίνα
βοάν;

˝Αγγελος
Ἅλαστα τἀν δόμοισι.

Χορός
Μάντιν οὐχ
ἕτερον ἄξομαι.

˝Αγγελος
Τεθνᾶσι παῖδες.

Χορός
Αἰαῖ.

˝Αγγελος
Στενάζεθ', ὡς στενακτά.

Χορός
Δάιοι φόνοι,
δάιοι δὲ τοκέων χέρες· ὤ.

˝Αγγελος
Οὐκ ἄν τις εἴποι μᾶλλον ἢ πεπόνθαμεν.

Χορός
Πῶς παισὶ στενακτὰν ἄταν ἄταν
πατέρος ἀμφαίνεις;
λέγε, τίνα τρόπον ἔσυτο θεόθεν ἐπὶ
μέλαθρα κακὰ τάδε,
τλήμονάς τε παίδων τύχας;

˝Αγγελος
Ἱερὰ μὲν ἦν πάροιθεν ἐσχάρας Διὸς
καθάρσι' οἴκων, γῆς ἄνακτ' ἐπεὶ κτανὼν
ἐξέβαλε τῶνδε δωμάτων Ἡρακλέης·
χορὸς δὲ καλλίμορφος εἱστήκει τέκνων
πατήρ τε Μεγάρα τ'· ἐν κύκλῳ δ' ἤδη κανοῦν
εἵλικτο βωμοῦ, φθέγμα δ' ὅσιον εἴχομεν.
Μέλλων δὲ δαλὸν χειρὶ δεξιᾷ φέρειν,

ἐς χέρνιβ’ ὡς βάψειεν, ᾽Αλκμήνης τόκος
ἔστη σιωπῇ. καὶ χρονίζοντος πατρὸς
παῖδες προσέσχον ὄμμ’· ὁ δ’ οὐκέθ’ αὐτὸς ἦν,
ἀλλ’ ἐν στροφαῖσιν ὀμμάτων ἐφθαρμένος
ῥίζας τ’ ἐν ὄσσοις αἱματῶπας ἐκβαλὼν
ἀφρὸν κατέσταζ’ εὐτρίχου γενειάδος.
Ἔλεξε δ’ ἅμα γέλωτι παραπεπληγμένῳ·
Πάτερ, τί θύω πρὶν κτανεῖν Εὐρυσθέα
καθάρσιον πῦρ, καὶ πόνους διπλοῦς ἔχω;
ἔργον μιᾶς μοι χειρὸς εὖ θέσθαι τάδε·
ὅταν δ’ ἐνέγκω δεῦρο κρᾶτ’ Εὐρυσθέως,
ἐπὶ τοῖσι νῦν θανοῦσιν ἁγνιῶ χέρας.
᾽Εκχεῖτε πηγάς, ῥίπτετ’ ἐκ χειρῶν κανᾶ.
Τίς μοι δίδωσι τόξα; τίς <δ’> ὅπλον χερός;
πρὸς τὰς Μυκήνας εἶμι· λάζυσθαι χρεὼν
μοχλοὺς δικέλλας θ’, ὥστε Κυκλώπων βάθρα
φοίνικι κανόνι καὶ τύκοις ἡρμοσμένα
στρεπτῷ σιδήρῳ συντριαινῶσαι πάλιν.
Αὐτοῦ δὲ βαίνων ἅρματ’ οὐκ ἔχων ἔχειν
ἔφασκε, δίφρου δ’ εἰσέβαινεν ἄντυγας
κἄθεινε, κέντρον δῆθεν ὡς ἔχων, χερί.
Διπλοῦς δ’ ὀπαδοῖς ἦν γέλως φόβος θ’ ὁμοῦ.
Καί τις τόδ’ εἶπεν, ἄλλος εἰς ἄλλον δρακών·
Παίζει πρὸς ἡμᾶς δεσπότης ἢ μαίνεται;
Ὅ δ’ εἶρπ’ ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω κατὰ στέγας,
μέσον δ’ ἐς ἀνδρῶν’ ἐσπεσὼν Νίσου πόλιν
ἥκειν ἔφασκε· δωμάτων τ’ ἔσω βεβώς,
κλιθεὶς ἐς οὗδας, ὡς ἔχει, σκευάζεται
θοίνην. διελθὼν δ’ ὡς βραχὺν χρόνον μονῆς
᾽Ισθμοῦ ναπαίας ἔλεγε προσβαίνειν πλάκας.
Κἀνταῦθα γυμνὸν σῶμα θεὶς πορπαμάτων,
πρὸς οὐδέν’ ἡμιλλᾶτο κἀκηρύσσετο
αὐτὸς πρὸς αὐτοῦ καλλίνικος οὐδενός,
ἀκοὴν ὑπειπών. δεινὰ δ’ Εὐρυσθεῖ βρέμων
ἦν ἐν Μυκήναις τῷ λόγῳ. Πατὴρ δέ νιν
θιγὼν κραταιᾶς χειρὸς ἐννέπει τάδε·
Ὦ παῖ, τί πάσχεις; τίς ὁ τρόπος ξενώσεως

τῆσδ’; οὔ τί που φόνος σ’ ἐβάκχευσεν νεκρῶν,
οὓς ἄρτι καίνεις; ὁ δέ νιν Εὐρυσθέως δοκῶν
πατέρα προταρβοῦνθ’ ἱκέσιον ψαύειν χερός,
ὠθεῖ, φαρέτραν δ’ εὐτρεπῆ σκευάζεται
καὶ τόξ’ ἑαυτοῦ παισί, τοὺς Εὐρυσθέως
δοκῶν φονεύειν. οἳ δὲ ταρβοῦντες φόβῳ
ὥρουον ἄλλος ἄλλοσ’, ἐς πέπλους ὁ μὲν
μητρὸς ταλαίνης, ὁ δ’ ὑπὸ κίονος σκιάν,
ἄλλος δὲ βωμὸν ὄρνις ὣς ἔπτηξ’ ὕπο.
Βοᾷ δὲ μήτηρ· Ὦ τεκών, τί δρᾷς; τέκνα
κτείνεις; Βοᾷ δὲ πρέσβυς οἰκετῶν τ’ ὄχλος.
Ὁ δ’ ἐξελίσσων παῖδα κίονος κύκλῳ,
τόρνευμα δεινὸν ποδός, ἐναντίον σταθεὶς
βάλλει πρὸς ἦπαρ· ὕπτιος δὲ λαΐνους
ὀρθοστάτας ἔδευσεν ἐκπνέων βίον.
Ὁ δ’ ἠλάλαξε κἀπεκόμπασεν τάδε·
Εἷς μὲν νεοσσὸς ὅδε θανὼν Εὐρυσθέως
ἔχθραν πατρῴαν ἐκτίνων πέπτωκέ μοι.
ἄλλῳ δ’ ἐπεῖχε τόξ’, ὃς ἀμφὶ βωμίαν
ἔπτηξε κρηπῖδ’ ὡς λεληθέναι δοκῶν.
Φθάνει δ’ ὁ τλήμων γόνασι προσπεσὼν πατρός,
καὶ πρὸς γένειον χεῖρα καὶ δέρην βαλών,
Ὦ φίλτατ’, αὐδᾷ, μή μ’ ἀποκτείνῃς, πάτερ·
σός εἰμι, σὸς παῖς· οὐ τὸν Εὐρυσθέως ὀλεῖς.
Ὁ δ’ ἀγριωπὸν ὄμμα Γοργόνος στρέφων,
ὡς ἐντὸς ἔστη παῖς λυγροῦ τοξεύματος,
μυδροκτύπον μίμημ’, ὑπὲρ κάρα βαλὼν
ξύλον καθῆκε παιδὸς ἐς ξανθὸν κάρα,
ἔρρηξε δ’ ὀστᾶ. Δεύτερον δὲ παῖδ’ ἑλών,
χωρεῖ τρίτον θῦμ’ ὡς ἐπισφάξων δυοῖν.
Ἀλλὰ φθάνει νιν ἡ τάλαιν’ ἔσω δόμων
μήτηρ ὑπεκλαβοῦσα, καὶ κλῄει πύλας.
Ὁ δ’ ὡς ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς δὴ Κυκλωπίοισιν ὢν
σκάπτει μοχλεύει θύρετρα, κἀκβαλὼν σταθμὰ
δάμαρτα καὶ παῖδ’ ἐνὶ κατέστρωσεν βέλει.
Κἀνθένδε πρὸς γέροντος ἱππεύει φόνον·
ἀλλ’ ἦλθεν εἰκών, ὡς ὁρᾶν ἐφαίνετο,

Παλλὰς κραδαίνουσ’ ἔγχος ἐπὶ λόφῳ κέαρ,
κἄρριψε πέτρον στέρνον εἰς Ἡρακλέους,
ὅς νιν φόνου μαργῶντος ἔσχε, κεἰς ὕπνον
καθῆκε· πίτνει δ’ ἐς πέδον, πρὸς κίονα
νῶτον πατάξας, ὃς πεσήμασι στέγης
διχορραγὴς ἔκειτο κρηπίδων ἔπι.
Ἡμεῖς δ’ ἐλευθεροῦντες ἐκ δρασμῶν πόδα
σὺν τῷ γέροντι δεσμὰ σειραίων βρόχων
ἀνήπτομεν πρὸς κίον’, ὡς λήξας ὕπνου
μηδὲν προσεργάσαιτο τοῖς δεδραμένοις.
Εὕδει δ’ ὁ τλήμων ὕπνον οὐκ εὐδαίμονα,
παῖδας φονεύσας καὶ δάμαρτ’. ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν
οὐκ οἶδα θνητῶν ὅστις ἀθλιώτερος.

Χορός
Ὁ φόνος ἦν ὃν ᾽Αργολὶς ἔχει πέτρα
τότε μὲν περισαμότατος καὶ ἄπιστος Ἑλλάδι
τῶν Δαναοῦ παίδων· τάδε δ’ ὑπερέβαλε, παρ-
έδραμε τὰ τότε κακά.

Τάλανι διογενεῖ κόρῳ
μονοτέκνου Πρόκνης φόνον ἔχω λέξαι
θυόμενον Μούσαις·
σὺ δὲ τέκνα τρίγονα τεκόμενος, ὦ δάιε,
λυσσάδι συγκατειργάσω μοίρᾳ.
Αἰαῖ, τίνα στεναγμὸν
ἢ γόον ἢ φθιτῶν
ᾠδάν, ἢ τὸν Ἄιδα χορὸν ἀχήσω;
Φεῦ φεῦ·
ἴδεσθε, διάνδιχα κλῇθρα
κλίνεται ὑψιπύλων δόμων.
Ἰώ μοι·
ἴδεσθε δὲ τέκνα πρὸ πατρὸς
ἄθλια κείμενα δυστάνου,
εὔδοντος ὕπνον δεινὸν ἐκ παίδων φόνου·
περὶ δὲ δεσμὰ καὶ πολύβροχ’ ἀμμάτων
ἐρείσμαθ’ Ἡράκλειον

ἀμφὶ δέμας τάδε λαΐνοις
ἀνημμένα κίοσιν οἴκων.
Ὁ δ' ὥς τις ὄρνις ἄπτερον καταστένων
ὠδῖνα τέκνων, πρέσβυς ὑστέρῳ ποδὶ
πικρὰν διώκων ἥλυσιν πάρεσθ' ὅδε.

Ἀμφιτρύων
Καδμεῖοι γέροντες, οὐ σῖγα σῖ-
γα τὸν ὕπνῳ παρειμένον ἐάσετ' ἐκ-
λαθέσθαι κακῶν;

Χορός
Κατὰ σὲ δακρύοις στένω, πρέσβυ, καὶ
τέκεα καὶ τὸ καλλίνικον κάρα.

Ἀμφιτρύων
Ἑκαστέρω πρόβατε, μὴ
κτυπεῖτε, μὴ βοᾶτε, μὴ
τὸν εὕδι' ἰαύονθ'
ὑπνώδεά τ' εὐνᾶς ἐγείρετε.

Χορός
Οἴμοι.
φόνος ὅσος ὅδ'...

Ἀμφιτρύων
Ἆ ἆ,
διά μ' ὀλεῖτε.

Χορός
Κεχυμένος ἐπαντέλλει.

Ἀμφιτρύων
Οὐκ ἀτρεμαῖα θρῆνον αἰάξετ', ὦ γέροντες;
ἢ δέσμ' ἀνεγειρόμενος χαλάσας ἀπολεῖ πόλιν,
ἀπὸ δὲ πατέρα, μέλαθρά τε καταράξει.

Χορός
Ἀδύνατ᾽ ἀδύνατά μοι.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Σῖγα, πνοὰς μάθω· φέρε πρὸς οὗς βάλω.

Χορός
Εὕδει;
᾽Αμφιτρύων
Ναί, εὕδει
ὕπνον γ᾽ ἄυπνον ὀλόμενον, ὃς ἔκανεν ἄλοχον, ἔ-
κανε δὲ τέκεα, τοξήρει ψαλμῷ τοξεύσας.

Χορός
Σῖτέναζέ νυν

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Στενάζω.

Χορός
τέκνων ὄλεθρον

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Ὤμοι.

Χορός
Σέθεν τε παιδὸς.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Αἰαῖ.

Χορός
Ὦ πρέσβυ . . .

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Σῖγα σῖγα·
παλίντροπος ἐξεγειρόμενος στρέφεται· φέρε,
ἀπόκρυφον δέμας ὑπὸ μέλαθρον κρύψω.

Χορός
Θάρσει· νὺξ ἔχει βλέφαρα παιδὶ σῷ.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Ὁρᾶθ᾽ ὁρᾶτε. Τὸ φάος ἐκ-
λιπεῖν μὲν ἐπὶ κακοῖσιν οὐ
φεύγω τάλας, ἀλλ᾽ εἴ με κανεῖ πατέρ᾽ ὄντα,
πρὸς δὲ κακοῖς κακὰ μήσεται
πρὸς ᾽Ερινύσι θ᾽ αἷμα σύγγονον ἕξει.

Χορός
Τότε θανεῖν σ᾽ ἐχρῆν, ὅτε δάμαρτι σᾷ
φόνον ὁμοσπόρων ἔμολες ἐκπράξας
Ταφίων περίκλυστον ἄστυ πέρσας.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Φυγὰν φυγάν, γέροντες, ἀποπρὸ δωμάτων
διώκετε· φεύγετε μάργον
ἄνδρ᾽ ἐπεγειρόμενον.
Τάχα φόνον ἕτερον ἐπὶ φόνῳ βαλὼν
ἀν᾽ αὖ βακχεύσει Καδμείων πόλιν.

Χορός
Ὦ Ζεῦ, τί παῖδ᾽ ἤχθηρας ὧδ᾽ ὑπερκότως
τὸν σόν, κακῶν δὲ πέλαγος ἐς τόδ᾽ ἤγαγες;

῾Ηρακλῆς
Ἔα·
ἔμπνους μέν εἰμι καὶ δέδορχ᾽ ἅπερ με δεῖ,
αἰθέρα τε καὶ γῆν τόξα θ᾽ ῾Ηλίου τάδε·
ὡς ἐν κλύδωνι καὶ φρενῶν ταράγματι
πέπτωκα δεινῷ καὶ πνοὰς θερμὰς πνέω
μετάρσι᾽, οὐ βέβαια, πνευμόνων ἄπο.
᾽Ιδού, τί δεσμοῖς ναῦς ὅπως ὡρμισμένος
νεανίαν θώρακα καὶ βραχίονα,
πρὸς ἡμιθραύστῳ λαΐνῳ τυκίσματι
ἧμαι, νεκροῖσι γείτονας θάκους ἔχων;
πτερωτά τ᾽ ἔγχη· τόξα δ᾽ ἔσπαρται πέδῳ,

ἃ πρὶν παρασπίζοντ’ ἐμοῖς βραχίοσιν
ἔσῳζε πλευρὰς ἐξ ἐμοῦ τ’ ἐσῴζετο.
Οὔ που κατῆλθον αὖθις εἰς Ἅιδου πάλιν,
Εὐρυσθέως δίαυλον; εἰς Ἅιδου; πόθεν;
Ἀλλ’ οὔτε Σισύφειον εἰσορῶ πέτρον
Πλούτωνά τ’, οὐδὲ σκῆπτρα Δήμητρος κόρης.
Ἔκ τοι πέπληγμαι· ποῦ ποτ’ ὢν ἀμηχανῶ;
Ὢή, τίς ἐγγὺς ἢ πρόσω φίλων ἐμῶν,
δύσγνοιαν ὅστις τὴν ἐμὴν ἰάσεται;
σαφῶς γὰρ οὐδὲν οἶδα τῶν εἰωθότων.

Ἀμφιτρύων
Γέροντες, ἔλθω τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν πέλας;

Χορός
Κἀγώ γε σὺν σοί, μὴ προδοὺς τὰς συμφοράς.

Ἡρακλῆς
Πάτερ, τί κλαίεις καὶ συναμπίσχῃ κόρας,
τοῦ φιλτάτου σοι τηλόθεν παιδὸς βεβώς;

Ἀμφιτρύων
Ὦ τέκνον· εἶ γὰρ καὶ κακῶς πράσσων ἐμός.

Ἡρακλῆς
Πράσσω δ’ ἐγὼ τί λυπρόν, οὗ δακρυρροεῖς;

Ἀμφιτρύων
Ἃ κἂν θεῶν τις, εἰ μάθοι, καταστένοι.

Ἡρακλῆς
Μέγας γ’ ὁ κόμπος, τὴν τύχην δ’ οὔπω λέγεις.

Ἀμφιτρύων
Ὁρᾷς γὰρ αὐτός, εἰ φρονῶν ἤδη κυρεῖς.

Ἡρακλῆς
Εἶπ’, εἴ τι καινὸν ὑπογράφῃ τῷμῷ βίῳ.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Εἰ μηκέθ᾽ ΄ΑΕΗΙΟΥΑιδου βάκχος εἶ, φράσαιμεν ἄν.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Παπαῖ, τόδ᾽ ὡς ὕποπτον ᾐνίξω πάλιν.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Καί σ᾽ εἰ βεβαίως εὖ φρονεῖς ἤδη σκοπῶ.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Οὐ γάρ τι βακχεύσας γε μέμνημαι φρένας.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Λύσω, γέροντες, δεσμὰ παιδός; ἢ τί δρῶ;

῾Ηρακλῆς
Καὶ τόν γε δήσαντ᾽ εἶπ᾽· ἀναινόμεσθα γάρ.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Τοσοῦτον ἴσθι τῶν κακῶν· τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ἔα.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Ἀρκεῖ σιωπὴ γὰρ μαθεῖν ὃ βούλομαι;

᾽Αμφιτρύων
῏Ω Ζεῦ, παρ᾽ ΄Ηρας ἦρ᾽ ὁρᾷς θρόνων τάδε;

῾Ηρακλῆς
Ἀλλ᾽ ἦ τι κεῖθεν πολέμιον πεπόνθαμεν;

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Τὴν θεὸν ἐάσας τὰ σὰ περιστέλλου κακά.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Ἀπωλόμεσθα· συμφορὰν λέξεις τινά.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Ἰδού, θέασαι τάδε τέκνων πεσήματα.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Οἴμοι· τίν᾽ ὄψιν τήνδε δέρκομαι τάλας;

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Ἀπόλεμον, ὦ παῖ, πόλεμον ἔσπευσας τέκνοις.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Τί πόλεμον εἶπας; τούσδε τίς διώλεσε;

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Σὺ καὶ σὰ τόξα καὶ θεῶν ὃς αἴτιος.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Τί φῄς; τί δράσας; ὦ κάκ᾽ ἀγγέλλων πάτερ.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Μανείς· ἐρωτᾷς δ᾽ ἄθλι᾽ ἑρμηνεύματα.

῾Ηρακλῆς
῏Η καὶ δάμαρτός εἰμ᾽ ἐγὼ φονεὺς ἐμῆς;

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Μιᾶς ἅπαντα χειρὸς ἔργα σῆς τάδε.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Αἰαῖ· στεναγμῶν γάρ με περιβάλλει νέφος.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Τούτων ἕκατι σὰς καταστένω τύχας.

῾Ηρακλῆς
῏Η γὰρ συνήραξ᾽ οἶκον ἢ βάκχευσ᾽ ἐμόν; ᾳϋχ2000;

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἕν· πάντα δυστυχεῖ τὰ σά.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Ποῦ δ᾽ οἶστρος ἡμᾶς ἔλαβε; ποῦ διώλεσεν;

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Ὅτ᾽ ἀμφὶ βωμὸν χεῖρας ἠγνίζου πυρί.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Οἴμοι· τί δῆτα φείδομαι ψυχῆς ἐμῆς
τῶν φιλτάτων μοι γενόμενος παίδων φονεύς;
κοὐκ εἶμι πέτρας λισσάδος πρὸς ἄλματα
ἢ φάσγανον πρὸς ἦπαρ ἐξακοντίσας
τέκνοις δικαστὴς αἵματος γενήσομαι;
ἢ σάρκα τὴν ἔμηνεν ἐμπρήσας πυρί,
δύσκλειαν ἣ μένει μ᾽ ἀπώσομαι βίου;
Ἀλλ᾽ ἐμποδών μοι θανασίμων βουλευμάτων
Θησεὺς ὅδ᾽ ἕρπει συγγενὴς φίλος τ᾽ ἐμός.
Ὀφθησόμεσθα, καὶ τεκνοκτόνον μύσος
ἐς ὄμμαθ᾽ ἥξει φιλτάτῳ ξένων ἐμῶν.
Οἴμοι, τί δράσω; ποῖ κακῶν ἐρημίαν
εὕρω, πτερωτὸς ἢ κατὰ χθονὸς μολών;
† φέρ᾽ ἄν τι † κρατὶ περιβάλω σκότον.
Αἰσχύνομαι γὰρ τοῖς δεδραμένοις κακοῖς·
καὶ τῶνδε προστρόπαιον αἷμα προσλαβὼν
οὐδὲν κακῶσαι τοὺς ἀναιτίους θέλω.

Θησεύς
Ἥκω σὺν ἄλλοις, οἳ παρ᾽ ᾽Ασωποῦ ῥοὰς
μένουσιν, ἔνοπλοι γῆς ᾽Αθηναίων κόροι,
σῷ παιδί, πρέσβυ, σύμμαχον φέρων δόρυ.
Κληδὼν γὰρ ἦλθεν εἰς ᾽Ερεχθειδῶν πόλιν
ὡς σκῆπτρα χώρας τῆσδ᾽ ἀναρπάσας Λύκος
ἐς πόλεμον ὑμῖν καὶ μάχην καθίσταται.
Τίνων δ᾽ ἀμοιβὰς ὧν ὑπῆρξεν ῾Ηρακλῆς
σῴσας με νέρθεν, ἦλθον, εἴ τι δεῖ, γέρον,
ἢ χειρὸς ὑμᾶς τῆς ἐμῆς ἢ συμμάχων.
Ἔα·
τί νεκρῶν τῶνδε πληθύει πέδον;
οὔ που λέλειμμαι καὶ νεωτέρων κακῶν
ὕστερος ἀφῖγμαι; τίς τάδ᾽ ἔκτεινεν τέκνα;
τίνος γεγῶσαν τήνδ᾽ ὁρῶ ξυνάορον;

οὐ γὰρ δορός γε παῖδες ἵστανται πέλας,
ἀλλ᾽ ἄλλο πού τι καινὸν εὑρίσκω κακόν.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Ὦ τὸν ἐλαιοφόρον ὄχθον ἔχων . . .

Θησεύς
Τί χρῆμά μ᾽ οἰκτροῖς ἐκάλεσας προοιμίοις;

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Ἐπάθομεν πάθεα μέλεα πρὸς θεῶν.

Θησεύς
Οἱ παῖδες οἵδε τίνες, ἐφ᾽ οἷς δακρυρροεῖς;

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Ἔτεκε μέν οὑμὸς ἶνις τάλας,
τεκόμενος δ᾽ ἔκανε, φόνιον αἷμα τλάς.

Θησεύς
Εὔφημα φώνει.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Βουλομένοισιν ἐπαγγέλλῃ.

Θησεύς
Ὦ δεινὰ λέξας.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Οἰχόμεθ᾽ οἰχόμεθα πτανοί.

Θησεύς
Τί φῄς; τί δράσας;

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Μαινομένῳ πιτύλῳ πλαγχθεὶς
ἑκατογκεφάλου βαφαῖς ὕδρας.

Θησεύς
Ἥρας ὅδ’ ἀγών· τίς δ’ ὅδ’ οὐν νεκροῖς, γέρον;

Ἀμφιτρύων
Ἐμὸς ἐμὸς ὅδε γόνος ὁ πολύπονος, ἐπὶ
δόρυ γιγαντοφόνον ἦλθεν σὺν θεοῖ-
σι Φλεγραῖον ἐς πεδίον ἀσπιστάς.

Θησεύς
Φεῦ φεῦ· τίς ἀνδρῶν ὧδε δυσδαίμων ἔφυ;

Ἀμφιτρύων
Οὐκ ἂν εἰδείης
ἕτερον πολυμοχθότερον πολυπλαγκτότερόν τε θνατῶν.

Θησεύς
Τί γὰρ πέπλοισιν ἄθλιον κρύπτει κάρα;

Ἀμφιτρύων
Αἰδόμενος τὸ σὸν ὄμμα
καὶ φιλίαν ὁμόφυλον
αἷμά τε παιδοφόνον.

Θησεύς
Ἀλλ’, εἰ συναλγῶν γ’ ἦλθον, ἐκκάλυπτέ νιν.

Ἀμφιτρύων
Ὦ τέκνον·
πάρες ἀπ’ ὀμμάτων
πέπλον, ἀπόδικε, ῥέθος ἀελίῳ δεῖξον.
Βάρος ἀντίπαλον, δακρύοις συναμιλλαταί,
ἱκετεύομεν ἀμφὶ γενειάδα καὶ
γόνυ καὶ χέρα σὰν προπίτνων,
πολιόν τε δάκρυον ἐκβάλλων·
ἰὼ παῖ, κατάσχεθε λέοντος ἀγρίου θυμόν, ὡς
βρόμον ἐπὶ φόνιον ἀνόσιον ἐξάγῃ,
κακὰ θέλων κακοῖς συνάψαι, τέκνον.

Θησεύς
Εἶέν· σὲ τὸν θάσσοντα δυστήνους ἕδρας
αὐδῶ, φίλοισιν ὄμμα δεικνύναι τὸ σόν.
Οὐδεὶς σκότος γὰρ ὧδ' ἔχει μέλαν νέφος,
ὅστις κακῶν σῶν συμφορὰν κρύψειεν ἄν.
Τί μοι προσείων χεῖρα σημαίνεις φόνον;
ὡς μὴ μύσος με σῶν βάλῃ προσφθεγμάτων;
Οὐδὲν μέλει μοι σύν γε σοὶ πράσσειν κακῶς·
καὶ γάρ ποτ' εὐτύχησα. ἐκεῖσ' ἀνοιστέον,
ὅτ' ἐξέσῳσάς μ' ἐς φάος νεκρῶν πάρα.
Χάριν δὲ γηράσκουσαν ἐχθαίρω φίλων,
καὶ τῶν καλῶν μὲν ὅστις ἀπολαύειν θέλει,
συμπλεῖν δὲ τοῖς φίλοισι δυστυχοῦσιν οὔ.
Ἀνίστασ', ἐκκάλυψον ἄθλιον κάρα,
βλέψον πρὸς ἡμᾶς. ὅστις εὐγενὴς βροτῶν,
φέρει τά γ' ἐκ θεῶν πτώματ' οὐδ' ἀναίνεται.

Ἡρακλῆς
Θησεῦ, δέδορκας τόνδ' ἀγῶν' ἐμῶν τέκνων;

Θησεύς
Ἤκουσα, καὶ βλέποντι σημαίνεις κακά.

Ἡρακλῆς
Τί δῆτά μου κρᾶτ' ἀνεκάλυψας ἡλίῳ;

Θησεύς
Τί δ'; οὐ μιαίνεις θνητὸς ὢν τὰ τῶν θεῶν.

Ἡρακλῆς
Φεῦγ', ὦ ταλαίπωρ', ἀνόσιον μίασμ' ἐμόν.

Θησεύς
Οὐδεὶς ἀλάστωρ τοῖς φίλοις ἐκ τῶν φίλων.

Ἡρακλῆς
Ἐπῄνεσ'· εὖ δράσας δέ σ' οὐκ ἀναίνομαι.

Θησεύς
Ἐγὼ δὲ πάσχων εὖ τότ᾽ οἰκτίρω σε νῦν.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Οἰκτρὸς γάρ εἰμι τἄμ᾽ ἀποκτείνας τέκνα.

Θησεύς
Κλαίω χάριν σὴν ἐφ᾽ ἑτέραισι συμφοραῖς.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Ἦρες δέ γ᾽ ἄλλους ἐν κακοῖσι μείζοσιν;

Θησεύς
Ἅπτῃ κάτωθεν οὐρανοῦ δυσπραξίᾳ.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Τοιγὰρ παρεσκευάσμεθ᾽ ὥστε κατθανεῖν.

Θησεύς
Δοκεῖς ἀπειλῶν σῶν μέλειν τι δαίμοσιν;

῾Ηρακλῆς
Αὔθαδες ὁ θεός, πρὸς δὲ τοὺς θεοὺς ἐγώ.

Θησεύς
Ἴσχε στόμ᾽, ὡς μὴ μέγα λέγων μεῖζον πάθῃς.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Γέμω κακῶν δή, κοὐκέτ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπῃ τεθῇ.

Θησεύς
Δράσεις δὲ δὴ τί; ποῖ φέρῃ θυμούμενος;

῾Ηρακλῆς
Θανών, ὅθενπερ ἦλθον, εἶμι γῆς ὕπο.

Θησεύς
Εἴρηκας ἐπιτυχόντος ἀνθρώπου λόγους.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Σὺ δ᾽ ἐκτὸς ὤν γε συμφορᾶς με νουθετεῖς.

Θησεύς
Ὁ πολλὰ δὴ τλὰς ῾Ηρακλῆς λέγει τάδε;

῾Ηρακλῆς
Οὐκ οὖν τοσαῦτά γ᾽, εἰ μέτρῳ μοχθητέον.

Θησεύς
Εὐεργέτης βροτοῖσι καὶ μέγας φίλος;

῾Ηρακλῆς
Οἱ δ᾽ οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦσί μ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ Ἥρα κρατεῖ.

Θησεύς
Οὐκ ἄν ἀνάσχοιθ᾽ ῾Ελλὰς ἀμαθίᾳ θανεῖν.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Ἄκουε δή νυν, ὡς ἀμιλληθῶ λόγοις
πρὸς νουθετήσεις σάς· ἀναπτύξω δέ σοι
ἀβίωτον ἡμῖν νῦν τε καὶ πάροιθεν ὄν.
Πρῶτον μὲν ἐκ τοῦδ᾽ ἐγενόμην, ὅστις κτανὼν
μητρὸς γεραιὸν πατέρα προστρόπαιος ὢν
ἔγημε τὴν τεκοῦσαν ᾽Αλκμήνην ἐμέ.
Ὅταν δὲ κρηπὶς μὴ καταβληθῇ γένους
ὀρθῶς, ἀνάγκη δυστυχεῖν τοὺς ἐκγόνους.
Ζεὺς δ᾽ ὅστις ὁ Ζεύς, πολέμιόν μ᾽ ἐγείνατο
Ἥρᾳ - σὺ μέντοι μηδὲν ἀχθεσθῇς, γέρον·
πατέρα γὰρ ἀντὶ Ζηνὸς ἡγοῦμαι σὲ ἐγώ. -
Ἔτ᾽ ἐν γάλακτί τ᾽ ὄντι γοργωποὺς ὄφεις
ἐπεισέφρησε σπαργάνοισι τοῖς ἐμοῖς
ἡ τοῦ Διὸς σύλλεκτρος, ὡς ὀλοίμεθα.
᾽Επεὶ δὲ σαρκὸς περιβόλαι᾽ ἐκτησάμην
ἡβῶντα, μόχθους οὓς ἔτλην τί δεῖ λέγειν;
ποίους ποτ᾽ ἢ λέοντας ἢ τρισωμάτους
Τυφῶνας ἢ Γίγαντας ἢ τετρασκελῆ
κενταυροπληθῆ πόλεμον οὐκ ἐξήνυσα;

τήν τ᾽ ἀμφίκρανον καὶ παλιμβλαστῆ κύνα
ὕδραν φονεύσας μυρίων τ᾽ ἄλλων πόνων
διῆλθον ἀγέλας κἀς νεκροὺς ἀφικόμην,
Ἅιδου πυλωρὸν κύνα τρίκρανον ἐς φάος
ὅπως πορεύσαιμ᾽ ἐντολαῖς Εὐρυσθέως.
Τὸν λοίσθιον δὲ τόνδ᾽ ἔτλην τάλας πόνον,
παιδοκτονήσας δῶμα θριγκῶσαι κακοῖς.
Ἥκω δ᾽ ἀνάγκης ἐς τόδ᾽· οὔτ᾽ ἐμαῖς φίλαις
Θήβαις ἐνοικεῖν ὅσιον· ἦν δὲ καὶ μένω,
ἐς ποῖον ἱερὸν ἢ πανήγυριν φίλων
εἶμ᾽; οὐ γὰρ ἄτας εὐπροσηγόρους ἔχω.
Ἀλλ᾽ Ἄργος ἔλθω; πῶς, ἐπεὶ φεύγω πάτραν;
φέρ᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἐς ἄλλην δή τιν᾽ ὁρμήσω πόλιν;
κἄπειθ᾽ ὑποβλεπώμεθ᾽ ὡς ἐγνωσμένοι,
γλώσσης πικροῖς κέντροισι κληδουχούμενοι·
Οὐχ οὗτος ὁ Διός, ὃς τέκν᾽ ἔκτεινέν ποτε
δάμαρτά τ᾽; οὐ γῆς τῆσδ᾽ ἀποφθαρήσεται;
[Κεκλημένῳ δὲ φωτὶ μακαρίῳ ποτὲ
αἱ μεταβολαὶ λυπηρόν· ᾧ δ᾽ ἀεὶ κακῶς
ἔστ᾽, οὐδὲν ἀλγεῖ συγγενῶς δύστηνος ὤν.
Ἐς τοῦτο δ᾽ ἥξειν συμφορᾶς οἶμαί ποτε·
φωνὴν γὰρ ἥσει χθὼν ἀπεννέπουσά με
μὴ θιγγάνειν γῆς καὶ θάλασσα μὴ περᾶν
πηγαί τε ποταμῶν, καὶ τὸν ἁρματήλατον
Ἰξίον᾽ ἐν δεσμοῖσιν ἐκμιμήσομαι.
καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἄριστα μηδέν᾽ Ἑλλήνων μ᾽ ὁρᾶν,
ἐν οἷσιν εὐτυχοῦντες ἦμεν ὄλβιοι.]
Τί δῆτά με ζῆν δεῖ; τί κέρδος ἕξομεν
βίον γ᾽ ἀχρεῖον ἀνόσιον κεκτημένοι;
Χορευέτω δὴ Ζηνὸς ἡ κλεινὴ δάμαρ
κρόουσ᾽ Ὀλύμπου ξεστὸς ἁρβύλῃ πέδον.
Ἔπραξε γὰρ βούλησιν ἣν ἐβούλετο,
ἄνδρ᾽ Ἑλλάδος τὸν πρῶτον αὐτοῖσιν βάθροις
ἄνω κάτω στρέψασα. Τοιαύτῃ θεῷ
τίς ἂν προσεύχοιθ᾽; ἢ γυναικὸς οὕνεκα
λέκτρων φθονοῦσα Ζηνὶ τοὺς εὐεργέτας
Ἑλλάδος ἀπώλεσ᾽ οὐδὲν ὄντας αἰτίους.

Θησεύς
Οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλου δαιμόνων ἀγὼν ὅδε
ἢ τῆς Διὸς δάμαρτος· εὖ τόδ᾽ αἰσθάνῃ.
. . . . . .
παραινέσαιμ᾽ ἂν μᾶλλον ἢ πάσχειν κακῶς.
Οὐδεὶς δὲ θνητῶν ταῖς τύχαις ἀκήρατος,
οὐ θεῶν, ἀοιδῶν εἴπερ οὐ ψευδεῖς λόγοι.
Οὐ λέκτρ᾽ ἐν ἀλλήλοισιν, ὧν οὐδεὶς νόμος,
συνῆψαν; οὐ δεσμοῖσι διὰ τυραννίδας
πατέρας ἐκηλίδωσαν; ἀλλ᾽ οἰκοῦσ᾽ ὅμως
Ὄλυμπον ἠνέσχοντό θ᾽ ἡμαρτηκότες.
Καίτοι τί φήσεις, εἰ σὺ μὲν θνητὸς γεγὼς
φέρεις ὑπέρφευ τὰς τύχας, θεοὶ δὲ μή;
Θήβας μὲν οὖν ἔκλειπε τοῦ νόμου χάριν,
ἔπου δ᾽ ἅμ᾽ ἡμῖν πρὸς πόλισμα Παλλάδος.
Ἐκεῖ χέρας σὰς ἁγνίσας μιάσματος,
δόμους τε δώσω χρημάτων τ᾽ ἐμῶν μέρος.
Ἃ δ᾽ ἐκ πολιτῶν δῶρ᾽ ἔχω σώσας κόρους
δὶς ἑπτά, ταῦρον Κνώσιον κατακτανών,
σοὶ ταῦτα δώσω. πανταχοῦ δέ μοι χθονὸς
τεμένη δέδασται· ταῦτ᾽ ἐπωνομασμένα
σέθεν τὸ λοιπὸν ἐκ βροτῶν κεκλήσεται
ζῶντος· θανόντα δ᾽, εὖτ᾽ ἂν εἰς Ἅιδου μόλῃς,
θυσίαισι λαΐνοισί τ᾽ ἐξογκώμασι
τίμιον ἀνάξει πᾶσ᾽ Ἀθηναίων πόλις.
Καλὸς γὰρ ἀστοῖς στέφανος Ἑλλήνων ὕπο
ἄνδρ᾽ ἐσθλὸν ὠφελοῦντας εὐκλείας τυχεῖν.
κἀγὼ χάριν σοι τῆς ἐμῆς σωτηρίας
τήνδ᾽ ἀντιδώσω· νῦν γὰρ εἶ χρεῖος φίλων.
θεοὶ δ᾽ ὅταν τιμῶσιν, οὐδὲν δεῖ φίλων·
Ἅλις γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ὠφελῶν, ὅταν θέλῃ.

Ἡρακλῆς
Οἴμοι· πάρεργα <μὲν> τάδ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐμῶν κακῶν,
ἐγὼ δὲ τοὺς θεοὺς οὔτε λέκτρ᾽ ἃ μὴ θέμις
στέργειν νομίζω, δεσμά τ᾽ ἐξάπτειν χεροῖν
οὔτ᾽ ἠξίωσα πώποτ᾽ οὔτε πείσομαι,

οὐδ’ ἄλλον ἄλλου δεσπότην πεφυκέναι.
Δεῖται γὰρ ὁ θεός, εἴπερ ἔστ’ ὀρθῶς θεός,
οὐδενός· ἀοιδῶν οἵδε δύστηνοι λόγοι.
Ἐσκεψάμην δὲ καίπερ ἐν κακοῖσιν ὤν,
μὴ δειλίαν ὄφλω τιν’ ἐκλιπὼν φάος·
ταῖς συμφοραῖς γὰρ ὅστις οὐχ ὑφίσταται,
οὐδ’ ἀνδρὸς ἂν δύναιθ’ ὑποστῆναι βέλος.
Ἐγκαρτερήσω βίοτον· εἶμι δ’ ἐς πόλιν
τὴν σήν, χάριν τε μυρίων δώρων ἔχω.
Ἀτὰρ πόνων δὴ μυρίων ἐγευσάμην·
ὧν οὔτ’ ἀπεῖπον οὐδέν’ οὔτ’ ἀπ’ ὀμμάτων
ἔσταξα πηγάς, οὐδ’ ἂν ᾠόμην ποτὲ
ἐς τοῦθ’ ἱκέσθαι, δάκρυ’ ἀπ’ ὀμμάτων βαλεῖν·
νῦν δ’, ὡς ἔοικε, τῇ τύχῃ δουλευτέον.
Εἶέν· γεραιέ, τὰς ἐμὰς φυγὰς ὁρᾷς,
ὁρᾷς δὲ παίδων ὄντα μ’ αὐθέντην ἐμῶν·
δὸς τούσδε τύμβῳ καὶ περίστειλον νεκροὺς
δακρύοισι τιμῶν - ἐμὲ γὰρ οὐκ ἐᾷ νόμος -
πρὸς στέρν’ ἐρείσας μητρὶ δούς τ’ ἐς ἀγκάλας,
κοινωνίαν δύστηνον, ἣν ἐγὼ τάλας
διώλεσ’ ἄκων. Γῇ δ’ ἐπὴν κρύψῃς νεκρούς,
οἴκει πόλιν τήνδ’, ἀθλίως μέν, ἀλλ’ ὅμως
ψυχὴν βιάζου τἀμὰ συμφέρειν κακά.
Ὦ τέκν’, ὁ φύσας καὶ τεκὼν ὑμᾶς πατὴρ
ἀπώλεσ’, οὐδ’ ὤνασθε τῶν ἐμῶν καλῶν,
ἀγὼ παρεσκεύαζον ἐκμοχθῶν βίᾳ
εὔκλειαν ὑμῖν, πατρὸς ἀπόλαυσιν καλήν.
Σέ τ’ οὐχ ὁμοίως, ὦ τάλαιν’, ἀπώλεσα
ὥσπερ σὺ τἀμὰ λέκτρ’ ἔσῳζες ἀσφαλῶς,
μακρὰς διαντλοῦσ’ ἐν δόμοις οἰκουρίας.
Οἴμοι δάμαρτος καὶ τέκνων, οἴμοι δ’ ἐμοῦ,
ὡς ἀθλίως πέπραγα κἀποζεύγνυμαι
τέκνων γυναικός τ’· ὦ λυγραὶ φιλημάτων
τέρψεις, λυγραὶ δὲ τῶνδ’ ὅπλων κοινωνίαι.
Ἀμηχανῶ γὰρ πότερ’ ἔχω τάδ’ ἢ μεθῶ,
ἃ πλευρὰ τἀμὰ προσπίτνοντ’ ἐρεῖ τάδε·
῾Ημῖν τέκν’ εἶλες καὶ δάμαρθ’· ἡμᾶς ἔχεις

παιδοκτόνους σούς. εἶτ’ ἐγὼ τάδ’ ὠλέναις
οἴσω; τί φάσκων; ἀλλὰ γυμνωθεὶς ὅπλων,
ξὺν οἷς τὰ κάλλιστ’ ἐξέπραξ’ ἐν Ἑλλάδι,
ἐχθροῖς ἐμαυτὸν ὑποβαλὼν αἰσχρῶς θάνω;
Οὐ λειπτέον τάδ’, ἀθλίως δὲ σῳστέον.
Ἔν μοί τι, Θησεῦ, σύγκαμ’· ἀθλίου κυνὸς
κόμιστρ’ ἐς Ἄργος συγκατάστησον μολών,
λύπῃ τι παίδων μὴ πάθω μονούμενος.
Ὦ γαῖα Κάδμου πᾶς τε Θηβαῖος λεώς,
κείρασθε, συμπενθήσατ’, ἔλθετ’ ἐς τάφον
παίδων· ἅπαντας δ’ ἐνὶ λόγῳ πενθήσετε
νεκρούς τε κἀμέ· πάντες ἐξολώλαμεν
Ἥρας μιᾷ πληγέντες ἄθλιοι τύχῃ.

Θησεύς
Ἀνίστασ’, ὦ δύστηνε· δακρύων δ’ ἅλις.

Ἡρακλῆς
Οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην· ἄρθρα γὰρ πέπηγέ μου.

Θησεύς
Καὶ τοὺς σθένοντας γὰρ καθαιροῦσιν τύχαι.

Ἡρακλῆς
Φεῦ·
αὐτοῦ γενοίμην πέτρος ἀμνήμων κακῶν.

Θησεύς
Παῦσαι· δίδου δὲ χεῖρ’ ὑπηρέτῃ φίλῳ.

Ἡρακλῆς
Ἀλλ’ αἷμα μὴ σοῖς ἐξομόρξωμαι πέπλοις.

Θησεύς
Ἔκμασσε, φείδου μηδέν· οὐκ ἀναίνομαι.

Ἡρακλῆς
Παίδων στερηθεὶς παῖδ’ ὅπως ἔχω σ’ ἐμόν.

Θησεύς
Δίδου δέρῃ σὴν χεῖρ’, ὁδηγήσω δ’ ἐγώ.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Ζεῦγός γε φίλιον· ἄτερος δὲ δυστυχής.
Ὦ πρέσβυ, τοιόνδ’ ἄνδρα χρὴ κτᾶσθαι φίλον.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Ἡ γὰρ τεκοῦσα τόνδε πατρὶς εὔτεκνος.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Θησεῦ, πάλιν με στρέψον, ὡς ἴδω τέκνα.

Θησεύς
Ὡς δὴ τί; φίλτρον τοῦτ’ ἔχων ῥᾴων ἔσῃ;

῾Ηρακλῆς
Ποθῶ· πατρός τε στέρνα προσθέσθαι θέλω.

᾽Αμφιτρύων
Ἰδοὺ τάδ’, ὦ παῖ· τἀμὰ γὰρ σπεύδεις φίλα.

Θησεύς
Οὕτως πόνων σῶν οὐκέτι μνήμην ἔχεις;

῾Ηρακλῆς
Ἅπαντ’ ἐλάσσω κεῖνα τῶνδ’ ἔτλην κακά.

Θησεύς
Εἴ σ’ ὄψεταί τις θῆλυν ὄντ’, οὐκ αἰνέσει.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Ζῶ σοι ταπεινός; ἀλλὰ πρόσθεν οὐ δοκῶ.

Θησεύς
Ἄγαν γ’· ὁ κλεινὸς ῾Ηρακλῆς οὐκ εἶ νοσῶν.

῾Ηρακλῆς
Σὺ ποῖος ἦσθα νέρθεν ἐν κακοῖσιν ὤν;

Θησεύς
Ὡς ἐς τὸ λῆμα παντὸς ἦν ἥσσων ἀνήρ.

Ἡρακλῆς
Πῶς οὖν ἔμ’ εἶπας ὅτι συνέσταλμαι κακοῖς;

Θησεύς
Πρόβαινε.

Ἡρακλῆς
Χαῖρ’, ὦ πρέσβυ.

Ἀμφιτρύων
Καὶ σύ μοι, τέκνον.

Ἡρακλῆς
Θάφθ’ ὥσπερ εἶπον παῖδας.

Ἀμφιτρύων
Ἐμὲ δὲ τίς, τέκνον;

Ἡρακλῆς
Ἐγώ.

Ἀμφιτρύων
Πότ’ ἐλθών;

Ἡρακλῆς
Ἡνίκ’ ἂν θάψῃς τέκνα. 1420

Ἀμφιτρύων
Πῶς;

Ἡρακλῆς
Εἰς Ἀθήνας πέμψομαι Θηβῶν ἄπο.
Ἀλλ’ ἐσκόμιζε τέκνα δυσκόμιστα γῇ·
ἡμεῖς δ’ ἀναλώσαντες αἰσχύναις δόμον,
Θησεῖ πανώλεις ἐψόμεσθ’ ἐφολκίδες.

Ὅστις δὲ πλοῦτον ἢ σθένος μᾶλλον φίλων
ἀγαθῶν πεπᾶσθαι βούλεται, κακῶς φρονεῖ.

Χορός
Στείχομεν οἰκτροὶ καὶ πολύκλαυτοι,
τὰ μέγιστα φίλων ὀλέσαντες.

THE TROJAN WOMEN

Ποσειδῶν

Ἥκω λιπὼν Αἴγαιον ἁλμυρὸν βάθος
πόντου Ποσειδῶν, ἔνθα Νηρῄδων χοροὶ
κάλλιστον ἴχνος ἐξελίσσουσιν ποδός.
Ἐξ οὗ γὰρ ἀμφὶ τήνδε Τρωικὴν χθόνα
[5] Φοῖβός τε κἀγὼ λαΐ¨νους πύργους πέριξ
ὀρθοῖσιν ἔθεμεν κανόσιν, οὔποτ᾽ ἐκ φρενῶν
εὔνοι᾽ ἀπέστη τῶν ἐμῶν Φρυγῶν πόλει·
ἣ νῦν καπνοῦται καὶ πρὸς Ἀργείου δορὸς
ὄλωλε πορθηθεῖσ᾽· ὁ γὰρ Παρνάσιος
[10] Φωκεὺς Ἐπειός, μηχαναῖσι Παλλάδος
ἐγκύμον᾽ ἵππον τευχέων ξυναρμόσας,
πύργων ἔπεμψεν ἐντὸς ὀλέθριον βρέτας·
ὅθεν πρὸς ἀνδρῶν ὑστέρων κεκλήσεται
Δούρειος Ἵππος, κρυπτὸν ἀμπισχὼν δόρυ.
[15] Ἔρημα δ᾽ ἄλση καὶ θεῶν ἀνάκτορα
φόνῳ καταρρεῖ· πρὸς δὲ κρηπίδων βάθροις
πέπτωκε Πρίαμος Ζηνὸς ἑρκείου θανών.
Πολὺς δὲ χρυσὸς Φρύγιά τε σκυλεύματα
πρὸς ναῦς Ἀχαιῶν πέμπεται· μένουσι δὲ
[20] πρύμνηθεν οὖρον, ὡς δεκασπόρῳ χρόνῳ
ἀλόχους τε καὶ τέκν᾽ εἰσίδωσιν ἄσμενοι,
οἳ τήνδ᾽ ἐπεστράτευσαν Ἕλληνες πόλιν.
Ἐγὼ δέ νικῶμαι γὰρ Ἀργείας θεοῦ
Ἥρας Ἀθάνας θ᾽, αἳ συνεξεῖλον Φρύγας
[25] λείπω τὸ κλεινὸν Ἴλιον βωμούς τ᾽ ἐμούς·
ἐρημία γὰρ πόλιν ὅταν λάβῃ κακή,
νοσεῖ τὰ τῶν θεῶν οὐδὲ τιμᾶσθαι θέλει.
Πολλοῖς δὲ κωκυτοῖσιν αἰχμαλωτίδων
βοᾷ Σκάμανδρος δεσπότας κληρουμένων.
[30] Καὶ τὰς μὲν Ἀρκάς, τὰς δὲ Θεσσαλὸς λεὼς
εἵληχ᾽ Ἀθηναίων τε Θησεῖδαι πρόμοι.
Ὅσαι δ᾽ ἄκληροι Τρῳάδων, ὑπὸ στέγαις

ταῖσδ’ εἰσί, τοῖς πρώτοισιν ἐξῃρημέναι
στρατοῦ, σὺν αὐταῖς δ’ ἡ Λάκαινα Τυνδαρὶς
Ἑλένη, νομισθεῖσ’ αἰχμάλωτος ἐνδίκως.
Τὴν δ’ ἀθλίαν τήνδ’ εἴ τις εἰσορᾶν θέλει,
πάρεστιν, Ἑκάβην κειμένην πυλῶν πάρος,
δάκρυα χέουσαν πολλὰ καὶ πολλῶν ὕπερ·
ᾗ παῖς μὲν ἀμφὶ μνῆμ’ Ἀχιλλείου τάφου
λάθρα τέθνηκε τλημόνως Πολυξένη·
φροῦδος δὲ Πρίαμος καὶ τέκν’· ἦν δὲ παρθένον
μεθῆκ’ Ἀπόλλων δρομάδα Κασάνδραν ἄναξ,
τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ τε παραλιπὼν τό τ’ εὐσεβὲς
γαμεῖ βιαίως σκότιον Ἀγαμέμνων λέχος.
Ἀλλ’, ὦ ποτ’ εὐτυχοῦσα, χαῖρέ μοι, πόλις
ξεστόν τε πύργωμ’· εἴ σε μὴ διώλεσεν
Παλλὰς Διὸς παῖς, ἦσθ’ ἂν ἐν βάθροις ἔτι.

Ἀθήνα

Ἔξεστι τὸν γένει μὲν ἄγχιστον πατρὸς
μέγαν τε δαίμον’ ἐν θεοῖς τε τίμιον,
λύσασαν ἔχθραν τὴν πάρος, προσεννέπειν;

Ποσειδῶν

Ἔξεστιν· αἱ γὰρ συγγενεῖς ὁμιλίαι,
ἄνασσ’ Ἀθάνα, φίλτρον οὐ σμικρὸν φρενῶν.

Ἀθήνα

Ἐπῄνεσ’ ὀργὰς ἠπίους· φέρω δὲ σοὶ
κοινοὺς ἐμαυτῇ τ’ ἐς μέσον λόγους, ἄναξ.

Ποσειδῶν

Μῶν ἐκ θεῶν του καινὸν ἀγγελεῖς ἔπος,
ἢ Ζηνὸς ἢ καὶ δαιμόνων τινὸς πάρα;

Ἀθήνα

Οὔκ, ἀλλὰ Τροίας οὕνεκ’, ἔνθα βαίνομεν,
πρὸς σὴν ἀφῖγμαι δύναμιν, ὡς κοινὴν λάβω.

Ποσειδῶν

῏Η πού νιν, ἔχθραν τὴν πρὶν ἐκβαλοῦσα, νῦν
[60] ἐς οἶκτον ἦλθες πυρὶ κατηθαλωμένης;

Ἀθήνα

Ἐκεῖσε πρῶτ’ ἄνελθε· κοινώσῃ λόγους
καὶ συνθελήσεις ἂν ἐγὼ πρᾶξαι θέλω;

Ποσειδῶν

Μάλιστ’· ἀτὰρ δὴ καὶ τὸ σὸν θέλω μαθεῖν·
πότερον Ἀχαιῶν ἦλθες οὕνεκ’ ἢ Φρυγῶν;

Ἀθήνα

[65] Τοὺς μὲν πρὶν ἐχθροὺς Τρῶας εὐφρᾶναι θέλω,
στρατῷ δ’ Ἀχαιῶν νόστον ἐμβαλεῖν πικρόν.

Ποσειδῶν

Τί δ’ ὧδε πηδᾷς ἄλλοτ’ εἰς ἄλλους τρόπους
μισεῖς τε λίαν καὶ φιλεῖς ὃν ἂν τύχῃς;

Ἀθήνα

Οὐκ οἶσθ’ ὑβρισθεῖσάν με καὶ ναοὺς ἐμούς;

Ποσειδῶν

[70] Οἶδ’, ἡνίκ’ Αἴας εἷλκε Κασάνδραν βίᾳ.

Ἀθήνα

Κοὐδέν γ’ Ἀχαιῶν ἔπαθεν οὐδ’ ἤκουσ’ ὕπο.

Ποσειδῶν

Καὶ μὴν ἔπερσάν γ’ Ἴλιον τῷ σῷ σθένει.

Ἀθήνα

Τοιγάρ σφε σὺν σοὶ βούλομαι δρᾶσαι κακῶς.

Ποσειδῶν

Ἕτοιμ’ ἃ βούλῃ τἀπ’ ἐμοῦ. Δράσεις δὲ τί;

Ἀθήνα

[75] Δύσνοστον αὐτοῖς νόστον ἐμβαλεῖν θέλω.

Ποσειδῶν

Ἐν γῇ μενόντων ἢ καθ’ ἁλμυρὰν ἅλα;

Ἀθήνα

[77] πρὸς οἴκους ναυστολῶσ’ ἀπ’ Ἰλίου.
Καὶ Ζεὺς μὲν ὄμβρον καὶ χάλαζαν ἄσπετον
πέμψει, δνοφώδη τ’ αἰθέρος φυσήματα·
[80] ἐμοὶ δὲ δώσειν φησὶ πῦρ κεραύνιον,
βάλλειν Ἀχαιοὺς ναῦς τε πιμπράναι πυρί.
Σὺ δ’ αὖ, τὸ σόν, παράσχες Αἴγαιον πόρον
τρικυμίαις βρέμοντα καὶ δίναις ἁλός,
πλῆσον δὲ νεκρῶν κοῖλον Εὐβοίας μυχόν,
[85] ὡς ἂν τὸ λοιπὸν τἄμ’ ἀνάκτορ’ εὐσεβεῖν
εἰδῶσ’ Ἀχαιοί, θεούς τε τοὺς ἄλλους σέβειν.

Ποσειδῶν

[87] Ἔσται τάδ’· ἡ χάρις γὰρ οὐ μακρῶν λόγων
δεῖται· ταράξω πέλαγος Αἰγαίας ἁλός.
Ἀκταὶ δὲ Μυκόνου Δήλιοί τε χοιράδες
[90] Σκῦρός τε Λῆμνός θ’ αἱ Καφήρειοί τ’ ἄκραι

πολλῶν θανόντων σώμαθ’ ἕξουσιν νεκρῶν.
Ἀλλ’ ἕρπ’ Ὄλυμπον καὶ κεραυνίους βολὰς
λαβοῦσα πατρὸς ἐκ χερῶν καραδόκει,
ὅταν στράτευμ’ Ἀργεῖον ἐξιῇ κάλως.
[95] Μῶρος δὲ θνητῶν ὅστις ἐκπορθεῖ πόλεις,
ναούς τε τύμβους θ’, ἱερὰ τῶν κεκμηκότων,
ἐρημίᾳ δοὺς αὐτὸς ὤλεθ’ ὕστερον.

Ἑκάβη

[98] Ἄνα, δύσδαιμον, πεδόθεν κεφαλή·
ἐπάειρε δέρην· οὐκέτι Τροία
[100] τάδε καὶ βασιλῆς ἐσμεν Τροίας.
Μεταβαλλομένου δαίμονος ἀνέχου.
Πλεῖ κατὰ πορθμόν, πλεῖ κατὰ δαίμονα,
μηδὲ προσίστω πρῷραν βιότου
πρὸς κῦμα πλέουσα τύχαισιν.
[105] Αἰαῖ αἰαῖ.
Τί γὰρ οὐ πάρα μοι μελέᾳ στενάχειν,
ᾗ πατρὶς ἔρρει καὶ τέκνα καὶ πόσις;
Ὦ πολὺς ὄγκος συστελλόμενος
προγόνων, ὡς οὐδὲν ἄρ’ ἦσθα.
[110] Τί με χρὴ σιγᾶν; Τί δὲ μὴ σιγᾶν;
Τί δὲ θρηνῆσαι;
Δύστηνος ἐγὼ τῆς βαρυδαίμονος
ἄρθρων κλίσεως, ὡς διάκειμαι,
νῶτ’ ἐν στερροῖς λέκτροισι ταθεῖσ’.
[115] Οἴμοι κεφαλῆς, οἴμοι κροτάφων
πλευρῶν θ’, ὥς μοι πόθος εἰλίξαι
καὶ διαδοῦναι νῶτον ἄκανθάν τ’
εἰς ἀμφοτέρους τοίχους, μελέων
ἐπὶ τοὺς αἰεὶ δακρύων ἐλέγους.
[120] Μοῦσα δὲ χαῦτη τοῖς δυστήνοις
ἄτας κελαδεῖν ἀχορεύτους.

Πρῷραι ναῶν, ὠκείαις
Ἴλιον ἱερὰν αἳ κώπαις

δι’ ἅλα πορφυροειδέα καὶ
λιμένας Ἑλλάδος εὐόρμους
αὐλῶν παιᾶνι στυγνῷ
συρίγγων τ’ εὐφθόγγων φωνᾷ
βαίνουσαι πλεκτὰν Αἰγύπτου
παιδείαν ἐξηρτήσασθ’,
αἰαῖ, Τροίας ἐν κόλποις
τὰν Μενελάου μετανισόμεναι
στυγνὰν ἄλοχον, Κάστορι λώβαν
τῷ τ’ Εὐρώτᾳ δυσκλείαν,
ἃ σφάζει μὲν
τὸν πεντήκοντ’ ἀροτῆρα τέκνων
Πρίαμον, ἐμέ τε μελέαν Ἑκάβαν
ἐς τάνδ’ ἐξώκειλ’ ἄταν.
Ὤμοι, θάκους οἵους θάσσω,
σκηναῖς ἐφέδρους Ἀγαμεμνονίαις.
Δούλα δ’ ἄγομαι
γραῦς ἐξ οἴκων πενθήρη
κρᾶτ’ ἐκπορθηθεῖσ’ οἰκτρῶς.
Ἀλλ’ ὦ τῶν χαλκεγχέων Τρώων
ἄλοχοι μέλεαι,
καὶ κοῦραι <κοῦραι> δύσνυμφοι,
τύφεται Ἴλιον, αἰάζωμεν.
Μάτηρ δ’ ὡσεί τις πτανοῖς
ὄρνισιν, ὅπως ἐξάρξω ‘γὼ
κλαγγάν, μολπάν, οὐ τὰν αὐτὰν
οἵαν ποτὲ δὴ
σκήπτρῳ Πριάμου διερειδομένα
ποδὸς ἀρχεχόρου πληγαῖς Φρυγίους
εὐκόμποις ἐξῆρχον θεούς.

Ἡμιχόριον Α

Ἑκάβη, τί θροεῖς; Τί δὲ θωύ¨σσεις;
Ποῖ λόγος ἥκει; Διὰ γὰρ μελάθρων
ἄιον οἴκτους οὓς οἰκτίζῃ.
Διὰ δὲ στέρνων φόβος ἄισσεν

Τρῳάσιν, αἳ τῶνδ’ οἴκων εἴσω
δουλείαν αἰάζουσιν.

Ἑκάβη

Ὦ τέκν’, Ἀργείων πρὸς ναῦς ἤδη . . .

Ἡμιχόριον Α

[160] Κινεῖται κωπήρης χείρ;
Οἳ ἐγώ, τί θέλουσ’, ἦ πού μ’ ἤδη
ναυσθλώσουσιν πατρίας ἐκ γᾶς;

Ἑκάβη

Οὐκ οἶδ’, εἰκάζω δ’ ἄταν.

Ἡμιχόριον Α

Ἰὼ ἰώ.
[165] Μέλεαι μόχθων ἐπακουσόμεναι
Τρῳάδες, ἔξω κομίζεσθ’ οἴκων·
στέλλουσ’ Ἀργεῖοι νόστον.

Ἑκάβη

[168] Αἶ, αἶ.
Μή νύν μοι τὰν
[170] ἐκβακχεύουσαν Κασάνδραν,
[172] αἰσχύναν Ἀργείοισιν,
[171] πέμψητ’ ἔξω,
[173] μαινάδ’, ἐπ’ ἄλγει δ’ ἀλγυνθῶ.
[173β] Ἰώ.
Τροία Τροία δύσταν’, ἔρρεις,
[174β] δύστανοι δ’ οἵ σ’ ἐκλείποντες
[175] καὶ ζῶντες καὶ δμαθέντες.

Ἡμιχόριον Β

[176] Οἴμοι. Τρομερὰ σκηνὰς ἔλιπον
τάσδ᾽ Ἀγαμέμνονος ἐπακουσομένα,
βασίλεια, σέθεν· μή με κτείνειν
δόξ᾽ Ἀργείων κεῖται μελέαν;
[180] Ἢ κατὰ πρύμνας ἤδη ναῦται
στέλλονται κινεῖν κώπας;

Ἑκάβη

Ὦ τέκνον, ὀρθρεύου σὰν ψυχάν.

Ἡμιχόριον Β

Ἐκπληχθεῖσ᾽ ἦλθον φρίκᾳ.
Ἤδη τις ἔβα Δαναῶν κῆρυξ;
[185] Τῷ πρόσκειμαι δούλα τλάμων;

Ἑκάβη

Ἐγγύς που κεῖσαι κλήρου.

Ἡμιχόριον Β

Ἰὼ ἰώ.
Τίς μ᾽ Ἀργείων ἢ Φθιωτᾶν
ἢ νησαίαν μ᾽ ἄξει χώραν
δύστανον πόρσω Τροίας;

Ἑκάβη

[190] Φεῦ φεῦ.
[190β] Τῷ δ᾽ ἁ τλάμων
ποῦ πᾷ γαίας δουλεύσω γραῦς,
ὡς κηφήν, ἁ δειλαία,
[192β] νεκροῦ μορφά,
νεκύων ἀμενηνὸν ἄγαλμα,
αἰαῖ
[194β] τὰν παρὰ προθύροις φυλακὰν κατέχουσ᾽

ἢ παίδων θρέπτειρ', ἃ Τροίας
ἀρχαγοὺς εἶχον τιμάς;

Χορός

Αἰαῖ αἰαῖ, ποίοις δ' οἴκτοις
τὰν σὰν λύμαν ἐξαιάζεις;
Οὐκ Ἰδαίοις ἱστοῖς κερκίδα
δινεύουσ' ἐξαλλάξω.
Νέατον τεκέων σώματα λεύσσω,
νέατον . . .
Μόχθους ἔξω κρείσσους,
ἢ λέκτροις πλαθεῖσ' Ἑλλάνων . . .
ἔρροι νὺξ αὕτα καὶ δαίμων.
Ἢ Πειρήνας ὑδρευσομένα
πρόσπολος οἰκτρὰ σεμνῶν ὑδάτων.
Τὰν κλεινὰν εἴθ' ἔλθοιμεν
Θησέως εὐδαίμονα χώραν.
Μὴ γὰρ δὴ δίναν γ' Εὐρώτα,
τὰν ἐχθίσταν θεράπναν Ἑλένας,
ἔνθ' ἀντάσω Μενέλᾳ δούλα,
τῷ τᾶς Τροίας πορθητᾷ.

Τὰν Πηνειοῦ σεμνὰν χώραν,
κρηπῖδ' Οὐλύμπου καλλίσταν,
ὅλβῳ βρίθειν φάμαν ἤκουσ'
εὐθαλεῖ τ' εὐκαρπείᾳ·
τάδε δεύτερά μοι μετὰ τὰν ἱερὰν
Θησέως ζαθέαν ἐλθεῖν χώραν.
Καὶ τὰν Αἰτναίαν Ἡφαίστου
Φοινίκας ἀντήρη χώραν,
Σικελῶν ὀρέων ματέρ', ἀκούω
καρύσσεσθαι στεφάνοις ἀρετᾶς.
Τάν τ' ἀγχιστεύουσαν γᾶν
Ἰονίῳ ναύται πόντῳ,
ἂν ὑγραίνει καλλιστεύων
ὁ ξανθὰν χαίταν πυρσαίνων

Κρᾶθις ζαθέαις πηγαῖσι τρέφων
εὔανδρόν τ᾽ ὀλβίζων γᾶν.

Καὶ μὴν Δαναῶν ὅδ᾽ ἀπὸ στρατιᾶς
κῆρυξ, νεοχμῶν μύθων ταμίας,
στείχει ταχύπουν ἴχνος ἐξανύων.
Τί φέρει; Τί λέγει; Δοῦλαι γὰρ δὴ
Δωρίδος ἐσμὲν χθονὸς ἤδη.

Ταλθύβιος

Ἑκάβη, πυκνὰς γὰρ οἶσθά μ᾽ ἐς Τροίαν ὁδοὺς
ἐλθόντα κήρυκ᾽ ἐξ Ἀχαιικοῦ στρατοῦ,
ἐγνωσμένος δὲ καὶ πάροιθέ σοι, γύναι,
Ταλθύβιος ἥκω καινὸν ἀγγελῶν λόγον.

Ἑκάβη

<Αἰαῖ,> τόδε
τόδε, φίλαι Τρῳάδες, ὃ φόβος ἦν πάλαι.

Ταλθύβιος

Ἤδη κεκλήρωσθ᾽, εἰ τόδ᾽ ἦν ὑμῖν φόβος.

Ἑκάβη

Αἰαῖ, τίν᾽ ἢ
Θεσσαλίας πόλιν ἢ
Φθιάδος εἶπας ἢ Καδμείας χθονός;

Ταλθύβιος

Κατ᾽ ἄνδρ᾽ ἑκάστη κοὐχ ὁμοῦ λελόγχατε.

Ἑκάβη

Τίν᾽ ἄρα τίς ἔλαχε; Τίνα πότμος εὐτυχὴς
Ἰλιάδων μένει;

Ταλθύβιος

Οἶδ'· ἀλλ' ἕκαστα πυνθάνου, μὴ πάνθ' ὁμοῦ.

Ἑκάβη

Τοὐμὸν τίς ἦρ'
ἔλαχε τέκος, ἔνεπε, τλάμονα Κασάνδραν;

Ταλθύβιος

[249] Ἐξαίρετόν νιν ἔλαβεν Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ.

Ἑκάβη

[250] Ἦ τᾷ Λακεδαιμονίᾳ νύμφᾳ
δούλαν; Ἰώ μοί μοι.

Ταλθύβιος

Οὔκ, ἀλλὰ λέκτρων σκότια νυμφευτήρια.

Ἑκάβη

[253] Ἦ τὰν τοῦ Φοίβου παρθένον, ᾇ γέρας ὁ
χρυσοκόμας ἔδωκ' ἄλεκτρον ζόαν;

Ταλθύβιος

[255] Ἔρως ἐτόξευσ' αὐτὸν ἐνθέου κόρης.

Ἑκάβη

Ῥῖπτε, τέκνον, ζαθέους κλῆ-
δας καὶ ἀπὸ χροὸς ἐνδυ-
τῶν στεφέων ἱεροὺς στολμούς.

Ταλθύβιος

Οὐ γὰρ μέγ᾽ αὐτῇ βασιλικῶν λέκτρων τυχεῖν;

Ἑκάβη

Τί δ᾽ ὃ νεοχμὸν ἀπ᾽ ἐμέθεν ἐλάβετε τέκος, ποῦ μοι;

Ταλθύβιος

Πολυξένην ἔλεξας, ἢ τίν᾽ ἱστορεῖς;

Ἑκάβη

Ταύταν· τῷ πάλος ἔζευξεν;

Ταλθύβιος

Τύμβῳ τέτακται προσπολεῖν Ἀχιλλέως.

Ἑκάβη

Ὤμοι ἐγώ· τάφῳ πρόσπολον ἐτεκόμαν.
Ἀτὰρ τίς ὅδ᾽ ἢ νόμος ἢ τί
θέσμιον, ὦ φίλος, Ἑλλάνων;

Ταλθύβιος

Εὐδαιμόνιζε παῖδα σήν· ἔχει καλῶς.

Ἑκάβη

Τί τόδ᾽ ἔλακες; Ἆρά μοι ἀέλιον λεύσσει;

Ταλθύβιος

Ἔχει πότμος νιν, ὥστ᾽ ἀπηλλάχθαι πόνων.

Ἑκάβη

Τί δ’ ἁ τοῦ χαλκεομήστορος Ἕκτορος δάμαρ,
Ἀνδρομάχα τάλαινα, τίν’ ἔχει τύχαν;

Ταλθύβιος

Καὶ τήνδ’ Ἀχιλλέως ἔλαβε παῖς ἐξαίρετον.

Ἑκάβη

Ἐγὼ δὲ τῷ
πρόσπολος ἁ τριτοβάμονος χερὶ
δευομένα βάκτρου γεραιῷ κάρᾳ;

Ταλθύβιος

Ἰθάκης Ὀδυσσεὺς ἔλαχ’ ἄναξ δούλην σ’ ἔχειν.

Ἑκάβη

Ἔ ἔ.
Ἄρασσε κρᾶτα κούριμον,
ἔλκ’ ὀνύχεσσι δίπτυχον παρειάν.
Ἰώ μοί μοι.
Μυσαρῷ δολίῳ λέλογχα φωτὶ δουλεύειν,
πολεμίῳ δίκας, παρανόμῳ δάκει,
ὃς πάντα τἀκεῖθεν ἐνθάδ<ε στρέφει, τὰ δ’>
ἀντίπαλ’ αὖθις ἐκεῖσε διπτύχῳ γλώσσᾳ
φίλα τὰ πρότερ’ ἄφιλα τιθέμενος πάντων.
Γοᾶσθ’, ὦ Τρῳάδες, με.
Βέβακα δύσποτμος. Οἴχομαι ἁ
τάλαινα, δυστυχεστάτῳ
προσέπεσον κλήρῳ.

Χορός

Τὸ μὲν σὸν οἶσθα, πότνια, τὰς δ’ ἐμὰς τύχας
τίς ἆρ’ Ἀχαιῶν ἢ τίς Ἑλλήνων ἔχει;

Ταλθύβιος

[294] Ἴτ’, ἐκκομίζειν δεῦρο Κασάνδραν χρεὼν
[295] ὅσον τάχιστα, δμῶες, ὡς στρατηλάτῃ
ἐς χεῖρα δούς νιν, εἶτα τὰς εἰληγμένας
καὶ τοῖσιν ἄλλοις αἰχμαλωτίδων ἄγω.
Ἔα· τί πεύκης ἔνδον αἴθεται σέλας;
Πιμπρᾶσιν ἢ τί δρῶσι Τρῳάδες μυχούς,
[300] ὡς ἐξάγεσθαι τῆσδε μέλλουσαι χθονὸς
πρὸς Ἄργος, αὐτῶν τ’ ἐκπυροῦσι σώματα
θανεῖν θέλουσαι; Κάρτα τοι τοὐλεύθερον
ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις δυσλόφως φέρει κακά.
Ἄνοιγ’ ἄνοιγε, μὴ τὸ ταῖσδε πρόσφορον
[305] ἐχθρὸν δ’ Ἀχαιοῖς εἰς ἔμ’ αἰτίαν βάλῃ.

Ἑκάβη

Οὐκ ἔστιν, οὐ πιμπρᾶσιν, ἀλλὰ παῖς ἐμὴ
μαινὰς θοάζει δεῦρο Κασάνδρα δρόμῳ.

Κασάνδρα

[308] Ἄνεχε· πάρεχε.
Φῶς φέρ’, ὦ· σέβω· φλέγω ἰδού, ἰδού
λαμπάσι τόδ’ ἱερόν.
[310] Ὦ Ὑμέναι’ ἄναξ·
μακάριος ὁ γαμέτας·
μακαρία δ’ ἐγὼ βασιλικοῖς λέκτροις
κατ’ Ἄργος ἁ γαμουμένα.
Ὑμήν, ὦ Ὑμέναι’ ἄναξ.
[315] Ἐπεὶ σύ, μᾶτερ, ἐπὶ δάκρυσι καὶ
γόοισι τὸν θανόντα πατέρα πατρίδα τε
φίλαν καταστένουσ’ ἔχεις,
[319] ἐγὼ δ’ ἐπὶ γάμοις ἐμοῖς
[320] ἀναφλέγω πυρὸς φῶς
ἐς αὐγάν, ἐς αἴγλαν,
διδοῦσ’, ὦ Ὑμέναιε, σοί,
διδοῦσ’, ὦ Ἑκάτα, φάος,
παρθένων ἐπὶ λέκτροις
ᾇ νόμος ἔχει.

[325] Πάλλε πόδα.
Αἰθέριον ἄναγε χορόν· εὐᾶν, εὐοῖ·
ὡς ἐπὶ πατρὸς ἐμοῦ
μακαριωτάταις
τύχαις· ὁ χορὸς ὅσιος.
Ἄγε σύ, Φοῖβε, νῦν· κατὰ σὸν ἐν δάφναις
[330] ἀνάκτορον θυηπολῶ,
Ὑμήν, ὦ Ὑμέναι', Ὑμήν.
Χόρευε, μᾶτερ, ἀναγέλασον·
ἔλισσε τᾷδ' ἐκεῖσε μετ' ἐμέθεν ποδῶν
φέρουσα φιλτάταν βάσιν.
[335] Βοάσαθ' Ὑμέναιον, ὦ,
μακαρίαις ἀοιδαῖς
ἰαχαῖς τε νύμφαν.
Ἴτ', ὦ καλλίπεπλοι Φρυγῶν
κόραι, μέλπετ' ἐμῶν γάμων
[340] τὸν πεπρωμένον εὐνᾷ
[340β] πόσιν ἐμέθεν.

Χορός

Βασίλεια, βακχεύουσαν οὐ λήψῃ κόρην,
μὴ κοῦφον αἴρῃ βῆμ' ἐς Ἀργείων στρατόν;

Ἑκάβη

[343] Ἥφαιστε, δᾳδουχεῖς μὲν ἐν γάμοις βροτῶν,
ἀτὰρ λυγράν γε τήνδ' ἀναιθύσσεις φλόγα
[345] ἔξω τε μεγάλων ἐλπίδων.
Οἴμοι, τέκνον,
ὡς οὐχ ὑπ' αἰχμῆς <σ'> οὐδ' ὑπ' Ἀργείου δορὸς
γάμους γαμεῖσθαι τούσδ' ἐδόξαζόν ποτε.
Παράδος ἐμοὶ φῶς· οὐ γὰρ ὀρθὰ πυρφορεῖς
μαινὰς θοάζουσ', οὐδέ σ' αἱ τύχαι, τέκνον,
[350] ἐσωφρονήκασ' , ἀλλ' ἔτ' ἐν ταὐτῷ μένεις.
Ἐσφέρετε πεύκας, δάκρυά τ' ἀνταλλάξατε
τοῖς τῆσδε μέλεσι, Τρῳάδες, γαμηλίοις.

Κασάνδρα

Μῆτερ, πύκαζε κρᾶτ’ ἐμὸν νικηφόρον,
καὶ χαῖρε τοῖς ἐμοῖσι βασιλικοῖς γάμοις·
καὶ πέμπε, κἂν μὴ τἀμά σοι πρόθυμά γ’ ᾖ,
ὤθει βιαίως· εἰ γὰρ ἔστι Λοξίας,
Ἑλένης γαμεῖ με δυσχερέστερον γάμον
ὁ τῶν Ἀχαιῶν κλεινὸς Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ.
Κτενῶ γὰρ αὐτόν, κἀντιπορθήσω δόμους
ποινὰς ἀδελφῶν καὶ πατρὸς λαβοῦσ’ ἐμοῦ . . .
Ἀλλ’ ἄττ’ ἐάσω· πέλεκυν οὐχ ὑμνήσομεν,
ὃς ἐς τράχηλον τὸν ἐμὸν εἶσι χἀτέρων·
μητροκτόνους τ’ ἀγῶνας, οὓς οὐμοὶ γάμοι
θήσουσιν, οἴκων τ’ Ἀτρέως ἀνάστασιν.
Πόλιν δὲ δείξω τήνδε μακαριωτέραν
ἢ τοὺς Ἀχαιούς, ἔνθεος μέν, ἀλλ’ ὅμως
τοσόνδε γ’ ἔξω στήσομαι βακχευμάτων·
οἳ διὰ μίαν γυναῖκα καὶ μίαν Κύπριν,
θηρῶντες Ἑλένην, μυρίους ἀπώλεσαν.
Ὁ δὲ στρατηγὸς ὁ σοφὸς ἐχθίστων ὕπερ
τὰ φίλτατ’ ὤλεσ’, ἡδονὰς τὰς οἴκοθεν
τέκνων ἀδελφῷ δοὺς γυναικὸς οὕνεκα,
καὶ ταῦθ’ ἑκούσης κοὐ βίᾳ λελῃσμένης.
Ἐπεὶ δ’ ἐπ’ ἀκτὰς ἦλυθον Σκαμανδρίους,
ἔθνῃσκον, οὐ γῆς ὅρι’ ἀποστερούμενοι
οὐδ’ ὑψίπυργον πατρίδ’· οὓς δ’ Ἄρης ἕλοι,
οὐ παῖδας εἶδον, οὐ δάμαρτος ἐν χεροῖν
πέπλοις συνεστάλησαν, ἐν ξένῃ δὲ γῇ
κεῖνται. Τὰ δ’ οἴκοι τοῖσδ’ ὅμοι’ ἐγίγνετο·
χῆραί τ’ ἔθνῃσκον, οἳ δ’ ἄπαιδες ἐν δόμοις
ἄλλοις τέκν’ ἐκθρέψαντες· οὐδὲ πρὸς τάφοις
ἔσθ’ ὅστις αὐτῶν αἷμα γῇ δωρήσεται.
Ἦ τοῦδ’ ἐπαίνου τὸ στράτευμ’ ἐπάξιον.
Σιγᾶν ἄμεινον τᾷσχρά, μηδὲ μοῦσά μοι
γένοιτ’ ἀοιδὸς ἥτις ὑμνήσει κακά.
Τρῶες δὲ πρῶτον μέν, τὸ κάλλιστον κλέος,
ὑπὲρ πάτρας ἔθνῃσκον· οὓς δ’ ἕλοι δόρυ,

νεκροί γ’ ἐς οἴκους φερόμενοι φίλων ὕπο
ἐν γῇ πατρῴᾳ περιβολὰς εἶχον χθονός,
χερσὶν περισταλέντες ὧν ἐχρῆν ὕπο·
ὅσοι δὲ μὴ θάνοιεν ἐν μάχῃ Φρυγῶν,
ἀεὶ κατ’ ἦμαρ σὺν δάμαρτι καὶ τέκνοις
ᾥκουν, Ἀχαιοῖς ὧν ἀπῆσαν ἡδοναί.
Τὰ δ’ Ἕκτορός σοι λύπρ’ ἄκουσον ὡς ἔχει·
δόξας ἀνὴρ ἄριστος οἴχεται θανών,
καὶ τοῦτ’ Ἀχαιῶν ἵξις ἐξεργάζεται·
εἰ δ’ ἦσαν οἴκοι, χρηστὸς ὢν ἐλάνθανεν.
Πάρις δ’ ἔγημε τὴν Διός· γήμας δὲ μή,
σιγώμενον τὸ κῆδος εἶχεν ἐν δόμοις.
Φεύγειν μὲν οὖν χρὴ πόλεμον ὅστις εὖ φρονεῖ·
εἰ δ’ ἐς τόδ’ ἔλθοι, στέφανος οὐκ αἰσχρὸς πόλει
καλῶς ὀλέσθαι, μὴ καλῶς δὲ δυσκλεές.
Ὧν οὕνεκ’ οὐ χρή, μῆτερ, οἰκτίρειν σε γῆν,
οὐ τἀμὰ λέκτρα· τοὺς γὰρ ἐχθίστους ἐμοὶ
καὶ σοὶ γάμοισι τοῖς ἐμοῖς διαφθερῶ.

Χορός

Ὡς ἡδέως κακοῖσιν οἰκείοις γελᾷς,
μέλπεις θ’ ἃ μέλπουσ’ οὐ σαφῆ δείξεις ἴσως.

Ταλθύβιος

Εἰ μή σ’ Ἀπόλλων ἐξεβάκχευεν φρένας,
οὔ τἂν ἀμισθὶ τοὺς ἐμοὺς στρατηλάτας
τοιαῖσδε φήμαις ἐξέπεμπες ἂν χθονός.
Ἀτὰρ τὰ σεμνὰ καὶ δοκήμασιν σοφὰ
οὐδέν τι κρείσσω τῶν τὸ μηδὲν ἦν ἄρα.
Ὁ γὰρ μέγιστος τῶν Πανελλήνων ἄναξ,
Ἀτρέως φίλος παῖς, τῆσδ’ ἔρωτ’ ἐξαίρετον
μαινάδος ὑπέστη· καὶ πένης μέν εἰμ’ ἐγώ,
ἀτὰρ λέχος γε τῆσδ’ ἂν οὐκ ἐκτησάμην.
Καὶ σοὶ μέν οὐ γὰρ ἀρτίας ἔχεις φρένας
Ἀργεῖ’ ὀνείδη καὶ Φρυγῶν ἐπαινέσεις
ἀνέμοις φέρεσθαι παραδίδωμ’· ἔπου δέ μοι

πρὸς ναῦς, καλὸν νύμφευμα τῷ στρατηλάτῃ.
Σὺ δ', ἡνίκ' ἄν σε Λαρτίου χρῄζῃ τόκος
ἄγειν, ἕπεσθαι· σώφρονος δ' ἔσῃ λάτρις
γυναικός, ὥς φασ' οἱ μολόντες Ἴλιον.

Κασάνδρα

Ἦ δεινὸς ὁ λάτρις. Τί ποτ' ἔχουσι τοὔνομα
κήρυκες, ἓν ἀπέχθημα πάγκοινον βροτοῖς,
οἱ περὶ τυράννους καὶ πόλεις ὑπηρέται;
Σὺ τὴν ἐμὴν φῂς μητέρ' εἰς Ὀδυσσέως
ἥξειν μέλαθρα; Ποῦ δ' Ἀπόλλωνος λόγοι,
οἵ φασιν αὐτὴν εἰς ἔμ' ἡρμηνευμένοι
αὐτοῦ θανεῖσθαι; . . . Τἄλλα δ' οὐκ ὀνειδιῶ.
Δύστηνος, οὐκ οἶδ' οἷά νιν μένει παθεῖν·
ὡς χρυσὸς αὐτῷ τἀμὰ καὶ Φρυγῶν κακὰ
δόξει ποτ' εἶναι. Δέκα γὰρ ἐκπλήσας ἔτη
πρὸς τοῖσιν ἐνθάδ', ἵξεται μόνος πάτραν
. . . . . .
οὗ δὴ στενὸν δίαυλον ᾤκισται πέτρας
δεινὴ Χάρυβδις, ὠμοβρώς τ' ὀρειβάτης
Κύκλωψ, Λιγυστίς θ' ἡ συῶν μορφώτρια
Κίρκη, θαλάσσης θ' ἁλμυρᾶς ναυάγια,
λωτοῦ τ' ἔρωτες, Ἡλίου θ' ἁγναὶ βόες,
αἳ σάρκα φωνήεσσαν ἥσουσίν ποτε,
πικρὰν Ὀδυσσεῖ γῆρυν. Ὡς δὲ συντέμω,
ζῶν εἶσ' ἐς Ἅιδου κἀκφυγὼν λίμνης ὕδωρ
κάκ' ἐν δόμοισι μυρί' εὑρήσει μολών.

Ἀλλὰ γὰρ τί τοὺς Ὀδυσσέως ἐξακοντίζω πόνους;
Στεῖχ' ὅπως τάχιστ'· ἐς Ἅιδου νυμφίῳ γημώμεθα.
Ἦ κακὸς κακῶς ταφήσῃ νυκτός, οὐκ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ,
ὦ δοκῶν σεμνόν τι πράσσειν, Δαναϊδῶν ἀρχηγέτα.
Κἀμέ τοι νεκρὸν φάραγγες γυμνάδ' ἐκβεβλημένην
ὕδατι χειμάρρῳ ῥέουσαι, νυμφίου πέλας τάφου,
θηρσὶ δώσουσιν δάσασθαι, τὴν Ἀπόλλωνος λάτριν.
Ὦ στέφη τοῦ φιλτάτου μοι θεῶν, ἀγάλματ' εὔια,

χαίρετ'· ἐκλέλοιφ' ἑορτάς, αἷς πάροιθ' ἠγαλλόμην.
Ἴτ' ἀπ' ἐμοῦ χρωτὸς σπαραγμοῖς, ὡς ἔτ' οὖσ' ἀγνὴ χρόα
δῶ θοαῖς αὔραις φέρεσθαί σοι τάδ', ὦ μαντεῖ' ἄναξ.
[455] Ποῦ σκάφος τὸ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ; Ποῖ ποτ' ἐμβαίνειν με χρή;
Οὐκέτ' ἂν φθάνοις ἂν αὔραν ἱστίοις καραδοκῶν,
ὡς μίαν τριῶν Ἐρινὺν τῆσδέ μ' ἐξάξων χθονός.
Χαῖρέ μοι, μῆτερ· δακρύσῃς μηδέν· ὦ φίλη πατρίς,
οἵ τε γῆς ἔνερθ' ἀδελφοὶ χὠ τεκὼν ἡμᾶς πατήρ,
[460] οὐ μακρὰν δέξεσθέ μ'· ἥξω δ' ἐς νεκροὺς νικηφόρος
καὶ δόμους πέρσασ' Ἀτρειδῶν, ὧν ἀπωλόμεσθ' ὕπο.

Χορός

[462] Ἑκάβης γεραιᾶς φύλακες, οὐ δεδόρκατε
δέσποιναν ὡς ἄναυδος ἐκτάδην πίτνει;
Οὐκ ἀντιλήψεσθ'; Ἦ μεθήσετ', ὦ κακαί,
[465] γραῖαν πεσοῦσαν; Αἴρετ' εἰς ὀρθὸν δέμας.

Ἑκάβη

[466] Ἐᾶτέ μ' οὗτοι φίλα τὰ μὴ φίλ', ὦ κόραι
κεῖσθαι πεσοῦσαν· πτωμάτων γὰρ ἄξια
πάσχω τε καὶ πέπονθα κἄτι πείσομαι.
Ὦ θεοί . . . κακοὺς μὲν ἀνακαλῶ τοὺς συμμάχους,
[470] ὅμως δ' ἔχει τι σχῆμα κικλήσκειν θεούς,
ὅταν τις ἡμῶν δυστυχῆ λάβῃ τύχην.
Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν μοι τἀγάθ' ἐξᾴσαι φίλον·
τοῖς γὰρ κακοῖσι πλείον' οἶκτον ἐμβαλῶ.
Ἦμεν τύραννοι κἀς τύρανν' ἐγημάμην,
[475] κἀνταῦθ' ἀριστεύοντ' ἐγεινάμην τέκνα,
οὐκ ἀριθμὸν ἄλλως, ἀλλ' ὑπερτάτους Φρυγῶν·
οὓς Τρῳὰς οὐδ' Ἑλληνὶς οὐδὲ βάρβαρος
γυνὴ τεκοῦσα κομπάσειεν ἄν ποτε.
Κἀκεῖνά τ' εἶδον δορὶ πεσόνθ' Ἑλληνικῷ
[480] τρίχας τ' ἐτμήθην τάσδε πρὸς τύμβοις νεκρῶν,
καὶ τὸν φυτουργὸν Πρίαμον οὐκ ἄλλων πάρα
κλύουσ' ἔκλαυσα, τοῖσδε δ' εἶδον ὄμμασιν
αὐτὴ κατασφαγέντ' ἐφ' ἑρκείῳ πυρᾷ,

πόλιν θ’ ἁλοῦσαν. Ὃς δ’ ἔθρεψα παρθένους
[485] ἐς ἀξίωμα νυμφίων ἐξαίρετον,
ἄλλοισι θρέψασ’ ἐκ χερῶν ἀφῃρέθην.
Κοὔτ’ ἐξ ἐκείνων ἐλπὶς ὡς ὀφθήσομαι,
αὐτή τ’ ἐκείνας οὐκέτ’ ὄψομαί ποτε.
Τὸ λοίσθιον δέ, θριγκὸς ἀθλίων κακῶν,
[490] δούλη γυνὴ γραῦς Ἑλλάδ’ εἰσαφίξομαι.
Ἃ δ’ ἐστὶ γήρᾳ τῷδ’ ἀσυμφορώτατα,
τούτοις με προσθήσουσιν, ἢ θυρῶν λάτριν
κλῆδας φυλάσσειν, τὴν τεκοῦσαν Ἕκτορα,
ἢ σιτοποιεῖν, κἀν πέδῳ κοίτας ἔχειν
[495] ῥυσοῖσι νώτοις, βασιλικῶν ἐκ δεμνίων,
τρυχηρὰ περὶ τρυχηρὸν εἱμένην χρόα
πέπλων λακίσματ’, ἀδόκιμ’ ὀλβίοις ἔχειν.
Οἳ ‘γὼ τάλαινα, διὰ γάμον μιᾶς ἕνα
γυναικὸς οἵων ἔτυχον ὧν τε τεύξομαι.
[500] Ὦ τέκνον, ὦ σύμβακχε Κασάνδρα θεοῖς,
οἵαις ἔλυσας συμφοραῖς ἄγνευμα σόν.
Σύ τ’, ὦ τάλαινα, ποῦ ποτ’ εἶ, Πολυξένη;
Ὡς οὔτε μ’ ἄρσην οὔτε θήλεια σπορὰ
πολλῶν γενομένων τὴν τάλαιναν ὠφελεῖ.
[505] Τί δῆτά μ’ ὀρθοῦτ’; Ἐλπίδων ποίων ὕπο;
Ἄγετε τὸν ἁβρὸν δήποτ’ ἐν Τροίᾳ πόδα,
νῦν δ’ ὄντα δοῦλον, στιβάδα πρὸς χαμαιπετῆ
πέτρινά τε κρήδεμν’, ὡς πεσοῦσ’ ἀποφθαρῶ
δακρύοις καταξανθεῖσα. Τῶν δ’ εὐδαιμόνων
[510] μηδένα νομίζετ’ εὐτυχεῖν, πρὶν ἂν θάνῃ.

Χορός

[512] Ἀμφί μοι Ἴλιον, ὦ
Μοῦσα, καινῶν ὕμνων
ἄεισον ἐν δακρύοις ᾠδὰν ἐπικήδειον·
[515] νῦν γὰρ μέλος ἐς Τροίαν ἰαχήσω,
[517] τετραβάμονος ὡς ὑπ’ ἀπήνας
Ἀργείων ὀλόμαν τάλαινα δοριάλωτος,
ὅτ’ ἔλιπον ἵππον οὐράνια

βρέμοντα χρυσεοφάλαρον ἔνο-
πλον ἐν πύλαις Ἀχαιοί·
ἀνὰ δ’ ἐβόασεν λεὼς
Τρῳάδος ἀπὸ πέτρας σταθείς·
Ἴτ’, ὦ πεπαυμένοι πόνων,
τόδ’ ἱερὸν ἀνάγετε ξόανον
Ἰλιάδι Διογενεῖ κόρᾳ.
Τίς οὐκ ἔβα νεανίδων,
τίς οὐ γεραιὸς ἐκ δόμων;
Κεχαρμένοι δ’ ἀοιδαῖς
δόλιον ἔσχον ἄταν.

Πᾶσα δὲ γέννα Φρυγῶν
πρὸς πύλας ὡρμάθη,
πεύκᾳ ἐν οὐρεί¨ᾳ ξεστὸν λόχον Ἀργείων
καὶ Δαρδανίας ἄταν θέᾳ δώσων,
χάριν ἄζυγος ἀμβροτοπώλου·
κλωστοῦ δ’ ἀμφιβόλοις λίνοιο ναὸς ὡσεὶ
σκάφος κελαινόν, εἰς ἔδρανα
λάινα δάπεδά τε φόνια πατρί-
δι Παλλάδος θέσαν θεᾶς.
Ἐπὶ δὲ πόνῳ καὶ χαρᾷ
νύχιον ἐπεὶ κνέφας παρῆν,
Λίβυς τε λωτὸς ἐκτύπει
Φρύγιά τε μέλεα, παρθένοι δ’
ἀέριον ἀνὰ κρότον ποδῶν
βοὰν ἔμελπον εὔφρον’, ἐν
δόμοις δὲ παμφαὲς σέλας
πυρὸς μέλαιναν αἴγλαν
<ἄκος> ἔδωκεν ὕπνῳ.

Ἐγὼ δὲ τὰν ὀρεστέραν
τότ’ ἀμφὶ μέλαθρα παρθένον
Διὸς κόραν ἐμελπόμαν
χοροῖσι· φοινία δ’ ἀνὰ
πτόλιν βοὰ κατεῖχε Περ-
γάμων ἕδρας· βρέφη δὲ φίλι-

α περὶ πέπλους ἔβαλλε μα-
τρὶ χεῖρας ἐπτοημένας·
[560] λόχου δ’ ἐξέβαιν’ Ἄρης,
κόρας ἔργα Παλλάδος.
Σφαγαὶ δ’ ἀμφιβώμιοι
Φρυγῶν, ἔν τε δεμνίοις
καράτομος ἐρημία
[565] νεανίδων στέφανον ἔφερεν
Ἑλλάδι κουροτρόφον,
Φρυγῶν πατρίδι πένθη.

[568] Ἑκάβη, λεύσσεις τήνδ’ Ἀνδρομάχην
ξενικοῖς ἐπ’ ὄχοις πορθμευομένην;
[570] Παρὰ δ’ εἰρεσίᾳ μαστῶν ἔπεται
φίλος Ἀστυάναξ, Ἕκτορος ἶνις.
Ποῖ ποτ’ ἀπήνης νώτοισι φέρῃ,
δύστανε γύναι, πάρεδρος χαλκέοις
Ἕκτορος ὅπλοις σκύλοις τε Φρυγῶν
δοριθηράτοις,
[575] οἷσιν Ἀχιλλέως παῖς Φθιώτας
στέψει ναοὺς ἀπὸ Τροίας;

Ἀνδρομάχη

Ἀχαιοὶ δεσπόται μ’ ἄγουσιν.

Ἑκάβη

οἴμοι.

Ἀνδρομάχη

τί παιᾶν’ ἐμὸν στενάζεις;

Ἑκάβη

Αἰαῖ

Ἀνδρομάχη

Τῶνδ’ ἀλγέων

Ἑκάβη

[580] Ὦ Ζεῦ

Ἀνδρομάχη

Καὶ συμφορᾶς.

Ἑκάβη

Τέκεα,

Ἀνδρομάχη

Πρίν ποτ’ ἦμεν.

Ἑκάβη

Βέβακ’ ὄλβος, βέβακε Τροία

Ἀνδρομάχη

Τλάμων.

Ἑκάβη

Ἐμῶν τ’ εὐγένεια παίδων.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Φεῦ φεῦ.

Ἑκάβη

Φεῦ δῆτ’ ἐμῶν

Ἀνδρομάχη

[585] Κακῶν.

Ἑκάβη

Οἰκτρὰ τύχα

Ἀνδρομάχη

Πόλεος,

Ἑκάβη

Ἃ καπνοῦται.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Μόλοις, ὦ πόσις, μοι

Ἑκάβη

Βοᾷς τὸν παρ’ Ἅιδᾳ
παῖδ’ ἐμόν, ὦ μελέα.

Ἀνδρομάχη

[590] Σᾶς δάμαρτος ἄλκαρ.

Ἑκάβη

Σύ τ’, ὦ λῦμ’ Ἀχαιῶν,
τέκνων δέσποθ’ ἁμῶν,
πρεσβυγενὲς Πρίαμε,
κοίμισαί μ’ ἐς Ἅιδου.

Ἀνδρομάχη

[595] οἵδε πόθοι μεγάλοι . . .

Ἑκάβη

Σχετλία, τάδε πάσχομεν ἄλγη.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Οἰχομένας πόλεως . . .

Ἑκάβη

Ἐπὶ δ’ ἄλγεσιν ἄλγεα κεῖται.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Δυσφροσύναισι θεῶν, ὅτε σὸς γόνος ἔκφυγεν Ἅιδαν,
ὃς λεχέων στυγερῶν χάριν ὤλεσε
[598β] πέργαμα Τροίας· αἱματόεντα δὲ
θεᾷ παρὰ Παλλάδι σώματα νεκρῶν
[600] γυψὶ φέρειν τέταται· ζυγὰ δ’ ἤνυσε
[600β] δούλια Τροίᾳ.

Ἑκάβη

Ὦ πατρίς, ὦ μελέα . . .

Ἀνδρομάχη

Καταλειπομέναν σε δακρύω,

Ἑκάβη

Νῦν τέλος οἰκτρὸν ὁρᾷς.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Καὶ ἐμὸν δόμον ἔνθ’ ἐλοχεύθην.

Ἑκάβη

[603] Ὦ τέκν’, ἐρημόπολις μάτηρ ἀπολείπεται ὑμῶν,
οἷος ἰάλεμος, οἷά τε πένθη
[605] Δάκρυά τ’ ἐκ δακρύων καταλείβεται
ἀμετέροισι δόμοις· ὁ θανὼν δ’ ἐπι-
λάθεται ἀλγέων ἀδάκρυτος.

Χορός

Ὡς ἠδὺ δάκρυα τοῖς κακῶς πεπραγόσι
θρήνων τ’ ὀδυρμοὶ μοῦσά θ’ ἡ λύπας ἔχει.

Ἀνδρομάχη

[610] Ὦ μῆτερ ἀνδρός, ὅς ποτ’ Ἀργείων δορὶ
πλείστους διώλεσ’, Ἕκτορος, τάδ’ εἰσορᾷς;

Ἑκάβη

Ὁρῶ τὰ τῶν θεῶν, ὡς τὰ μὲν πυργοῦσ’ ἄνω
τὸ μηδὲν ὄντα, τὰ δὲ δοκοῦντ’ ἀπώλεσαν.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Ἀγόμεθα λεία σὺν τέκνῳ· τὸ δ’ εὐγενὲς
[615] ἐς δοῦλον ἥκει, μεταβολὰς τοσάσδ’ ἔχον.

Ἑκάβη

Τὸ τῆς ἀνάγκης δεινόν· ἄρτι κἀπ’ ἐμοῦ
βέβηκ’ ἀποσπασθεῖσα Κασάνδρα βίᾳ.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Φεῦ φεῦ·
ἄλλος τις Αἴας, ὡς ἔοικε, δεύτερος
παιδὸς πέφηνε σῆς. Νοσεῖς δὲ χἄτερα.

Ἑκάβη

[620] Ὧν γ’ οὔτε μέτρον οὔτ’ ἀριθμός ἐστί μοι·
κακῷ κακὸν γὰρ εἰς ἅμιλλαν ἔρχεται.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Τέθνηκέ σοι παῖς πρὸς τάφῳ Πολυξένη
σφαγεῖσ’ Ἀχιλλέως, δῶρον ἀψύχῳ νεκρῷ.

Ἑκάβη

Οἳ ‘γὼ τάλαινα. Τοῦτ’ ἐκεῖν’ ὅ μοι πάλαι
[625] Ταλθύβιος αἴνιγμ’ οὐ σαφῶς εἶπεν σαφές.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Εἶδόν νιν αὐτή, κἀποβᾶσα τῶνδ’ ὄχων
ἔκρυψα πέπλοις κἀπεκοψάμην νεκρόν.

Ἑκάβη

Αἰαῖ, τέκνον, σῶν ἀνοσίων προσφαγμάτων·
αἰαῖ μάλ’ αὖθις, ὡς κακῶς διόλλυσαι.

Ἀνδρομάχη

[630] Ὄλωλεν ὡς ὄλωλεν· ἀλλ’ ὅμως ἐμοῦ
ζώσης γ’ ὄλωλεν εὐτυχεστέρῳ πότμῳ.

Ἑκάβη

Οὐ ταὐτόν, ὦ παῖ, τῷ βλέπειν τὸ κατθανεῖν·
τὸ μὲν γὰρ οὐδέν, τῷ δ’ ἔνεισιν ἐλπίδες.

Ἀνδρομάχη

[634] Ὦ μῆτερ, ὦ τεκοῦσα , κάλλιστον λόγον
[635] ἄκουσον, ὥς σοι τέρψιν ἐμβαλῶ φρενί.
Τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι τῷ θανεῖν ἴσον λέγω,
τοῦ ζῆν δὲ λυπρῶς κρεῖσσόν ἐστι κατθανεῖν.

Ἀλγεῖ γὰρ οὐδὲν τῶν κακῶν ᾐσθημένος·
ὁ δ’ εὐτυχήσας ἐς τὸ δυστυχὲς πεσὼν
ψυχὴν ἀλᾶται τῆς πάροιθ’ εὐπραξίας.
Κείνη δ’, ὁμοίως ὥσπερ οὐκ ἰδοῦσα φῶς,
τέθνηκε κοὐδὲν οἶδε τῶν αὐτῆς κακῶν.
Ἐγὼ δὲ τοξεύσασα τῆς εὐδοξίας
λαχοῦσα πλεῖον τῆς τύχης ἡμάρτανον.
Ἃ γὰρ γυναιξὶ σώφρον’ ἔσθ’ ηὑρημένα,
ταῦτ’ ἐξεμόχθουν Ἕκτορος κατὰ στέγας.
Πρῶτον μέν, ἔνθα κἂν προσῇ κἂν μὴ προσῇ
ψόγος γυναιξίν αὐτὸ τοῦτ’ ἐφέλκεται
κακῶς ἀκούειν, ἥτις οὐκ ἔνδον μένει,
τούτου παρεῖσα πόθον ἔμιμνον ἐν δόμοις·
ἔσω τε μελάθρων κομψὰ θηλειῶν ἔπη
οὐκ εἰσεφρούμην, τὸν δὲ νοῦν διδάσκαλον
οἴκοθεν ἔχουσα χρηστὸν ἐξήρκουν ἐμοί.
Γλώσσης τε σιγὴν ὄμμα θ’ ἥσυχον πόσει
παρεῖχον· ᾔδη δ’ ἀμὲ χρῆν νικᾶν πόσιν,
κείνῳ τε νίκην ὧν ἐχρῆν παριέναι.
Καὶ τῶνδε κληδὼν ἐς στράτευμ’ Ἀχαιϊκὸν
ἐλθοῦσ’ ἀπώλεσέν μ’· ἐπεὶ γὰρ ᾔρέθην,
Ἀχιλλέως με παῖς ἐβουλήθη λαβεῖν
δάμαρτα· δουλεύσω δ’ ἐν αὐθεντῶν δόμοις.
Κεἰ μὲν παρώσασ’ Ἕκτορος φίλον κάρα
πρὸς τὸν παρόντα πόσιν ἀναπτύξω φρένα,
κακὴ φανοῦμαι τῷ θανόντι· τόνδε δ’ αὖ
στυγοῦσ’ ἐμαυτῆς δεσπόταις μισήσομαι.
Καίτοι λέγουσιν ὡς μί’ εὐφρόνη χαλᾷ
τὸ δυσμενὲς γυναικὸς εἰς ἀνδρὸς λέχος·
ἀπέπτυσ’ αὐτήν, ἥτις ἄνδρα τὸν πάρος
καινοῖσι λέκτροις ἀποβαλοῦσ’ ἄλλον φιλεῖ.
Ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ πῶλος ἥτις ἂν διαζυγῇ
τῆς συντραφείσης, ῥᾳδίως ἕλξει ζυγόν.
Καίτοι τὸ θηριῶδες ἄφθογγόν τ’ ἔφυ
ξυνέσει τ’ ἄχρηστον τῇ φύσει τε λείπεται.
Σὲ δ’, ὦ φίλ’ Ἕκτορ, εἶχον ἄνδρ’ ἀρκοῦντά μοι
ξυνέσει γένει πλούτῳ τε κἀνδρείᾳ μέγαν·

ἀκήρατον δέ μ’ ἐκ πατρὸς λαβὼν δόμων
πρῶτος τὸ παρθένειον ἐζεύξω λέχος.
Καὶ νῦν ὄλωλας μὲν σύ, ναυσθλοῦμαι δ’ ἐγὼ
πρὸς Ἑλλάδ’ αἰχμάλωτος ἐς δοῦλον ζυγόν.
Ἆρ’ οὐκ ἐλάσσω τῶν ἐμῶν ἔχειν κακῶν
Πολυξένης ὄλεθρος, ἢν καταστένεις;
Ἐμοὶ γὰρ οὐδ’ ὃ πᾶσι λείπεται βροτοῖς
ξύνεστιν ἐλπίς, οὐδὲ κλέπτομαι φρένας
πράξειν τι κεδνόν· ἡδὺ δ’ ἐστὶ καὶ δοκεῖν.

Χορός

Ἐς ταὐτὸν ἥκεις συμφορᾶς· θρηνοῦσα δὲ
τὸ σὸν διδάσκεις μ’ ἔνθα πημάτων κυρῶ.

Ἑκάβη

Αὐτὴ μὲν οὔπω ναὸς εἰσέβην σκάφος,
γραφῇ δ’ ἰδοῦσα καὶ κλύουσ’ ἐπίσταμαι.
Ναύταις γὰρ ἢν μὲν μέτριος ᾖ χειμὼν φέρειν,
προθυμίαν ἔχουσι σωθῆναι πόνων,
ὁ μὲν παρ’ οἴαχ’, ὁ δ’ ἐπὶ λαίφεσιν βεβώς,
ὁ δ’ ἄντλον εἴργων ναός· ἢν δ’ ὑπερβάλῃ
πολὺς ταραχθεὶς πόντος, ἐνδόντες τύχῃ
παρεῖσαν αὐτοὺς κυμάτων δρομήμασιν.
Οὕτω δὲ κἀγὼ πόλλ’ ἔχουσα πήματα
ἄφθογγός εἰμι καὶ παρεῖσ’ ἐῶ στόμα·
νικᾷ γὰρ οὐκ θεῶν με δύστηνος κλύδων.
Ἀλλ’, ὦ φίλη παῖ, τὰς μὲν Ἕκτορος τύχας
ἔασον· οὐ μὴ δάκρυά νιν σώσῃ τὰ σά·
τίμα δὲ τὸν παρόντα δεσπότην σέθεν,
φίλον διδοῦσα δέλεαρ ἀνδρὶ σῶν τρόπων.
Κἂν δρᾷς τάδ’, ἐς τὸ κοινὸν εὐφρανεῖς φίλους
καὶ παῖδα τόνδε παιδὸς ἐκθρέψειας ἂν
Τροίᾳ μέγιστον ὠφέλημ’, ἵν’ εἴ ποτε
ἐκ σοῦ γενόμενοι παῖδες Ἴλιον πάλιν
κατοικίσειαν, καὶ πόλις γένοιτ’ ἔτι.
Ἀλλ’ ἐκ λόγου γὰρ ἄλλος ἐκβαίνει λόγος,

τίν’ αὖ δέδορκα τόνδ’ Ἀχαιϊκὸν λάτριν
στείχοντα καινῶν ἄγγελον βουλευμάτων;

Ταλθύβιος

[709] Φρυγῶν ἀρίστου πρίν ποθ’ Ἕκτορος δάμαρ,
[710] μή με στυγήσῃς· οὐχ ἑκὼν γὰρ ἀγγελῶ.
Δαναῶν δὲ κοινὰ Πελοπιδῶν τ’ ἀγγέλματα. . . .

Ἀνδρομάχη

Τί δ’ ἔστιν; Ὡς μοι φροιμίων ἄρχῃ κακῶν.

Ταλθύβιος

Ἔδοξε τόνδε παῖδα . . . πῶς εἴπω λόγον;

Ἀνδρομάχη

Μῶν οὐ τὸν αὐτὸν δεσπότην ἡμῖν ἔχειν;

Ταλθύβιος

[715] Οὐδεὶς Ἀχαιῶν τοῦδε δεσπόσει ποτέ.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Ἀλλ’ ἐνθάδ’ αὐτοῦ λείψανον Φρυγῶν λιπεῖν;

Ταλθύβιος

Οὐκ οἶδ’ ὅπως σοι ῥᾳδίως εἴπω κακά.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Ἐπῄνεσ’ αἰδῶ, πλὴν ἐὰν λέγῃς καλά.

Ταλθύβιος

Κτενοῦσι σὸν παῖδ’, ὡς πύθῃ κακὸν μέγα.

Ἀνδρομάχη

Οἴμοι, γάμων τόδ’ ὡς κλύω μεῖζον κακόν.

Ταλθύβιος

Νικᾷ δ’ Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐν Πανέλλησιν λέγων . . .

Ἀνδρομάχη

Αἰαῖ μάλ’· οὐ γὰρ μέτρια πάσχομεν κακά.

Ταλθύβιος

Λέξας ἀρίστου παῖδα μὴ τρέφειν πατρὸς . . .

Ἀνδρομάχη

Τοιαῦτα νικήσειε τῶν αὑτοῦ πέρι.

Ταλθύβιος

Ῥῖψαι δὲ πύργων δεῖν σφε Τρωικῶν ἄπο.
Ἀλλ’ ὡς γενέσθω, καὶ σοφωτέρα φανῇ·
μήτ’ ἀντέχου τοῦδ’, εὐγενῶς δ’ ἄλγει κακοῖς,
μήτε σθένουσα μηδὲν ἰσχύειν δόκει.
Ἔχεις γὰρ ἀλκὴν οὐδαμῇ. Σκοπεῖν δὲ χρή·
πόλις τ’ ὄλωλε καὶ πόσις, κρατῇ δὲ σύ,
ἡμεῖς δὲ πρὸς γυναῖκα μάρνασθαι μίαν
οἷοί τε. Τούτων οὕνεκ’ οὐ μάχης ἐρᾶν
οὐδ’ αἰσχρὸν οὐδὲν οὐδ’ ἐπίφθονόν σε δρᾶν,
οὐδ’ αὖ σ’ Ἀχαιοῖς βούλομαι ῥίπτειν ἀράς.
Εἰ γάρ τι λέξεις ὧν χολώσεται στρατός,
οὔτ’ ἂν ταφείη παῖς ὅδ’ οὔτ’ οἴκτου τύχοι.
Σιγῶσα δ’ εὖ τε τὰς τύχας κεκτημένη
τὸν τοῦδε νεκρὸν οὐκ ἄθαπτον ἂν λίποις
αὐτή τ’ Ἀχαιῶν πρευμενεστέρων τύχοις.

Ἀνδρομάχη

[740] Ὦ φίλτατ’, ὦ περισσὰ τιμηθεὶς τέκνον,
θανῇ πρὸς ἐχθρῶν μητέρ’ ἀθλίαν λιπών,
ἡ τοῦ πατρὸς δέ σ’ εὐγένει’ ἀποκτενεῖ,
ἢ τοῖσιν ἄλλοις γίγνεται σωτηρία,
τὸ δ’ ἐσθλὸν οὐκ ἐς καιρὸν ἦλθε σοὶ πατρός.
[745] Ὦ λέκτρα τἀμὰ δυστυχῆ τε καὶ γάμοι,
οἷς ἦλθον ἐς μέλαθρον Ἕκτορός ποτε,
οὐ σφάγιον υἱὸν Δαναΐδαις τέξουσ’ ἐμόν,
ἀλλ’ ὡς τύραννον Ἀσιάδος πολυσπόρου.
Ὦ παῖ, δακρύεις· αἰσθάνῃ κακῶν σέθεν;
[750] Τί μου δέδραξαι χερσὶ κἀντέχῃ πέπλων,
νεοσσὸς ὡσεὶ πτέρυγας ἐσπίτνων ἐμάς;
Οὐκ εἶσιν Ἕκτωρ κλεινὸν ἁρπάσας δόρυ
γῆς ἐξανελθὼν σοὶ φέρων σωτηρίαν,
οὐ συγγένεια πατρός, οὐκ ἰσχὺς Φρυγῶν·
[755] λυγρὸν δὲ πήδημ’ ἐς τράχηλον ὑψόθεν
πεσὼν ἀνοίκτως, πνεῦμ’ ἀπορρήξεις σέθεν.
Ὦ νέον ὑπαγκάλισμα μητρὶ φίλτατον,
ὦ χρωτὸς ἡδὺ πνεῦμα· διὰ κενῆς ἄρα
ἐν σπαργάνοις σε μαστὸς ἐξέθρεψ’ ὅδε,
[760] μάτην δ’ ἐμόχθουν καὶ κατεξάνθην πόνοις.
Νῦν οὔποτ’ αὖθις μητέρ’ ἀσπάζου σέθεν,
πρόσπιτνε τὴν τεκοῦσαν, ἀμφὶ δ’ ὠλένας
ἕλισσ’ ἐμοῖς νώτοισι καὶ στόμ’ ἅρμοσον.
Ὦ βάρβαρ’ ἐξευρόντες Ἕλληνες κακά,
[765] τί τόνδε παῖδα κτείνετ’ οὐδὲν αἴτιον;
Ὦ Τυνδάρειον ἔρνος, οὔποτ’ εἶ Διός,
πολλῶν δὲ πατέρων φημί σ’ ἐκπεφυκέναι,
Ἀλάστορος μὲν πρῶτον, εἶτα δὲ Φθόνου,
Φόνου τε Θανάτου θ’ ὅσα τε γῆ τρέφει κακά.
[770] Οὐ γάρ ποτ’ αὐχῶ Ζῆνά γ’ ἐκφῦσαί σ’ ἐγώ,
πολλοῖσι κῆρα βαρβάροις Ἕλλησί τε.
Ὅλοιο· καλλίστων γὰρ ὀμμάτων ἄπο
αἰσχρῶς τὰ κλεινὰ πεδί’ ἀπώλεσας Φρυγῶν.
<Ἀλλ’> ἄγετε φέρετε ῥίπτετ’, εἰ ῥίπτειν δοκεῖ·

δαίνυσθε τοῦδε σάρκας. Ἔκ τε γὰρ θεῶν
διολλύμεσθα, παιδί τ᾽ οὐ δυναίμεθ᾽ ἂν
θάνατον ἀρῆξαι. Κρύπτετ᾽ ἄθλιον δέμας
καὶ ῥίπτετ᾽ ἐς ναῦς· ἐπὶ καλὸν γὰρ ἔρχομαι
ὑμέναιον, ἀπολέσασα τοὐμαυτῆς τέκνον.

Χορός

Τάλαινα Τροία, μυρίους ἀπώλεσας
μιᾶς γυναικὸς καὶ λέχους στυγνοῦ χάριν.

Ταλθύβιος

Ἄγε παῖ, φίλιον πρόσπτυγμα μεθεὶς
μητρὸς μογερᾶς, βαῖνε πατρῴων
πύργων ἐπ᾽ ἄκρας στεφάνας, ὅθι σοι
πνεῦμα μεθεῖναι ψῆφος ἐκράνθη.
Λαμβάνετ᾽ αὐτόν. Τὰ δὲ τοιάδε χρὴ
κηρυκεύειν, ὅστις ἄνοικτος
καὶ ἀναιδείᾳ τῆς ἡμετέρας
γνώμης μᾶλλον φίλος ἐστίν.

Ἑκάβη

Ὦ τέκνον, ὦ παῖ παιδὸς μογεροῦ,
συλώμεθα σὴν ψυχὴν ἀδίκως
μήτηρ κἀγώ. Τί πάθω; Τί σ᾽ ἐγώ,
δύσμορε, δράσω; Τάδε σοι δίδομεν
πλήγματα κρατὸς στέρνων τε κόπους·
τῶνδε γὰρ ἄρχομεν. Οἳ ‘γὼ πόλεως,
οἴμοι δὲ σέθεν· τί γὰρ οὐκ ἔχομεν;
Τίνος ἐνδέομεν μὴ οὐ πανσυδίᾳ
χωρεῖν ὀλέθρου διὰ παντός;

Χορός

Μελισσοτρόφου Σαλαμῖνος ὦ βασιλεῦ Τελαμών,
νάσου περικύμονος οἰκήσας ἕδραν

τᾶς ἐπικεκλιμένας ὄχθοις ἱεροῖς, ἵν᾽ ἐλαίας
πρῶτον ἔδειξε κλάδον γλαυκᾶς Ἀθάνα,
οὐράνιον στέφανον λιπαραῖσί <τε> κόσμον Ἀθήναις,
ἔβας ἔβας τῷ τοξοφόρῳ συναρι-
στεύων ἅμ᾽ Ἀλκμήνας γόνῳ
Ἴλιον Ἴλιον ἐκπέρσων πόλιν
ἀμετέραν τὸ πάροιθεν ὅτ᾽ ἔβας ἀφ᾽ Ἑλλάδος·

Ὅθ᾽ Ἑλλάδος ἄγαγε πρῶτον ἄνθος ἀτυζόμενος
πώλων, Σιμόεντι δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ εὐρείτᾳ πλάταν
ἔσχασε ποντοπόρον καὶ ναύδετ᾽ ἀνήψατο πρυμνᾶν
καὶ χερὸς εὐστοχίαν ἐξεῖλε ναῶν,
Λαομέδοντι φόνον· κανόνων δὲ τυκίσματα Φοίβου
. . πυρὸς φοίνικι πνοᾷ καθελὼν
Τροίας ἐπόρθησε χθόνα.
Διὶς δὲ δυοῖν πιτύλοιν τείχη περὶ
Δαρδανίας φοινία κατέλυσεν αἰχμά.

Μάταν ἄρ᾽, ὦ χρυσέαις ἐν οἰνοχόαις ἁβρὰ βαίνων,
Λαομεδόντιε παῖ,
Ζηνὸς ἔχεις κυλίκων πλήρωμα, καλλίσταν λατρείαν·
ἁ δέ σε γειναμένα πυρὶ δαίεται·
ἠιόνες δ᾽ ἅλιαι
ἴακχον οἰωνὸς οἶ-
ον τεκέων ὕπερ βοᾷ,
ᾇ μὲν εὐνάτορας, ᾇ δὲ παῖδας,
ᾇ δὲ ματέρας γεραιάς.
Τὰ δὲ σὰ δροσόεντα λουτρὰ
γυμνασίων τε δρόμοι
βεβᾶσι, σὺ δὲ πρόσωπα νεα-
ρὰ χάρισι παρὰ Διὸς θρόνοις
καλλιγάλανα τρέφεις· Πριάμοιο δὲ γαῖαν
Ἑλλὰς ὤλεσ᾽ αἰχμά.

Ἔρως Ἔρως, ὃς τὰ Δαρδάνεια μέλαθρά ποτ᾽ ἦλθες
οὐρανίδαισι μέλων,
ὡς τότε μὲν μεγάλως Τροίαν ἐπύργωσας, θεοῖσι

κῆδος ἀναψάμενος. Τὸ μὲν οὖν Διὸς
οὐκέτ᾽ ὄνειδος ἐρῶ·
τὸ τᾶς δὲ λευκοπτέρου
φίλιον Ἀμέρας βροτοῖς
φέγγος ὀλοὸν εἶδε γαῖαν,
εἶδε περγάμων ὄλεθρον,
τεκνοποιὸν ἔχουσα τᾶσδε
γᾶς πόσιν ἐν θαλάμοις,
ὃν ἀστέρων τέθριππος �έλα-
βε χρύσεος ὄχος ἀναρπάσας,
ἐλπίδα γᾷ πατρίᾳ μεγάλαν· τὰ θεῶν δὲ
φίλτρα φροῦδα Τροίᾳ.

Μενέλαος

Ὦ καλλιφεγγὲς ἡλίου σέλας τόδε,
ἐν ᾧ δάμαρτα τὴν ἐμὴν χειρώσομαι
Ἑλένην· ὁ γὰρ δὴ πολλὰ μοχθήσας ἐγὼ
Μενέλαός εἰμι καὶ στράτευμ᾽ Ἀχαιϊκόν.
Ἦλθον δὲ Τροίαν οὐχ ὅσον δοκοῦσί με
γυναικὸς οὕνεκ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἄνδρ᾽ ὃς ἐξ ἐμῶν
δόμων δάμαρτα ξεναπάτης ἐλήσατο.
Κεῖνος μὲν οὖν δέδωκε σὺν θεοῖς δίκην
αὐτός τε καὶ γῆ δορὶ πεσοῦσ᾽ Ἑλληνικῷ.
Ἥκω δὲ τὴν τάλαιναν οὐ γὰρ ἡδέως
ὄνομα δάμαρτος ἥ ποτ᾽ ἦν ἐμὴ λέγω
ἄξων· δόμοις γὰρ τοῖσδ᾽ ἐν αἰχμαλωτικοῖς
κατηρίθμηται Τρῳάδων ἄλλων μέτα.
Οἵπερ γὰρ αὐτὴν ἐξεμόχθησαν δορί,
κτανεῖν ἐμοί νιν ἔδοσαν, εἴτε μὴ κτανὼν
θέλοιμ᾽ ἄγεσθαι πάλιν ἐς Ἀργείαν χθόνα.
Ἐμοὶ δ᾽ ἔδοξε τὸν μὲν ἐν Τροίᾳ μόρον
Ἑλένης ἐᾶσαι, ναυπόρῳ δ᾽ ἄγειν πλάτῃ
Ἑλληνίδ᾽ ἐς γῆν κᾆτ᾽ ἐκεῖ δοῦναι κτανεῖν,
ποινὰς ὅσοις τεθνᾶσ᾽ ἐν Ἰλίῳ φίλοι.
Ἀλλ᾽ εἶα χωρεῖτ᾽ ἐς δόμους, ὀπάονες,
κομίζετ᾽ αὐτὴν τῆς μιαιφονωτάτης

κόμης ἐπισπάσαντες· οὔριοι δ’ ὅταν
πνοαὶ μόλωσι, πέμψομέν νιν Ἑλλάδα.

Ἑκάβη

[884] Ὦ γῆς ὄχημα κἀπὶ γῆς ἔχων ἕδραν,
[885] ὅστις ποτ’ εἶ σύ, δυστόπαστος εἰδέναι,
Ζεύς, εἴτ’ ἀνάγκη φύσεος εἴτε νοῦς βροτῶν,
προσηυξάμην σε· πάντα γὰρ δι’ ἀψόφου
βαίνων κελεύθου κατὰ δίκην τὰ θνήτ’ ἄγεις.

Μενέλαος

Τί δ’ ἔστιν; Εὐχὰς ὡς ἐκαίνισας θεῶν.

Ἑκάβη

[890] Αἰνῶ σε, Μενέλα’, εἰ κτενεῖς δάμαρτα σήν.
Ὅρᾶν δὲ τήνδε φεῦγε, μή σ’ ἕλῃ πόθῳ.
Αἱρεῖ γὰρ ἀνδρῶν ὄμματ’, ἐξαιρεῖ πόλεις,
πίμπρησιν οἴκους· ὧδ’ ἔχει κηλήματα.
Ἐγώ νιν οἶδα, καὶ σύ, χοἱ πεπονθότες.

Ἑλένη

[895] Μενέλαε, φροίμιον μὲν ἄξιον φόβου
τόδ’ ἐστίν· ἐν γὰρ χερσὶ προσπόλων σέθεν
βίᾳ πρὸ τῶνδε δωμάτων ἐκπέμπομαι.
Ἀτὰρ σχεδὸν μὲν οἶδά σοι μισουμένη,
ὅμως δ’ ἐρέσθαι βούλομαι· γνῶμαι τίνες
[900] Ἕλλησι καὶ σοὶ τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς πέρι;

Μενέλαος

Οὐκ εἰς ἀκριβὲς ἦλθες, ἀλλ’ ἅπας στρατὸς
κτανεῖν ἐμοί σ’ ἔδωκεν, ὅνπερ ἠδίκεις.

Ἑλένη

Ἔξεστιν οὖν πρὸς ταῦτ᾽ ἀμείψασθαι λόγῳ,
ὡς οὐ δικαίως, ἢν θάνω, θανούμεθα;

Μενέλαος

Οὐκ ἐς λόγους ἐλήλυθ᾽, ἀλλά σε κτενῶν.

Ἑκάβη

Ἄκουσον αὐτῆς, μὴ θάνῃ τοῦδ᾽ ἐνδεής,
Μενέλαε, καὶ δὸς τοὺς ἐναντίους λόγους
ἡμῖν κατ᾽ αὐτῆς· τῶν γὰρ ἐν Τροίᾳ κακῶν
οὐδὲν κάτοισθα. Συντεθεὶς δ᾽ ὁ πᾶς λόγος
κτενεῖ νιν οὕτως ὥστε μηδαμοῦ φυγεῖν.

Μενέλαος

Σχολῆς τὸ δῶρον· εἰ δὲ βούλεται λέγειν,
ἔξεστι. Τῶν σῶν δ᾽ οὕνεχ᾽ ὡς μάθῃ λόγων
δώσω τόδ᾽ αὐτῇ· τῆσδε δ᾽ οὐ δώσω χάριν.

Ἑλένη

Ἴσως με, κἂν εὖ κἂν κακῶς δόξω λέγειν,
οὐκ ἀνταμείψῃ πολεμίαν ἡγούμενος.
Ἐγὼ δ᾽, ἅ σ᾽ οἶμαι διὰ λόγων ἰόντ᾽ ἐμοῦ
κατηγορήσειν, ἀντιθεῖσ᾽ ἀμείψομαι
τοῖς σοῖσι τἀμὰ καὶ τὰ σ᾽ αἰτιάματα.
Πρῶτον μὲν ἀρχὰς ἔτεκεν ἥδε τῶν κακῶν,
Πάριν τεκοῦσα· δεύτερον δ᾽ ἀπώλεσε
Τροίαν τε κἄμ᾽ ὁ πρέσβυς οὐ κτανὼν βρέφος,
δαλοῦ πικρὸν μίμημ᾽, Ἀλέξανδρόν ποτε.
Ἐνθένδε τἀπίλοιπ᾽ ἄκουσον ὡς ἔχει.
Ἔκρινε τρισσὸν ζεῦγος ὅδε τριῶν θεῶν·
καὶ Παλλάδος μὲν ἦν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ δόσις
Φρυξὶ στρατηγοῦνθ᾽ Ἑλλάδ᾽ ἐξανιστάναι,
Ἥρα δ᾽ ὑπέσχετ᾽ Ἀσιάδ᾽ Εὐρώπης θ᾽ ὅρους
τυραννίδ᾽ ἔξειν, εἴ σφε κρίνειεν Πάρις·

Κύπρις δὲ τοὐμὸν εἶδος ἐκπαγλουμένη
δώσειν ὑπέσχετ’, εἰ θεὰς ὑπερδράμοι
κάλλει. Τὸν ἔνθεν δ’ ὡς ἔχει σκέψαι λόγον·
νικᾷ Κύπρις θεάς, καὶ τοσόνδ’ οὐμοὶ γάμοι
ὤνησαν Ἑλλάδ’· οὐ κρατεῖσθ’ ἐκ βαρβάρων,
οὔτ’ ἐς δόρυ σταθέντες, οὐ τυραννίδι.
Ἃ δ’ εὐτύχησεν Ἑλλάς, ὠλόμην ἐγὼ
εὐμορφίᾳ πραθεῖσα, κὠνειδίζομαι
ἐξ ὧν ἐχρῆν με στέφανον ἐπὶ κάρᾳ λαβεῖν.
Οὔπω με φήσεις αὐτὰ τἀν ποσὶν λέγειν,
ὅπως ἀφώρμησ’ ἐκ δόμων τῶν σῶν λάθρα.
Ἦλθ’ οὐχὶ μικρὰν θεὸν ἔχων αὐτοῦ μέτα
ὁ τῆσδ’ ἀλάστωρ, εἴτ’ Ἀλέξανδρον θέλεις
ὀνόματι προσφωνεῖν νιν εἴτε καὶ Πάριν·
ὅν, ὦ κάκιστε, σοῖσιν ἐν δόμοις λιπὼν
Σπάρτης ἀπῆρας νηὶ Κρησίαν χθόνα.
Εἶέν.
Οὐ σέ, ἀλλ’ ἐμαυτὴν τοὐπὶ τῷδ’ ἐρήσομαι·
τί δὴ φρονοῦσά γ’ ἐκ δόμων ἅμ’ ἐσπόμην
ξένῳ, προδοῦσα πατρίδα καὶ δόμους ἐμούς;
Τὴν θεὸν κόλαζε καὶ Διὸς κρείσσων γενοῦ,
ὃς τῶν μὲν ἄλλων δαιμόνων ἔχει κράτος,
κείνης δὲ δοῦλός ἐστι· συγγνώμη δ’ ἐμοί.
Ἔνθεν δ’ ἔχοις ἂν εἰς ἔμ’ εὐπρεπῆ λόγον·
ἐπεὶ θανὼν γῆς ἦλθ’ Ἀλέξανδρος μυχούς,
χρῆν μ’, ἡνίκ’ οὐκ ἦν θεοπόνητά μου λέχη,
λιποῦσαν οἴκους ναῦς ἐπ’ Ἀργείων μολεῖν.
Ἔσπευδον αὐτὸ τοῦτο· μάρτυρες δέ μοι
πύργων πυλωροὶ κἀπὸ τειχέων σκοποί,
οἳ πολλάκις μ’ ἐφηῦρον ἐξ ἐπάλξεων
πλεκταῖσιν ἐς γῆν σῶμα κλέπτουσαν τόδε.
Βίᾳ δ’ ὁ καινός μ’ οὗτος ἁρπάσας πόσις
Δηίφοβος ἄλοχον εἶχεν ἀκόντων Φρυγῶν.
Πῶς οὖν ἔτ’ ἂν θνῄσκοιμ’ ἂν ἐνδίκως, πόσι,
. . . . . .
πρὸς σοῦ δικαίως, ἢν ὁ μὲν βίᾳ γαμεῖ,
τὰ δ’ οἴκοθεν κεῖν’ ἀντὶ νικητηρίων

πικρῶς ἐδούλευσ’; Εἰ δὲ τῶν θεῶν κρατεῖν
[965] βούλῃ, τὸ χρῄζειν ἀμαθές ἐστί σου τόδε.

Χορός

Βασίλει’, ἄμυνον σοῖς τέκνοισι καὶ πάτρᾳ
πειθὼ διαφθείρουσα τῆσδ’, ἐπεὶ λέγει
καλῶς κακοῦργος οὖσα· δεινὸν οὖν τόδε.

Ἑκάβη

[969] Ταῖς θεαῖσι πρῶτα σύμμαχος γενήσομαι
[970] καὶ τήνδε δείξω μὴ λέγουσαν ἔνδικα.
Ἐγὼ γὰρ Ἥραν παρθένον τε Παλλάδα
οὐκ ἐς τοσοῦτον ἀμαθίας ἐλθεῖν δοκῶ,
ὥσθ’ ἣ μὲν Ἄργος βαρβάροις ἀπημπόλα,
Παλλὰς δ’ Ἀθήνας Φρυξὶ δουλεύειν ποτέ,
[975] εἰ παιδιαῖσι καὶ χλιδῇ μορφῆς πέρι
ἦλθον πρὸς Ἴδην. Τοῦ γὰρ οὕνεκ’ ἂν θεὰ
Ἥρα τοσοῦτον ἔσχ’ ἔρωτα καλλονῆς;
Πότερον ἀμείνον’ ὡς λάβῃ Διὸς πόσιν;
Ἢ γάμον Ἀθηνᾶ θεῶν τίνος θηρωμένη
[980] ἢ παρθενείαν πατρὸς ἐξῃτήσατο,
φεύγουσα λέκτρα; Μὴ ἀμαθεῖς ποίει θεὰς
[982] τὸ σὸν κακὸν κοσμοῦσα, μὴ οὐ πείσῃς σοφούς.
Κύπριν δ’ ἔλεξας ταῦτα γὰρ γέλως πολύς
ἐλθεῖν ἐμῷ ξὺν παιδὶ Μενέλεω δόμους.
[985] Οὐκ ἂν μένουσ’ ἂν ἥσυχός σ’ ἐν οὐρανῷ
αὐταῖς Ἀμύκλαις ἤγαγεν πρὸς Ἴλιον;
Ἦν οὑμὸς υἱὸς κάλλος ἐκπρεπέστατος,
ὁ σὸς δ’ ἰδών νιν νοῦς ἐποιήθη Κύπρις·
τὰ μῶρα γὰρ πάντ’ ἐστὶν Ἀφροδίτη βροτοῖς,
[990] καὶ τοὔνομ’ ὀρθῶς ἀφροσύνης ἄρχει θεᾶς.
Ὃν εἰσιδοῦσα βαρβάροις ἐσθήμασι
χρυσῷ τε λαμπρὸν ἐξεμαργώθης φρένας.
Ἐν μὲν γὰρ Ἄργει μίκρ’ ἔχουσ’ ἀνεστρέφου,
Σπάρτης δ’ ἀπαλλαχθεῖσα τὴν Φρυγῶν πόλιν
[995] χρυσῷ ῥέουσαν ἤλπισας κατακλύσειν

δαπάναισιν· οὐδ’ ἦν ἱκανά σοι τὰ Μενέλεω
μέλαθρα ταῖς σαῖς ἐγκαθυβρίζειν τρυφαῖς.
Εἶέν· βίᾳ γὰρ παῖδα φῄς <σ’> ἄγειν ἐμόν·
τίς Σπαρτιατῶν ἤσθετ’; Ἢ ποίαν βοὴν
ἀνωλόλυξας Κάστορος νεανίου
τοῦ συζύγου τ’ ἔτ’ ὄντος, οὐ κατ’ ἄστρα πω;
Ἐπεὶ δὲ Τροίαν ἦλθες Ἀργεῖοί τέ σου
κατ’ ἴχνος, ἦν δὲ δοριπετὴς ἀγωνία,
εἰ μὲν τὰ τοῦδε κρείσσον’ ἀγγέλλοιτό σοι,
Μενέλαον ἥνεις, παῖς ὅπως λυποῖτ’ ἐμὸς
ἔχων ἔρωτος ἀνταγωνιστὴν μέγαν·
εἰ δ’ εὐτυχοῖεν Τρῶες, οὐδὲν ἦν ὅδε.
Ἐς τὴν τύχην δ’ ὁρῶσα τοῦτ’ ἤσκεις, ὅπως
ἔποι’ ἅμ’ αὐτῇ, τῇ ἀρετῇ δ’ οὐκ ἤθελες.
Κἄπειτα πλεκταῖς σῶμα σὸν κλέπτειν λέγεις
πύργων καθιεῖσ’, ὡς μένουσ’ ἀκουσίως;
Ποῦ δῆτ’ ἐλήφθης ἢ βρόχους ἀρτωμένη
ἢ φάσγανον θήγουσ’, ἃ γενναία γυνὴ
δράσειεν ἂν ποθοῦσα τὸν πάρος πόσιν;
Καίτοι σ’ ἐνουθέτουν γε πολλὰ πολλάκις·
Ὦ θύγατερ, ἔξελθ’· οἱ δ’ ἐμοὶ παῖδες γάμους
ἄλλους γαμοῦσι, σὲ δ’ ἐπὶ ναῦς Ἀχαιϊ̈κὰς
πέμψω συνεκκλέψασα· καὶ παῦσον μάχης
Ἕλληνας ἡμᾶς τε. Ἀλλὰ σοὶ τόδ’ ἦν πικρόν.
Ἐν τοῖς Ἀλεξάνδρου γὰρ ὕβριζες δόμοις
καὶ προσκυνεῖσθαι βαρβάρων ὕπ’ ἤθελες·
μεγάλα γὰρ ἦν σοι. Κἀπὶ τοῖσδε σὸν δέμας
ἐξῆλθες ἀσκήσασα κἄβλεψας πόσει
τὸν αὐτὸν αἰθέρ’, ᾧ κατάπτυστον κάρα·
ἦν χρῆν ταπεινὴν ἐν πέπλων ἐρειπίοις,
φρίκῃ τρέμουσαν, κρᾶτ’ ἀπεσκυθισμένην
ἐλθεῖν, τὸ σῶφρον τῆς ἀναιδείας πλέον
ἔχουσαν ἐπὶ τοῖς πρόσθεν ἡμαρτημένοις.
Μενέλα’, ἵν’ εἰδῇς οἷ τελευτήσω λόγον,
στεφάνωσον Ἑλλάδ’ ἀξίως τήνδε κτανὼν
σαυτοῦ, νόμον δὲ τόνδε ταῖς ἄλλαισι θὲς
γυναιξί, θνῄσκειν ἥτις ἂν προδῷ πόσιν.

Χορός

Μενέλαε, προγόνων τ’ ἀξίως δόμων τε σῶν
τεῖσαι δάμαρτα κἀφελοῦ, πρὸς Ἑλλάδος,
ψόγον τὸ θῆλύ τ’, εὐγενὴς ἐχθροῖς φανείς.

Μενέλαος

Ἐμοὶ σὺ συμπέπτωκας ἐς ταὐτὸν λόγου,
ἑκουσίως τήνδ’ ἐκ δόμων ἐλθεῖν ἐμῶν
ξένας ἐς εὐνάς· χἡ Κύπρις κόμπου χάριν
λόγοις ἐνεῖται. Βαῖνε λευστήρων πέλας
πόνους τ’ Ἀχαιῶν ἀπόδος ἐν μικρῷ μακροὺς
θανοῦσ’, ἵν’ εἰδῇς μὴ καταισχύνειν ἐμέ.

Ἑλένη

Μή, πρός σε γονάτων, τὴν νόσον τὴν τῶν θεῶν
προσθεὶς ἐμοὶ κτάνῃς με, συγγίγνωσκε δέ.

Ἑκάβη

Μηδ’ οὓς ἀπέκτειν’ ἥδε συμμάχους προδῷς·
ἐγὼ πρὸ κείνων καὶ τέκνων σε λίσσομαι.

Μενέλαος

Παῦσαι, γεραιά· τῆσδε δ’ οὐκ ἐφρόντισα.
Λέγω δὲ προσπόλοισι πρὸς πρύμνας νεῶν
τήνδ’ ἐκκομίζειν, ἔνθα ναυστολήσεται.

Ἑκάβη

Μή νυν νεὼς σοὶ ταὐτὸν ἐσβήτω σκάφος.

Μενέλαος

Τί δ’ ἔστι; Μεῖζον βρῖθος ἢ πάροιθ’ ἔχει;

Ἑκάβη

Οὐκ ἔστ᾽ ἐραστὴς ὅστις οὐκ ἀεὶ φιλεῖ.

Μενέλαος

Ὅπως ἂν ἐκβῇ τῶν ἐρωμένων ὁ νοῦς.
Ἔσται δ᾽ ἃ βούλῃ· ναῦν γὰρ οὐκ ἐσβήσεται
ἐς ἥνπερ ἡμεῖς· καὶ γὰρ οὐ κακῶς λέγεις·
ἐλθοῦσα δ᾽ Ἄργος ὥσπερ ἀξία κακῶς
κακὴ θανεῖται καὶ γυναιξὶ σωφρονεῖν
πάσαισι θήσει. Ῥᾴδιον μὲν οὐ τόδε·
ὅμως δ᾽ ὁ τῆσδ᾽ ὄλεθρος ἐς φόβον βαλεῖ
τὸ μῶρον αὐτῶν, κἂν ἔτ᾽ ὦσ᾽ ἐχθίονες.

Χορός

Οὕτω δὴ τὸν ἐν Ἰλίῳ
ναὸν καὶ θυόεντα βω-
μὸν προύδωκας Ἀχαιοῖς,
ὦ Ζεῦ, καὶ πελάνων φλόγα
σμύρνης αἰθερίας τε κα-
πνὸν καὶ Πέργαμον ἱερὰν
Ἰδαῖά τ᾽ Ἰδαῖα κισσοφόρα νάπη
χιόνι κατάρυτα ποταμίᾳ
τέρμονα πρωτόβολόν θ᾽ ἁλίῳ,
τὰν καταλαμπομέναν ζαθέαν θεράπναν.

Φροῦδαί σοι θυσίαι χορῶν τ᾽
εὔφημοι κέλαδοι κατ᾽ ὄρ-
φναν τε παννυχίδες θεῶν,
χρυσέων τε ξοάνων τύποι
Φρυγῶν τε ζάθεοι σελᾶ-
ναι συνδώδεκα πλήθει.
Μέλει μέλει μοι τάδ᾽ εἰ φρονεῖς, ἄναξ,
οὐράνιον ἕδρανον ἐπιβεβὼς
αἰθέρα τε πτόλεως ὀλομένας,
ἂν πυρὸς αἰθομένα κατέλυσεν ὁρμά.

Ὦ φίλος ὦ πόσι μοι,
σὺ μὲν φθίμενος ἀλαίνεις
ἄθαπτος ἄνυδρος, ἐμὲ δὲ πόντιον σκάφος
ἀίσσον πτεροῖσι πορεύσει
ἱππόβοτον Ἄργος, ἵνα τείχεα
λάινα Κυκλώπι᾽ οὐράνια νέμονται.
Τέκνων δὲ πλῆθος ἐν πύλαις
δάκρυσι κατᾴορα στένει·
βοᾷ βοᾷ·
Μᾶτερ, ὤμοι, μόναν δή μ᾽ Ἀχαιοὶ κομί-
ζουσι σέθεν ἀπ᾽ ὀμμάτων
κυανέαν ἐπὶ ναῦν
εἰναλίαισι πλάταις
ἢ Σαλαμῖν᾽ ἱερὰν
ἢ δίπορον κορυφὰν
Ἴσθμιον, ἔνθα πύλας
Πέλοπος ἔχουσιν ἕδραι.

Εἴθ᾽ ἀκάτου Μενέλα
μέσον πέλαγος ἰούσας,
δίπαλτον ἱερὸν ἀνὰ μέσον πλατᾶν πέσοι
Αἰγαίου κεραυνοφαὲς πῦρ,
Ἰλιόθεν ὅτε με πολύδακρυν
Ἑλλάδι λάτρευμα γᾶθεν ἐξορίζει,
χρύσεα δ᾽ ἔνοπτρα, παρθένων
χάριτας, ἔχουσα τυγχάνει
Διὸς κόρα·
μηδὲ γαῖάν ποτ᾽ ἔλθοι Λάκαιναν πατρῷ-
όν τε θάλαμον ἑστίας,
μηδὲ πόλιν Πιτάνας
χαλκόπυλόν τε θεάν,
δύσγαμον αἶσχος ἑλὼν
Ἑλλάδι τᾷ μεγάλᾳ
καὶ Σιμοεντιάσιν
μέλεα πάθεα ῥοῇσιν.

Ἰὼ ἰώ,
καίν᾽ ἐκ καινῶν μεταβάλλουσαι
χθονὶ συντυχίαι. Λεύσσετε Τρώων
τόνδ᾽ Ἀστυάνακτ᾽ ἄλοχοι μέλεαι
νεκρόν, ὃν πύργων δίσκημα πικρὸν
Δαναοὶ κτείναντες ἔχουσιν.

Ταλθύβιος

Ἑκάβη, νεὼς μὲν πίτυλος εἷς λελειμμένος
λάφυρα τἀπίλοιπ᾽ Ἀχιλλείου τόκου
μέλλει πρὸς ἀκτὰς ναυστολεῖν Φθιώτιδας·
αὐτὸς δ᾽ ἀνῆκται Νεοπτόλεμος, καινάς τινας
Πηλέως ἀκούσας συμφοράς, ὥς νιν χθονὸς
Ἄκαστος ἐκβέβληκεν, ὁ Πελίου γόνος.
Οὗ θᾶσσον οὕνεκ᾽, ἢ χάριν μονῆς ἔχων,
φροῦδος, μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ δ᾽ Ἀνδρομάχη, πολλῶν ἐμοὶ
δακρύων ἀγωγός, ἡνίκ᾽ ἐξώρμα χθονός,
πάτραν τ᾽ ἀναστένουσα καὶ τὸν Ἕκτορος
τύμβον προσεννέπουσα. Καί σφ᾽ ᾐτήσατο
θάψαι νεκρὸν τόνδ᾽, ὃς πεσὼν ἐκ τειχέων
ψυχὴν ἀφῆκεν Ἕκτορος τοῦ σοῦ γόνος·
φόβον τ᾽ Ἀχαιῶν, χαλκόνωτον ἀσπίδα
τήνδ᾽, ἣν πατὴρ τοῦδ᾽ ἀμφὶ πλεύρ᾽ ἐβάλλετο,
μή νυν πορεῦσαι Πηλέως ἐφ᾽ ἑστίαν,
μηδ᾽ ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν θάλαμον, οὗ νυμφεύσεται
μήτηρ νεκροῦ τοῦδ᾽ Ἀνδρομάχη, λύπας ὁρᾶν,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀντὶ κέδρου περιβόλων τε λαΐ¨νων
ἐν τῇδε θάψαι παῖδα· σὰς δ᾽ ἐς ὠλένας
δοῦναι, πέπλοισιν ὡς περιστείλῃς νεκρὸν
στεφάνοις θ᾽, ὅση σοι δύναμις, ὡς ἔχει τὰ σά·
ἐπεὶ βέβηκε, καὶ τὸ δεσπότου τάχος
ἀφείλετ᾽ αὐτὴν παῖδα μὴ δοῦναι τάφῳ.
Ἡμεῖς μὲν οὖν, ὅταν σὺ κοσμήσῃς νέκυν,
γῆν τῷδ᾽ ἐπαμπισχόντες ἀροῦμεν δόρυ·
σὺ δ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα πρᾶσσε τἀπεσταλμένα.
Ἑνὸς μὲν οὖν μόχθου σ᾽ ἀπαλλάξας ἔχω·

Σκαμανδρίους γὰρ τάσδε διαπερῶν ῥοὰς
ἔλουσα νεκρὸν κἀπένιψα τραύματα.
Ἀλλ᾽ εἶμ᾽ ὀρυκτὸν τῷδ᾽ ἀναρρήξων τάφον,
ὡς σύντομ᾽ ἡμῖν τἀπ᾽ ἐμοῦ τε κἀπὸ σοῦ
[1155] ἐς ἓν ξυνελθόντ᾽ οἴκαδ᾽ ὁρμήσῃ πλάτην.

Ἑκάβη

[1156] Θέσθ᾽ ἀμφίτορνον ἀσπίδ᾽ Ἕκτορος πέδῳ,
λυπρὸν θέαμα κοὐ φίλον λεύσσειν ἐμοί.
Ὦ μείζον᾽ ὄγκον δορὸς ἔχοντες ἢ φρενῶν,
τί τόνδ᾽, Ἀχαιοί, παῖδα δείσαντες φόνον
[1160] καινὸν διειργάσασθε; Μὴ Τροίαν ποτὲ
πεσοῦσαν ὀρθώσειεν; Οὐδὲν ἦτ᾽ ἄρα,
ὅθ᾽ Ἕκτορος μὲν εὐτυχοῦντος ἐς δόρυ
διωλλύμεσθα μυρίας τ᾽ ἄλλης χερός,
πόλεως δ᾽ ἁλούσης καὶ Φρυγῶν ἐφθαρμένων
[1165] βρέφος τοσόνδ᾽ ἐδείσατ᾽· οὐκ αἰνῶ φόβον,
ὅστις φοβεῖται μὴ διεξελθὼν λόγῳ.
Ὦ φίλταθ᾽, ὥς σοι θάνατος ἦλθε δυστυχής.
Εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἔθανες πρὸ πόλεως, ἥβης τυχὼν
γάμων τε καὶ τῆς ἰσοθέου τυραννίδος,
[1170] μακάριος ἦσθ᾽ ἄν, εἴ τι τῶνδε μακάριον·
νῦν δ᾽ αὖτ᾽ ἰδὼν μὲν γνούς τε σῇ ψυχῇ, τέκνον,
οὐκ οἶσθ᾽, ἐχρήσω δ᾽ οὐδὲν ἐν δόμοις ἔχων.
Δύστηνε, κρατὸς ὥς σ᾽ ἔκειρεν ἀθλίως
τείχη πατρῷα, Λοξίου πυργώματα,
[1175] ὃν πόλλ᾽ ἐκήπευσ᾽ ἡ τεκοῦσα βόστρυχον
φιλήμασίν τ᾽ ἔδωκεν, ἔνθεν ἐκγελᾷ
ὀστέων ῥαγέντων φόνος, ἵν᾽ αἰσχρὰ μὴ λέγω.
Ὦ χεῖρες, ὡς εἰκοὺς μὲν ἡδείας πατρὸς
κέκτησθ᾽, ἐν ἄρθροις δ᾽ ἔκλυτοι πρόκεισθέ μοι.
[1180] Ὦ πολλὰ κόμπους ἐκβαλὸν φίλον στόμα,
ὄλωλας, ἐψεύσω μ᾽, ὅτ᾽ ἐσπίπτων πέπλους,
Ὦ μῆτερ, ηὔδας, ἦ πολύν σοι βοστρύχων
πλόκαμον κεροῦμαι, πρὸς τάφον θ᾽ ὁμηλίκων
κώμους ἀπάξω, φίλα διδοὺς προσφθέγματα.

Σὺ δ’ οὐκ ἔμ’, ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ σὲ τὸν νεώτερον,
γραῦς ἄπολις ἄτεκνος, ἄθλιον θάπτω νεκρόν.
Οἴμοι, τὰ πόλλ’ ἀσπάσμαθ’ αἵ τ’ ἐμαὶ τροφαὶ
ὕπνοι τ’ ἐκεῖνοι φροῦδά μοι. Τί καί ποτε
γράψειεν ἄν σε μουσοποιὸς ἐν τάφῳ;
Τὸν παῖδα τόνδ’ ἔκτειναν Ἀργεῖοί ποτε
δείσαντες; Αἰσχρὸν τοὐπίγραμμά γ’ Ἑλλάδι.
Ἀλλ’ οὖν πατρῴων οὐ λαχὼν ἕξεις ὅμως
ἐν ᾗ ταφήσῃ χαλκόνωτον ἰτέαν.
Ὦ καλλίπηχυν Ἕκτορος βραχίονα
σῴζουσ’, ἄριστον φύλακ’ ἀπώλεσας σέθεν.
Ὡς ἡδὺς ἐν πόρπακι σῷ κεῖται τύπος
ἴτυός τ’ ἐν εὐτόρνοισι περιδρόμοις ἰδρώς,
ὃν ἐκ μετώπου πολλάκις πόνους ἔχων
ἔσταζεν Ἕκτωρ προστιθεὶς γενειάδι.
Φέρετε, κομίζετ’ ἀθλίῳ κόσμον νεκρῷ
ἐκ τῶν παρόντων· οὐ γὰρ ἐς κάλλος τύχας
δαίμων δίδωσιν· ὧν δ’ ἔχω, λήψῃ τάδε.
Θνητῶν δὲ μῶρος ὅστις εὖ πράσσειν δοκῶν
βέβαια χαίρει· τοῖς τρόποις γὰρ αἱ τύχαι,
ἔμπληκτος ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ἄλλοτ’ ἄλλοσε
πηδῶσι, κοὐδεὶς αὐτὸς εὐτυχεῖ ποτε.

Χορός

Καὶ μὴν πρόχειρον αἵδε σοι σκυλευμάτων
Φρυγίων φέρουσι κόσμον ἐξάπτειν νεκρῷ.

Ἑκάβη

Ὦ τέκνον, οὐχ ἵπποισι νικήσαντά σε
οὐδ’ ἅλικας τόξοισιν, οὓς Φρύγες νόμους
τιμῶσιν, οὐκ ἐς πλησμονὰς θηρωμένη,
μήτηρ πατρός σοι προστίθησ’ ἀγάλματα
τῶν σῶν ποτ’ ὄντων· νῦν δέ σ’ ἡ θεοστυγὴς
ἀφείλεθ’ Ἑλένη, πρὸς δὲ καὶ ψυχὴν σέθεν
ἔκτεινε καὶ πάντ’ οἶκον ἐξαπώλεσεν.

Χορός

Ἒ ἔ, φρενῶν
ἔθιγες ἔθιγες· ὦ μέγας ἐμοί ποτ᾽ ἂν
[1217β] ἀνάκτωρ πόλεως.

Ἑκάβη

Ἃ δ᾽ ἐν γάμοισι χρῆν σε προσθέσθαι χροὶ¨
Ἀσιατίδων γήμαντα τὴν ὑπερτάτην,
[1220] Φρύγια πέπλων ἀγάλματ᾽ ἐξάπτω χροός.
Σύ τ᾽, ὦ ποτ᾽ οὖσα καλλίνικε, μυρίων
μῆτερ τροπαίων, Ἕκτορος φίλον σάκος,
στεφανοῦ· θανῇ γὰρ οὐ θανοῦσα σὺν νεκρῷ·
ἐπεὶ σὲ πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἢ τὰ τοῦ σοφοῦ
[1225] κακοῦ τ᾽ Ὀδυσσέως ἄξιον τιμᾶν ὅπλα.

Χορός

Αἰαῖ αἰαῖ· πικρὸν ὄδυρμα . . .
[1228] γαῖά σ᾽ ὦ τέκνον δέξεται.
Στέναζε, μᾶτερ,

Ἑκάβη

Αἰαῖ.

Χορός

[1230] Νεκρῶν ἴακχον.

Ἑκάβη

Οἴμοι μοι.

Χορός

Οἴμοι δῆτα σῶν ἀλάστων κακῶν.

Ἑκάβη

Τελαμῶσιν ἕλκη τὰ μὲν ἐγώ σ’ ἰάσομαι,
τλήμων ἰατρός, ὄνομ’ ἔχουσα, τἄργα δ’ οὔ·
τὰ δ’ ἐν νεκροῖσι φροντιεῖ πατὴρ σέθεν.

Χορός

[1235] Ἄρασσ’ ἄρασσε κρᾶτα
πιτύλους διδοῦσα χειρός,
ἰώ μοί μοι.

Ἑκάβη

Ὦ φίλταται γυναῖκες . . .

Χορός

Ἑκάβη, σὰς ἔνεπε· τίνα θροεῖς αὐδάν;

Ἑκάβη

[1240] Οὐκ ἦν ἄρ’ ἐν θεοῖσι πλὴν οὐμοὶ πόνοι
Τροία τε πόλεων ἔκκριτον μισουμένη,
μάτην δ’ ἐβουθυτοῦμεν. Εἰ δὲ μὴ θεὸς
ἔστρεψε τἄνω περιβαλὼν κάτω χθονός,
ἀφανεῖς ἂν ὄντες οὐκ ἂν ὑμνήθημεν ἂν
[1245] μούσαις ἀοιδὰς δόντες ὑστέρων βροτῶν.
Χωρεῖτε, θάπτετ’ ἀθλίῳ τύμβῳ νεκρόν·
ἔχει γὰρ οἷα δεῖ γε νερτέρων στέφη.
Δοκῶ δὲ τοῖς θανοῦσι διαφέρειν βραχύ,
εἰ πλουσίων τις τεύξεται κτερισμάτων·
[1250] κενὸν δὲ γαύρωμ’ ἐστὶ τῶν ζώντων τόδε.

Χορός

Ἰὼ ἰώ·
μελέα μήτηρ, ἣ τὰς μεγάλας
ἐλπίδας ἐν σοὶ κατέκναψε βίου.

Μέγα δ’ ὀλβισθεὶς ὡς ἐκ πατέρων
ἀγαθῶν ἐγένου,
[1255] δεινῷ θανάτῳ διόλωλας.
Ἔα ἔα·
[1256β] τίνας Ἰλιάσιν ταῖσδ’ ἐν κορυφαῖς
λεύσσω φλογέας δαλοῖσι χέρας
διερέσσοντας; Μέλλει Τροίᾳ
καινόν τι κακὸν προσέσεσθαι.

Ταλθύβιος

[1260] Αὐδῶ λοχαγοῖς, οἳ τέταχθ’ ἐμπιμπράναι
Πριάμου τόδ’ ἄστυ, μηκέτ’ ἀργοῦσαν φλόγα
ἐν χειρὶ σῴζειν, ἀλλὰ πῦρ ἐνιέναι,
ὡς ἂν κατασκάψαντες Ἰλίου πόλιν
στελλώμεθ’ οἴκαδ’ ἄσμενοι Τροίας ἄπο.
[1265] Ὑμεῖς δ’, ἵν’ αὐτὸς λόγος ἔχῃ μορφὰς δύο,
χωρεῖτε, Τρώων παῖδες, ὀρθίαν ὅταν
σάλπιγγος ἠχὼ δῶσιν ἀρχηγοὶ στρατοῦ,
πρὸς ναῦς Ἀχαιῶν, ὡς ἀποστέλλησθε γῆς.
Σύ τ’, ὦ γεραιὰ δυστυχεστάτη γύναι,
[1270] ἕπου. Μεθήκουσίν σ’ Ὀδυσσέως πάρα
οἵδ’, ᾧ σε δούλην κλῆρος ἐκπέμπει πάτρας.

Ἑκάβη

[1272] Οἵ ‘γὼ τάλαινα· τοῦτο δὴ τὸ λοίσθιον
καὶ τέρμα πάντων τῶν ἐμῶν ἤδη κακῶν·
ἔξειμι πατρίδος, πόλις ὑφάπτεται πυρί.
[1275] Ἀλλ’, ὦ γεραιὲ πούς, ἐπίσπευσον μόλις,
ὡς ἀσπάσωμαι τὴν ταλαίπωρον πόλιν.
Ὦ μεγάλα δή ποτ’ ἀμπνέουσ’ ἐν βαρβάροις
Τροία, τὸ κλεινὸν ὄνομ’ ἀφαιρήσῃ τάχα.
Πιμπρᾶσί σ’, ἡμᾶς δ’ ἐξάγουσ’ ἤδη χθονὸς
[1280] δούλας· ἰὼ θεοί. Καὶ τί τοὺς θεοὺς καλῶ;
Καὶ πρὶν γὰρ οὐκ ἤκουσαν ἀνακαλούμενοι.
Φέρ’ ἐς πυρὰν δράμωμεν· ὡς κάλλιστά μοι
σὺν τῇδε πατρίδι κατθανεῖν πυρουμένῃ.

Ταλθύβιος

Ἐνθουσιᾷς, δύστηνε, τοῖς σαυτῆς κακοῖς.
Ἀλλ᾽ ἄγετε, μὴ φείδεσθ᾽· Ὀδυσσέως δὲ χρὴ
ἐς χεῖρα δοῦναι τήνδε καὶ πέμπειν γέρας.

Ἑκάβη

Ὀττοτοτοτοτοῖ.
Κρόνιε, πρύτανι Φρύγιε, γενέτα
πάτερ, ἀνάξια τᾶς Δαρδάνου
γονᾶς τάδ᾽ οἷα πάσχομεν δέδορκας;

Χορός

Δέδορκεν, ἁ δὲ μεγαλόπολις
ἄπολις ὄλωλεν οὐδ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἔστι Τροία.

Ἑκάβη

Ὀττοτοτοτοτοῖ.
Λέλαμπεν Ἴλιος, Περ-
γάμων τε πυρὶ καταίθεται τέραμνα
καὶ πόλις ἄκρα τε τειχέων.

Χορός

Πτέρυγι δὲ καπνὸς ὥς τις οὐ-
ρανίᾳ πεσοῦσα δορὶ καταφθίνει γᾶ.
Μαλερὰ μέλαθρα πυρὶ κατάδρομα
δαΐ̈ῳ τε λόγχᾳ.

Ἑκάβη

Ἴὼ γᾶ τρόφιμε τῶν ἐμῶν τέκνων.

Χορός

Ἔ ἔ.

Ἑκάβη

Ὦ τέκνα, κλύετε, μάθετε ματρὸς αὐδάν.

Χορός

Ἰαλέμῳ τοὺς θανόντας ἀπύεις.

Ἑκάβη

[1305] Γεραιά γ’ ἐς πέδον τιθεῖσα μέλεα καὶ
χερσὶ γαῖαν κτυποῦσα δισσαῖς.

Χορός

Διάδοχά σοι γόνυ τίθημι γαίᾳ
τοὺς ἐμοὺς καλοῦσα νέρθεν
ἀθλίους ἀκοίτας.

Ἑκάβη

[1310] Ἀγόμεθα φερόμεθ’ . . .

Χορός

Ἄλγος ἄλγος βοᾷς.

Ἑκάβη

Δούλειον ὑπὸ μέλαθρον.

Χορός

Ἐκ πάτρας γ’ ἐμᾶς.

Ἑκάβη

Ἰώ.
Πρίαμε Πρίαμε, σὺ μὲν ὀλόμενος

ἄταφος ἄφιλος
ἄτας ἐμᾶς ἄιστος εἶ.

Χορός

Μέλας γὰρ ὅσσε κατεκάλυψε
θάνατος ὅσιος ἀνοσίαις σφαγαῖσιν.

Ἑκάβη

Ἰὼ θεῶν μέλαθρα καὶ πόλις φίλα,

Χορός

Ἔ ἔ.

Ἑκάβη

Τὰν φόνιον ἔχετε φλόγα δορός τε λόγχαν.

Χορός

Τάχ' ἐς φίλαν γᾶν πεσεῖσθ' ἀνώνυμοι.

Ἑκάβη

Κόνις δ' ἴσα καπνῷ πτέρυγι πρὸς αἰθέρα
ᾖστον οἴκων ἐμῶν με θήσει.

Χορός

Ὄνομα δὲ γᾶς ἀφανὲς εἶσιν· ἄλλᾳ δ'
ἄλλο φροῦδον, οὐδ' ἔτ' ἔστιν
ἁ τάλαινα Τροία.

Ἑκάβη

Ἐμάθετ', ἐκλύετε;

Χορός

Περγάμων <γε> κτύπον.

Ἑκάβη

Ἔνοσις ἅπασαν ἔνοσις . . .

Χορός

Ἐπικλύσει πόλιν.

Ἑκάβη

Ἰώ·
τρομερὰ μέλεα, φέρετ᾽ ἐμὸν ἴχνος·
ἴτ᾽ ἐπί, τάλανα,
[1330] δούλειον ἀμέραν βίου.

Χορός

Ἰὼ τάλαινα πόλις· ὅμως δὲ
πρόφερε πόδα σὸν ἐπὶ πλάτας Ἀχαιῶν.

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS

Ἰφιγένεια

Πέλοψ ὁ Ταντάλειος ἐς Πῖσαν μολὼν
θοαῖσιν ἵπποις Οἰνομάου γαμεῖ κόρην,
ἐξ ἧς Ἀτρεὺς ἔβλαστεν· Ἀτρέως δὲ παῖς
Μενέλαος Ἀγαμέμνων τε· τοῦ δ᾽ ἔφυν ἐγώ
τῆς Τυνδαρείας θυγατρὸς Ἰφιγένεια παῖς,
ἣν ἀμφὶ δίναις ἃς θάμ᾽ Εὔριπος πυκναῖς
αὔραις ἑλίσσων κυανέαν ἅλα στρέφει,
ἔσφαξεν Ἑλένης οὕνεχ᾽, ὡς δοκεῖ, πατὴρ
Ἀρτέμιδι κλειναῖς ἐν πτυχαῖσιν Αὐλίδος.
Ἐνταῦθα γὰρ δὴ χιλίων ναῶν στόλον
Ἑλληνικὸν συνήγαγ᾽ Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ,
τὸν καλλίνικον στέφανον Ἰλίου θέλων
λαβεῖν Ἀχαιοῖς τούς θ᾽ ὑβρισθέντας γάμους
Ἑλένης μετελθεῖν, Μενέλεῳ χάριν φέρων.
Δεινῆς δ᾽ ἀπλοίας πνευμάτων τε τυγχάνων,
ἐς ἔμπυρ᾽ ἦλθε, καὶ λέγει Κάλχας τάδε·
ὦ τῆσδ᾽ ἀνάσσων Ἑλλάδος στρατηγίας,
Ἀγάμεμνον, οὐ μὴ ναῦς ἀφορμίσῃ χθονός,
πρὶν ἂν κόρην σὴν Ἰφιγένειαν Ἄρτεμις
λάβῃ σφαγεῖσαν· ὅ τι γὰρ ἐνιαυτὸς τέκοι
κάλλιστον, ηὔξω φωσφόρῳ θύσειν θεᾷ.
Παῖδ᾽ οὖν ἐν οἴκοις σὴ Κλυταιμήστρα δάμαρ
τίκτει — τὸ καλλιστεῖον εἰς ἔμ᾽ ἀναφέρων —
ἣν χρή σε θῦσαι. Καί μ᾽ Ὀδυσσέως τέχναις
μητρὸς παρείλοντ᾽ ἐπὶ γάμοις Ἀχιλλέως.
Ἐλθοῦσα δ᾽ Αὐλίδ᾽ ἡ τάλαιν᾽ ὑπὲρ πυρᾶς
μεταρσία ληφθεῖσ᾽ ἐκαινόμην ξίφει·
ἀλλ᾽ ἐξέκλεψεν ἔλαφον ἀντιδοῦσά μου
Ἄρτεμις Ἀχαιοῖς, διὰ δὲ λαμπρὸν αἰθέρα
πέμψασά μ᾽ ἐς τήνδ᾽ ᾤκισεν Ταύρων χθόνα,
οὗ γῆς ἀνάσσει βαρβάροισι βάρβαρος
Θόας, ὃς ὠκὺν πόδα τιθεὶς ἴσον πτεροῖς

ἐς τοὔνομ᾽ ἦλθε τόδε ποδωκείας χάριν.
Ναοῖσι δ᾽ ἐν τοῖσδ᾽ ἱερέαν τίθησί με·
ὅθεν νόμοισι τοῖσιν ἥδεται θεὰ
Ἄρτεμις, ἑορτῆς, τοὔνομ᾽ ἧς καλὸν μόνον —
τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλα σιγῶ, τὴν θεὸν φοβουμένη —
[θύω γὰρ ὄντος τοῦ νόμου καὶ πρὶν πόλει,
ὃς ἂν κατέλθῃ τήνδε γῆν Ἕλλην ἀνήρ.]
Κατάρχομαι μέν, σφάγια δ᾽ ἄλλοισιν μέλει
ἄρρητ᾽ ἔσωθεν τῶνδ᾽ ἀνακτόρων θεᾶς.
Ἃ καινὰ δ᾽ ἥκει νὺξ φέρουσα φάσματα,
λέξω πρὸς αἰθέρ᾽, εἴ τι δὴ τόδ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἄκος.
Ἔδοξ᾽ ἐν ὕπνῳ τῆσδ᾽ ἀπαλλαχθεῖσα γῆς
οἰκεῖν ἐν Ἄργει, παρθένοισι δ᾽ ἐν μέσαις
εὕδειν, χθονὸς δὲ νῶτα σεισθῆναι σάλῳ,
φεύγειν δὲ κἄξω στᾶσα θριγκὸν εἰσιδεῖν
δόμων πίτνοντα, πᾶν δ᾽ ἐρείψιμον στέγος
βεβλημένον πρὸς οὖδας ἐξ ἄκρων σταθμῶν.
Μόνος λελεῖφθαι στῦλος εἷς ἔδοξέ μοι
δόμων πατρῴων, ἐκ δ᾽ ἐπικράνων κόμας
ξανθὰς καθεῖναι, φθέγμα δ᾽ ἀνθρώπου λαβεῖν,
κἀγὼ τέχνην τήνδ᾽ ἣν ἔχω ξενοκτόνον
τιμῶσ᾽ ὑδραίνειν αὐτὸν ὡς θανούμενον,
κλαίουσα. Τοὔναρ δ᾽ ὧδε συμβάλλω τόδε·
τέθνηκ᾽ Ὀρέστης, οὗ κατηρξάμην ἐγώ.
Στῦλοι γὰρ οἴκων παῖδές εἰσιν ἄρσενες·
θνῄσκουσι δ᾽ οὓς ἂν χέρνιβες βάλωσ᾽ ἐμαί.
[Οὐδ᾽ αὖ συνάψαι τοὔναρ ἐς φίλους ἔχω·
Στροφίῳ γὰρ οὐκ ἦν παῖς, ὅτ᾽ ὠλλύμην ἐγώ.]
Νῦν οὖν ἀδελφῷ βούλομαι δοῦναι χοὰς
παροῦσ᾽ ἀπόντι — ταῦτα γὰρ δυναίμεθ᾽ ἄν —
σὺν προσπόλοισιν, ἃς ἔδωχ᾽ ἡμῖν ἄναξ
Ἑλληνίδας γυναῖκας. Ἀλλ᾽ ἐξ αἰτίας
οὔπω τίνος πάρεισιν; Εἶμ᾽ ἔσω δόμων
ἐν οἷσι ναίω τῶνδ᾽ ἀνακτόρων θεᾶς.

Ὀρέστης

Ὅρα, φυλάσσου μή τις ἐν στίβῳ βροτῶν.

Πυλάδης

Ὁρῶ, σκοποῦμαι δ᾽ ὄμμα πανταχῆ στρέφων.

Ὀρέστης

Πυλάδη, δοκεῖ σοι μέλαθρα ταῦτ᾽ εἶναι θεᾶς
ἔνθ᾽ Ἀργόθεν ναῦν ποντίαν ἐστείλαμεν;

Πυλάδης

Ἔμοιγ᾽, Ὀρέστα· σοὶ δὲ συνδοκεῖν χρεών.

Ὀρέστης

Καὶ βωμός, Ἕλλην οὗ καταστάζει φόνος;

Πυλάδης

Ἐξ αἱμάτων γοῦν ξάνθ᾽ ἔχει τριχώματα.

Ὀρέστης

Θριγκοῖς δ᾽ ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῖς σκῦλ᾽ ὁρᾷς ἠρτημένα;

Πυλάδης

Τῶν κατθανόντων γ᾽ ἀκροθίνια ξένων.
Ἀλλ᾽ ἐγκυκλοῦντ᾽ ὀφθαλμὸν εὖ σκοπεῖν χρεών.

Ὀρέστης

Ὦ Φοῖβε, ποῖ μ᾽ αὖ τήνδ᾽ ἐς ἄρκυν ἤγαγες
χρήσας, ἐπειδὴ πατρὸς αἷμ᾽ ἐτεισάμην,
μητέρα κατακτάς, διαδοχαῖς δ᾽ Ἐρινύων
ἠλαυνόμεσθα φυγάδες ἕξεδροι χθονὸς
δρόμους τε πολλοὺς ἐξέπλησα καμπίμους,

ἐλθὼν δέ σ᾽ ἠρώτησα πῶς τροχηλάτου
μανίας ἂν ἔλθοιμ᾽ ἐς τέλος πόνων τ᾽ ἐμῶν,
οὓς ἐξεμόχθουν περιπολῶν καθ᾽ Ἑλλάδα —
σὺ δ᾽ εἶπας ἐλθεῖν Ταυρικῆς μ᾽ ὅρους χθονός,
ἔνθ᾽ Ἄρτεμίς σοι σύγγονος βωμοὺς ἔχοι,
λαβεῖν τ᾽ ἄγαλμα θεᾶς, ὅ φασιν ἐνθάδε
ἐς τούσδε ναοὺς οὐρανοῦ πεσεῖν ἄπο·
λαβόντα δ᾽ ἢ τέχναισιν ἢ τύχῃ τινί,
κίνδυνον ἐκπλήσαντ᾽, Ἀθηναίων χθονὶ
δοῦναι — τὸ δ᾽ ἐνθένδ᾽ οὐδὲν ἐρρήθη πέρα —
καὶ ταῦτα δράσαντ᾽ ἀμπνοὰς ἕξειν πόνων.
Ἥκω δὲ πεισθεὶς σοῖς λόγοισιν ἐνθάδε
ἄγνωστον ἐς γῆν, ἄξενον. Σὲ δ᾽ ἱστορῶ,
Πυλάδη — σὺ γάρ μοι τοῦδε συλλήπτωρ πόνου —
τί δρῶμεν; Ἀμφίβληστρα γὰρ τοίχων ὁρᾷς
ὑψηλά· πότερα δωμάτων προσαμβάσεις
ἐκβησόμεσθα; Πῶς ἂν οὖν λάθοιμεν ἄν;
Ἢ χαλκότευκτα κλῆθρα λύσαντες μοχλοῖς —
ὧν οὐδὲν ἴσμεν; Ἢν δ᾽ ἀνοίγοντες πύλας
ληφθῶμεν ἐσβάσεις τε μηχανώμενοι,
θανούμεθ᾽. Ἀλλὰ πρὶν θανεῖν, νεὼς ἔπι
φεύγωμεν, ᾗπερ δεῦρ᾽ ἐναυστολήσαμεν.

Πυλάδης

Φεύγειν μὲν οὐκ ἀνεκτὸν οὐδ᾽ εἰώθαμεν,
τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ δὲ χρησμὸν οὐ κακιστέον·
ναοῦ δ᾽ ἀπαλλαχθέντε κρύψωμεν δέμας
κατ᾽ ἄντρ᾽ ἃ πόντος νοτίδι διακλύζει μέλας —
νεὼς ἄπωθεν, μή τις εἰσιδὼν σκάφος
βασιλεῦσιν εἴπῃ κᾆτα ληφθῶμεν βίᾳ.
Ὅταν δὲ νυκτὸς ὄμμα λυγαίας μόλῃ,
τολμητέον τοι ξεστὸν ἐκ ναοῦ λαβεῖν
ἄγαλμα πάσας προσφέροντε μηχανάς.
Ὅρα δέ γ᾽ εἴσω τριγλύφων ὅποι κενὸν
δέμας καθεῖναι· τοὺς πόνους γὰρ ἀγαθοὶ
τολμῶσι, δειλοὶ δ᾽ εἰσὶν οὐδὲν οὐδαμοῦ.

Ὀρέστης

Οὔ τοι μακρὸν μὲν ἤλθομεν κώπῃ πόρον,
ἐκ τερμάτων δὲ νόστον ἀροῦμεν πάλιν.
Ἀλλ᾽ εὖ γὰρ εἶπας, πειστέον· χωρεῖν χρεὼν
ὅποι χθονὸς κρύψαντε λήσομεν δέμας.
Οὐ γὰρ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ γ᾽ αἴτιον γενήσεται
πεσεῖν ἄχρηστον θέσφατον· τολμητέον·
μόχθος γὰρ οὐδεὶς τοῖς νέοις σκῆψιν φέρει.

Χορός

Εὐφαμεῖτ᾽, ὦ [123]
πόντου δισσὰς συγχωρούσας
πέτρας Ἀξείνου ναίοντες.
Ὦ παῖ τᾶς Λατοῦς,
Δίκτυνν᾽ οὐρεία,
πρὸς σὰν αὐλάν, εὐστύλων
ναῶν χρυσήρεις θριγκούς,
πόδα παρθένιον ὅσιον ὁσίας
κληδούχου δούλα πέμπω,
Ἑλλάδος εὐίππου πύργους
καὶ τείχη χόρτων τ᾽ εὐδένδρων
ἐξαλλάξασ᾽ Εὐρώπαν,
πατρῴων οἴκων ἕδρας.
Ἔμολον· τί νέον; Τίνα φροντίδ᾽ ἔχεις;
Τί με πρὸς ναοὺς ἄγαγες ἄγαγες,
ὦ παῖ τοῦ τᾶς Τροίας πύργους
ἐλθόντος κλεινᾷ σὺν κώπᾳ
χιλιοναύτα
μυριοτευχοῦς Ἀτρείδα; [Τῶν κλεινῶν;]

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἰὼ δμωαί, [143]
δυσθρηνήτοις ὡς θρήνοις
ἔγκειμαι, τᾶς οὐκ εὐμούσου
μολπᾶς [βοὰν] ἀλύροις ἐλέγοις, αἰαῖ,

αἰαῖ, κηδείοις οἴκτοισιν·
αἵ μοι συμβαίνουσ᾽ ἆται,
σύγγονον ἀμὸν κατακλαιομένα
ζωᾶς, οἵαν <οἵαν> ἰδόμαν
ὄψιν ὀνείρων
νυκτός, τᾶς ἐξῆλθ᾽ ὄρφνα.
Ὀλόμαν ὀλόμαν·
οὐκ εἴσ᾽ οἶκοι πατρῷοι·
οἴμοι <μοι> φροῦδος γέννα.
Φεῦ φεῦ τῶν Ἄργει μόχθων.
Ἰὼ δαῖμον,
μόνον ὅς με κασίγνητον συλᾷς
Ἀίδᾳ πέμψας, ᾧ τάσδε χοὰς
μέλλω κρατῆρά τε τὸν φθιμένων
ὑδραίνειν γαίας ἐν νώτοις
πηγάς τ᾽ οὐρείων ἐκ μόσχων
Βάκχου τ᾽ οἰνηρὰς λοιβὰς
ξουθᾶν τε πόνημα μελισσᾶν,
ἃ νεκροῖς θελκτήρια κεῖται.
Ἀλλ᾽ ἔνδος μοι πάγχρυσον
τεῦχος καὶ λοιβὰν Ἄιδα.
Ὦ κατὰ γαίας Ἀγαμεμνόνιον
θάλος, ὡς φθιμένῳ τάδε σοι πέμπω·
δέξαι δ᾽· οὐ γὰρ πρὸς τύμβον σοι
ξανθὰν χαίταν, οὐ δάκρυ᾽ οἴσω.
Τηλόσε γὰρ δὴ σᾶς ἀπενάσθην
πατρίδος καὶ ἐμᾶς, ἔνθα δοκήμασι
κεῖμαι σφαχθεῖσ᾽ ἁ τλάμων.

Χορός

Ἀντιψάλμους ᾠδὰς ὕμνων τ᾽
Ἀσιητᾶν σοι βάρβαρον ἀχὰν
δεσποίνᾳ γ᾽ ἐξαυδάσω,
τὰν ἐν θρήνοισιν μοῦσαν
νέκυσι μελομέναν, τὰν ἐν μολπαῖς
Ἄιδας ὑμνεῖ δίχα παιάνων.

Οἴμοι, τῶν Ἀτρειδᾶν οἴκων·
ἔρρει φῶς σκήπτρων, οἴμοι,
πατρῴων οἴκων.
Ἦν ἐκ τῶν εὐόλβων Ἄργει
βασιλέων ἀρχά,
μόχθος δ᾽ ἐκ μόχθων ἄσσει·
δινευούσαις ἵπποισι <ῥιφαὶ
Πέλοπος> πταναῖς· ἀλλάξας δ᾽ ἐξ
ἕδρας ἱερὸν <ἱερὸν> ὄμμ᾽ αὐγᾶς
ἅλιος. Ἄλλαις δ᾽ ἄλλα προσέβα
χρυσέας ἀρνὸς μελάθροις ὀδύνα,
φόνος ἐπὶ φόνῳ, ἄχεα ἄχεσιν
ἔνθεν τῶν πρόσθεν δμαθέντων
Τανταλιδᾶν ἐκβαίνει ποινά γ᾽
εἰς οἴκους, σπεύδει δ᾽ ἀσπούδαστ᾽
ἐπὶ σοὶ δαίμων.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἐξ ἀρχᾶς μοι δυσδαίμων [203]
δαίμων τᾶς ματρὸς ζώνας
καὶ νυκτὸς κείνας· ἐξ ἀρχᾶς
λόχιαι στερρὰν παιδείαν
Μοῖραι ξυντείνουσιν θεαί,
τᾷ μναστευθείσᾳ ᾽ξ Ἑλλάνων,
ἂν πρωτόγονον θάλος ἐν θαλάμοις
Λήδας ἁ τλάμων κούρα
σφάγιον πατρῴᾳ λώβᾳ
καὶ θῦμ᾽ οὐκ εὐγάθητον
ἔτεκεν, ἔτρεφεν εὐκταίαν·
ἱππείοις δ᾽ ἐν δίφροισι
ψαμάθων Αὐλίδος ἐπέβασαν
νύμφαιον, οἴμοι, δύσνυμφον
τῷ τᾶς Νηρέως κούρας, αἰαῖ.
Νῦν δ᾽ ἀξείνου πόντου ξείνα
δυσχόρτους οἴκους ναίω,
ἄγαμος ἄτεκνος ἄπολις ἄφιλος,

οὐ τὰν Ἄργει μέλπουσ᾽ Ἥραν
οὐδ᾽ ἱστοῖς ἐν καλλιφθόγγοις
κερκίδι Παλλάδος Ἀτθίδος εἰκὼ
<καὶ> Τιτάνων ποικίλλουσ᾽, ἀλλ᾽
αἱμόρραντον δυσφόρμιγγα
ξείνων αἱμάσσουσ᾽ ἄταν βωμούς,
οἰκτράν τ᾽ αἰαζόντων αὐδὰν
οἰκτρόν τ᾽ ἐκβαλλόντων δάκρυον.
Καὶ νῦν κείνων μέν μοι λάθα,
τὸν δ᾽ Ἄργει δμαθέντα κλαίω
σύγγονον, ὃν ἔλιπον ἐπιμαστίδιον,
ἔτι βρέφος, ἔτι νέον, ἔτι θάλος
ἐν χερσὶν ματρὸς πρὸς στέρνοις τ᾽
Ἄργει σκηπτοῦχον Ὀρέσταν.

Χορός

Καὶ μὴν ὅδ᾽ ἀκτὰς ἐκλιπὼν θαλασσίους [236]
βουφορβὸς ἥκει σημανῶν τί σοι νέον.

Βουκόλος

Ἀγαμέμνονός τε καὶ Κλυταιμήστρας τέκνον,
ἄκουε καινῶν ἐξ ἐμοῦ κηρυγμάτων.

Ἰφιγένεια

Τί δ᾽ ἔστι τοῦ παρόντος ἐκπλῆσσον λόγου;

Βουκόλος

Ἥκουσιν ἐς γῆν, κυανέαν Συμπληγάδα
πλάτῃ φυγόντες, δίπτυχοι νεανίαι,
θεᾷ φίλον πρόσφαγμα καὶ θυτήριον
Ἀρτέμιδι. Χέρνιβας δὲ καὶ κατάργματα
οὐκ ἂν φθάνοις ἂν εὐτρεπῆ ποιουμένη.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ποδαποί; Τίνος γῆς σχῆμ᾽ ἔχουσιν οἱ ξένοι;

Βουκόλος

Ἕλληνες· ἓν τοῦτ᾽ οἶδα κοὐ περαιτέρω.

Ἰφιγένεια

Οὐδ᾽ ὄνομ᾽ ἀκούσας οἶσθα τῶν ξένων φράσαι;

Βουκόλος

Πυλάδης ἐκλήζεθ᾽ ἅτερος πρὸς θατέρου.

Ἰφιγένεια

Τοῦ ξυζύγου δὲ τοῦ ξένου τί τοὔνομ᾽ ἦν;

Βουκόλος

Οὐδεὶς τόδ᾽ οἶδεν· οὐ γὰρ εἰσηκούσαμεν.

Ἰφιγένεια

Πῶς δ᾽ εἶδετ᾽ αὐτοὺς κἀντυχόντες εἵλετε;

Βουκόλος

Ἄκραις ἐπὶ ῥηγμῖσιν ἀξένου πόρου —

Ἰφιγένεια

Καὶ τίς θαλάσσης βουκόλοις κοινωνία;

Βουκόλος

Βοῦς ἤλθομεν νίψοντες ἐναλίᾳ δρόσῳ.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἐκεῖσε δὴ ᾽πάνελθε, πῶς νιν εἵλετε [256]
τρόπῳ θ᾽ ὁποίῳ· τοῦτο γὰρ μαθεῖν θέλω.
Χρόνιοι γὰρ ἥκουσ᾽· οὐδέ πω βωμὸς θεᾶς
Ἑλληνικαῖσιν ἐξεφοινίχθη ῥοαῖς.

Βουκόλος

Ἐπεὶ τὸν ἐσρέοντα διὰ Συμπληγάδων [260]
βοῦς ὑλοφορβοὺς πόντον εἰσεβάλλομεν,
ἦν τις διαρρὼξ κυμάτων πολλῷ σάλῳ
κοιλωπὸς ἀγμός, πορφυρευτικαὶ στέγαι.
Ἐνταῦθα δισσοὺς εἶδέ τις νεανίας
βουφορβὸς ἡμῶν, κἀπεχώρησεν πάλιν 265
ἄκροισι δακτύλοισι πορθμεύων ἴχνος.
Ἔλεξε δ᾽· Οὐχ ὁρᾶτε; Δαίμονές τινες
θάσσουσιν οἵδε. — Θεοσεβὴς δ᾽ ἡμῶν τις ὢν
ἀνέσχε χεῖρα καὶ προσηύξατ᾽ εἰσιδών·
ὦ ποντίας παῖ Λευκοθέας, νεῶν φύλαξ, 270
δέσποτα Παλαῖμον, ἵλεως ἡμῖν γενοῦ,
εἴτ᾽ οὖν ἐπ᾽ ἀκταῖς θάσσετον Διοσκόρω,
ἢ Νηρέως ἀγάλμαθ᾽, ὃς τὸν εὐγενῆ
ἔτικτε πεντήκοντα Νηρῄδων χορόν.
Ἄλλος δέ τις μάταιος, ἀνομίᾳ θρασύς, 275
ἐγέλασεν εὐχαῖς, ναυτίλους δ᾽ ἐφθαρμένους
θάσσειν φάραγγ᾽ ἔφασκε τοῦ νόμου φόβῳ,
κλύοντας ὡς θύοιμεν ἐνθάδε ξένους.
Ἔδοξε δ᾽ ἡμῶν εὖ λέγειν τοῖς πλείοσι,
θηρᾶν τε τῇ θεῷ σφάγια τἀπιχώρια. 280
Κἀν τῷδε πέτραν ἄτερος λιπὼν ξένοιν
ἔστη κάρα τε διετίναξ᾽ ἄνω κάτω
κἀπεστέναξεν ὠλένας τρέμων ἄκρας,
μανίαις ἀλαίνων, καὶ βοᾷ κυναγὸς ὥς·
Πυλάδη, δέδορκας τήνδε; Τήνδε δ᾽ οὐχ ὁρᾷς 285
Ἅιδου δράκαιναν, ὥς με βούλεται κτανεῖν
δειναῖς ἐχίδναις εἰς ἔμ᾽ ἐστομωμένη;
Ἣ δ᾽ ἐκ χιτώνων πῦρ πνέουσα καὶ φόνον
πτεροῖς ἐρέσσει, μητέρ᾽ ἀγκάλαις ἐμὴν

ἔχουσα — πέτρινον ὄχθον, ὡς ἐπεμβάλῃ.
Οἴμοι, κτενεῖ με· ποῖ φύγω;
Παρῆν δ᾽ ὁρᾶν 291a
οὐ ταῦτα μορφῆς σχήματ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἠλλάσσετο
φθογγάς τε μόσχων καὶ κυνῶν ὑλάγματα,
ἃς φᾶσ᾽ Ἐρινῦς ἰέναι μιμήματα.
Ἡμεῖς δὲ συσταλέντες, ὡς θαμβούμενοι,
σιγῇ καθήμεθ᾽· ὃ δὲ χερὶ σπάσας ξίφος,
μόσχους ὀρούσας ἐς μέσας λέων ὅπως,
παίει σιδήρῳ λαγόνας ἐς πλευράς θ᾽ ἱείς,
δοκῶν Ἐρινῦς θεὰς ἀμύνεσθαι τάδε,
ὡς αἱματηρὸν πέλαγος ἐξανθεῖν ἁλός.
Κἀν τῷδε πᾶς τις, ὡς ὁρᾷ βουφόρβια
πίπτοντα καὶ πορθούμεν᾽, ἐξωπλίζετο,
κόχλους τε φυσῶν συλλέγων τ᾽ ἐγχωρίους·
πρὸς εὐτραφεῖς γὰρ καὶ νεανίας ξένους
φαύλους μάχεσθαι βουκόλους ἡγούμεθα.
Πολλοὶ δ᾽ ἐπληρώθημεν ἐν μακρῷ χρόνῳ.
Πίπτει δὲ μανίας πίτυλον ὁ ξένος μεθείς,
στάζων ἀφρῷ γένειον· ὡς δ᾽ ἐσείδομεν
προύργου πεσόντα, πᾶς ἀνὴρ ἔσχεν πόνον
βάλλων ἀράσσων. Ἄτερος δὲ τοῖν ξένοιν
ἀφρόν τ᾽ ἀπέψη σώματός τ᾽ ἐτημέλει
πέπλων τε προυκάλυπτεν εὐπήνους ὑφάς,
καραδοκῶν μὲν τἀπιόντα τραύματα,
φίλον δὲ θεραπείαισιν ἄνδρ᾽ εὐεργετῶν.
Ἔμφρων δ᾽ ἀνάξας ὁ ξένος πεσήματος
ἔγνω κλύδωνα πολεμίων προσκείμενον
καὶ τὴν παροῦσαν συμφορὰν αὐτοῖν πέλας,
ᾤμωξέ θ᾽· ἡμεῖς δ᾽ οὐκ ἀνίεμεν πέτροις
βάλλοντες, ἄλλος ἄλλοθεν προσκείμενοι.
Οὗ δὴ τὸ δεινὸν παρακέλευσμ᾽ ἠκούσαμεν·
Πυλάδη, θανούμεθ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ὅπως θανούμεθα
κάλλισθ᾽· ἔπου μοι, φάσγανον σπάσας χερί. —
Ὡς δ᾽ εἶδομεν δίπαλτα πολεμίων ξίφη,
φυγῇ λεπαίας ἐξεπίμπλαμεν νάπας.
Ἀλλ᾽, εἰ φύγοι τις, ἄτεροι προσκείμενοι

ἔβαλλον αὐτούς· εἰ δὲ τούσδ᾽ ὡσαίατο,
αὖθις τὸ νῦν ὑπεῖκον ἤρασσεν πέτροις.
Ἀλλ᾽ ἦν ἄπιστον· μυρίων γὰρ ἐκ χερῶν
οὐδεὶς τὰ τῆς θεοῦ θύματ᾽ εὐτύχει βαλών.
Μόλις δέ νιν τόλμῃ μὲν οὐ χειρούμεθα,
κύκλῳ δὲ περιβαλόντες ἐξεκλέψαμεν
πέτροισι χειρῶν φάσγαν᾽, ἐς δὲ γῆν γόνυ
καμάτῳ καθεῖσαν. Πρὸς δ᾽ ἄνακτα τῆσδε γῆς
κομίζομέν νιν. Ὅ δ᾽ ἐσιδὼν ὅσον τάχος
ἐς χέρνιβάς τε καὶ σφαγεῖ᾽ ἔπεμπέ σοι.
Ἦχου δὲ τοιάδ᾽, ὦ νεᾶνί, σοι ξένων
σφάγια παρεῖναι· κἂν ἀναλίσκῃς ξένους
τοιούσδε, τὸν σὸν Ἕλλὰς ἀποτείσει φόνον
δίκας τίνουσα τῆς ἐν Αὐλίδι σφαγῆς.

Χορός

Θαυμάστ᾽ ἔλεξας τὸν μανένθ᾽, ὅστις ποτὲ [340]
Ἕλληνος ἐκ γῆς πόντον ἦλθεν ἄξενον.

Ἰφιγένεια

Εἶέν· σὺ μὲν κόμιζε τοὺς ξένους μολών, [342]
τὰ δ᾽ ἐνθάδ᾽ ἡμεῖς ὅσια φροντιούμεθα —
ὦ καρδία τάλαινα, πρὶν μὲν ἐς ξένους
γαληνὸς ἦσθα καὶ φιλοικτίρμων ἀεί,
ἐς θοὐμόφυλον ἀναμετρουμένη δάκρυ,
Ἕλληνας ἄνδρας ἡνίκ᾽ ἐς χέρας λάβοις.
Νῦν δ᾽ ἐξ ὀνείρων οἷσιν ἠγριώμεθα,
δοκοῦσ᾽ Ὀρέστην μηκέθ᾽ ἥλιον βλέπειν,
δύσνουν με λήψεσθ᾽, οἵτινές ποθ᾽ ἥκετε.
Καὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἦν ἀληθές, ᾐσθόμην, φίλαι·
οἱ δυστυχεῖς γὰρ τοῖσι δυστυχεστέροις
αὐτοὶ κακῶς πράξαντες οὐ φρονοῦσιν εὖ.
Ἀλλ᾽ οὔτε πνεῦμα Διόθεν ἦλθε πώποτε,
οὐ πορθμίς, ἥτις διὰ πέτρας Συμπληγάδας
Ἑλένην ἀπήγαγ᾽ ἐνθάδ᾽, ἥ μ᾽ ἀπώλεσεν,
Μενέλεών θ᾽, ἵν᾽ αὐτοὺς ἀντετιμωρησάμην,

τὴν ἐνθάδ᾽ Αὖλιν ἀντιθεῖσα τῆς ἐκεῖ,
οὗ μ᾽ ὥστε μόσχον Δαναΐδαι χειρούμενοι
ἔσφαζον, ἱερεὺς δ᾽ ἦν ὁ γεννήσας πατήρ.
Οἴμοι — κακῶν γὰρ τῶν τότ᾽ οὐκ ἀμνημονῶ —
ὅσας γενείου χεῖρας ἐξηκόντισα
γονάτων τε τοῦ τεκόντος, ἐξαρτωμένη,
λέγουσα τοιάδ᾽· ὦ πάτερ, νυμφεύομαι
νυμφεύματ᾽ αἰσχρὰ πρὸς σέθεν· μήτηρ δ᾽ ἐμὲ
σέθεν κατακτείνοντος Ἀργεῖαί τε νῦν
ὑμνοῦσιν ὑμεναίοισιν, αὐλεῖται δὲ πᾶν
μέλαθρον· ἡμεῖς δ᾽ ὀλλύμεσθα πρὸς σέθεν.
Ἅιδης Ἀχιλλεὺς ἦν ἄρ᾽, οὐχ ὁ Πηλέως,
ὅν μοι προσείσας πόσιν, ἐν ἁρμάτων ὄχοις
ἐς αἱματηρὸν γάμον ἐπόρθμευσας δόλῳ.
Ἐγὼ δὲ λεπτῶν ὄμμα διὰ καλυμμάτων
ἔχουσ᾽, ἀδελφόν τ᾽ οὐκ ἀνειλόμην χεροῖν,
— ὃς νῦν ὄλωλεν — οὐ κασιγνήτῃ στόμα
συνῆψ᾽ ὑπ᾽ αἰδοῦς, ὡς ἰοῦσ᾽ ἐς Πηλέως
μέλαθρα· πολλὰ δ᾽ ἀπεθέμην ἀσπάσματα
ἐς αὖθις, ὡς ἥξουσ᾽ ἐς Ἄργος αὖ πάλιν.
Ὦ τλῆμον, εἰ τέθνηκας, ἐξ οἵων καλῶν
ἔρρεις, Ὀρέστα, καὶ πατρὸς ζηλωμάτων —
τὰ τῆς θεοῦ δὲ μέμφομαι σοφίσματα,
ἥτις βροτῶν μὲν ἦν τις ἅψηται φόνου,
ἢ καὶ λοχείας ἢ νεκροῦ θίγῃ χεροῖν,
βωμῶν ἀπείργει, μυσαρὸν ὡς ἡγουμένη,
αὐτὴ δὲ θυσίαις ἥδεται βροτοκτόνοις.
Οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως ἔτεκεν ἂν ἡ Διὸς δάμαρ
Λητὼ τοσαύτην ἀμαθίαν. Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν
τὰ Ταντάλου θεοῖσιν ἑστιάματα
ἄπιστα κρίνω, παιδὸς ἡσθῆναι βορᾷ,
τοὺς δ᾽ ἐνθάδ᾽, αὐτοὺς ὄντας ἀνθρωποκτόνους,
ἐς τὴν θεὸν τὸ φαῦλον ἀναφέρειν δοκῶ·
οὐδένα γὰρ οἶμαι δαιμόνων εἶναι κακόν.

Χορός

Κυάνεαι κυάνεαι [392]
σύνοδοι θαλάσσας, ἵν᾽ οἶ-
στρος ὁ πετόμενος Ἀργόθεν ἄ-
ξενον ἐπ᾽ οἶδμα διεπέρασεν . . . 395
Ἀσιήτιδα γαῖαν
Εὐρώπας διαμείψας.
Τίνες ποτ᾽ ἄρα τὸν εὔυδρον δονακόχλοα 399
λιπόντες Εὐρώταν ἢ 400
ῥεύματα σεμνὰ Δίρκας
ἔβασαν ἔβασαν ἄμεικτον αἶαν, ἔνθα κούρᾳ
δίᾳ τέγγει
βωμοὺς καὶ περικίονας 405
ναοὺς αἷμα βρότειον;
Ἦ ῥοθίοις εἰλατίνας
δικρότοισι κώπας ἔπλευ-
σαν ἐπὶ πόντια κύματα, νά-
ιον ὄχημα λινοπόροις αὔραις, 410
φιλόπλουτον ἅμιλλαν
αὔξοντες μελάθροισιν;
Φίλα γὰρ ἐλπίς γ᾽, ἐπί τε πήμασιν βροτῶν 410
ἄπληστος ἀνθρώποις, ὅλ- 415
βου βάρος οἳ φέρονται
πλάνητες ἐπ᾽ οἶδμα πόλεις τε βαρβάρους περῶντες,
κοινᾷ δόξᾳ·
γνώμα δ᾽ οἷς μὲν ἄκαιρος ὅλ-
βου, τοῖς δ᾽ ἐς μέσον ἥκει. 420
Πῶς πέτρας τὰς συνδρομάδας,
πῶς Φινεϊδᾶν ἀΰ-
πνους ἀκτὰς ἐπέρασαν
παρ᾽ ἅλιον
αἰγιαλὸν ἐπ᾽ Ἀμφιτρί- 425
τας ῥοθίῳ δραμόντες,
ὅπου πεντήκοντα κορᾶν
Νηρήδων . . . . χοροὶ
μέλπουσιν ἐγκύκλιοι,
πλησιστίοισι πνοαῖς 430
συριζόντων κατὰ πρύμναν

εὐναίων πηδαλίων
αὔραις <σὺν> νοτίαις
ἢ πνεύμασι Ζεφύρου,
τὰν πολυόρνιθον ἐπ᾽ αἶ-
αν, λευκὰν ἀκτάν, Ἀχιλῆ-
ος δρόμους καλλισταδίους,
ἄξεινον κατὰ πόντον;
Εἴθ᾽ εὐχαῖσιν δεσποσύνοις
Λήδας Ἑλένα φίλα
παῖς ἐλθοῦσα τύχοι τὰν
Τρῳάδα λι-
ποῦσα πόλιν, ἵν᾽ ἀμφὶ χαί-
τᾳ δρόσον αἱματηρὰν
ἑλιχθεῖσα λαιμοτόμῳ
δεσποίνας χειρὶ θάνοι
ποινὰς δοῦσ᾽ ἀντιπάλους.
Ἀδίσταν δ᾽ ἀγγελίαν
δεξαίμεσθ᾽, Ἑλλάδος ἐκ γᾶς
πλωτήρων εἴ τις ἔβα,
δουλείας ἐμέθεν
δειλαίας παυσίπονος·
κἀν γὰρ ὀνείροισι συνεί-
ην δόμοις πόλει τε πατρῴ-
ᾳ, τερπνῶν ὕπνων ἀπόλαυ-
σιν, κοινὰν χάριν ὄλβου.
Ἀλλ᾽ οἵδε χέρας δεσμοῖς δίδυμοι
συνερεισθέντες χωροῦσι, νέον
πρόσφαγμα θεᾶς· σιγᾶτε, φίλαι.
Τὰ γὰρ Ἑλλήνων ἀκροθίνια δὴ
ναοῖσι πέλας τάδε βαίνει·
οὐδ᾽ ἀγγελίας ψευδεῖς ἔλακεν
βουφορβὸς ἀνήρ.
Ὦ πότνι᾽, εἴ σοι τάδ᾽ ἀρεσκόντως
πόλις ἥδε τελεῖ, δέξαι θυσίας,
ἃς ὁ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν νόμος οὐχ ὁσίας
[Ἕλλησι διδοὺς] ἀναφαίνει.

Ἰφιγένεια

Εἶέν· [466]
τὰ τῆς θεοῦ μὲν πρῶτον ὡς καλῶς ἔχῃ
φροντιστέον μοι. Μέθετε τῶν ξένων χέρας,
ὡς ὄντες ἱεροὶ μηκέτ᾽ ὦσι δέσμιοι.
Ναοῦ δ᾽ ἔσω στείχοντες εὐτρεπίζετε 470
ἃ χρὴ ᾽πὶ τοῖς παροῦσι καὶ νομίζεται.
Φεῦ·
τίς ἆρα μήτηρ ἡ τεκοῦσ᾽ ὑμᾶς ποτε
πατήρ τ᾽; Ἀδελφή τ᾽, εἰ γεγῶσα τυγχάνει . . .
Οἵων στερεῖσα διπτύχων νεανιῶν
ἀνάδελφος ἔσται. — Τὰς τύχας τίς οἶδ᾽ ὅτῳ 475
τοιαίδ᾽ ἔσονται; Πάντα γὰρ τὰ τῶν θεῶν
ἐς ἀφανὲς ἕρπει, κοὐδὲν οἶδ᾽ οὐδεὶς κακὸν
<*>
ἡ γὰρ τύχη παρήγαγ᾽ ἐς τὸ δυσμαθές.
Πόθεν ποθ᾽ ἥκετ᾽, ὦ ταλαίπωροι ξένοι;
Ὡς διὰ μακροῦ μὲν τήνδ᾽ ἐπλεύσατε χθόνα, 480
μακρὸν δ᾽ ἀπ᾽ οἴκων χρόνον ἔσεσθ᾽ ἀεὶ κάτω.

Ὀρέστης

Τί ταῦτ᾽ ὀδύρῃ, κἀπὶ τοῖς μέλλουσι νῷν [483]
κακοῖσι λυπεῖς, ἥτις εἶ ποτ᾽, ὦ γύναι;
Οὗτοι νομίζω σοφόν, ὃς ἂν μέλλων κτενεῖν
οἴκτῳ τὸ δεῖμα τοὐλέθρου νικᾶν θέλῃ. 485
Οὐχ ὅστις Ἅιδην ἐγγὺς ὄντ᾽ οἰκτίζεται
σωτηρίας ἄνελπις· ὡς δύ᾽ ἐξ ἑνὸς
κακὼ συνάπτει, μωρίαν τ᾽ ὀφλισκάνει
θνῄσκει θ᾽ ὁμοίως· τὴν τύχην δ᾽ ἐᾶν χρεών.
Ἡμᾶς δὲ μὴ θρήνει σύ· τὰς γὰρ ἐνθάδε 490
θυσίας ἐπιστάμεσθα καὶ γιγνώσκομεν.

Ἰφιγένεια

Πότερος ἄρ᾽ ὑμῶν ἐνθάδ᾽ ὠνομασμένος [492]
Πυλάδης κέκληται; Τόδε μαθεῖν πρῶτον θέλω.

Ὀρέστης

Ὅδ᾽, εἴ τι δή σοι τοῦτ᾽ ἐν ἡδονῇ μαθεῖν.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ποίας πολίτης πατρίδος Ἕλληνος γεγώς;

Ὀρέστης

Τί δ᾽ ἂν μαθοῦσα τόδε πλέον λάβοις, γύναι;

Ἰφιγένεια

Πότερον ἀδελφῶ μητρός ἐστον ἐκ μιᾶς;

Ὀρέστης

Φιλότητί γ᾽· ἐσμὲν δ᾽ οὐ κασιγνήτω, γύναι.

Ἰφιγένεια

Σοὶ δ᾽ ὄνομα ποῖον ἔθεθ᾽ ὁ γεννήσας πατήρ;

Ὀρέστης

Τὸ μὲν δίκαιον Δυστυχὴς καλοίμεθ᾽ ἄν.

Ἰφιγένεια

Οὐ τοῦτ᾽ ἐρωτῶ· τοῦτο μὲν δὸς τῇ τύχῃ.

Ὀρέστης

Ἀνώνυμοι θανόντες οὐ γελῴμεθ᾽ ἄν.

Ἰφιγένεια

Τί δὲ φθονεῖς τοῦτο; Ἦ φρονεῖς οὕτω μέγα;

Ὀρέστης

Τὸ σῶμα θύσεις τοὐμόν, οὐχὶ τοὔνομα.

Ἰφιγένεια

Οὐδ᾽ ἂν πόλιν φράσειας ἥτις ἐστί σοι; [505]

Ὀρέστης

Ζητεῖς γὰρ οὐδὲν κέρδος, ὡς θανουμένῳ.

Ἰφιγένεια

Χάριν δὲ δοῦναι τήνδε κωλύει τί σε;

Ὀρέστης

Τὸ κλεινὸν Ἄργος πατρίδ᾽ ἐμὴν ἐπεύχομαι.

Ἰφιγένεια

Πρὸς θεῶν, ἀληθῶς, ὦ ξέν᾽, εἶ κεῖθεν γεγώς;

Ὀρέστης

Ἐκ τῶν Μυκηνῶν <γ᾽>, αἵ ποτ᾽ ἦσαν ὄλβιαι. 510

Ἰφιγένεια

Φυγὰς <δ᾽> ἀπῆρας πατρίδος, ἢ ποίᾳ τύχῃ;

Ὀρέστης

Φεύγω τρόπον γε δή τιν᾽ οὐχ ἑκὼν ἑκών.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἆρ᾽ ἄν τί μοι φράσειας ὧν ἐγὼ θέλω;

Ὀρέστης

Ὡς ἐν παρέργῳ τῆς ἐμῆς δυσπραξίας.

Ἰφιγένεια

Καὶ μὴν ποθεινός γ᾽ ἦλθες ἐξ Ἄργους μολών.

Ὀρέστης

Οὔκουν ἐμαυτῷ γ᾽· εἰ δὲ σοί, σὺ τοῦτ᾽ ἔρα.

Ἰφιγένεια

Τροίαν ἴσως οἶσθ᾽, ἧς ἁπανταχοῦ λόγος.

Ὀρέστης

Ὡς μήποτ᾽ ὤφελόν γε μηδ᾽ ἰδὼν ὄναρ.

Ἰφιγένεια

Φασίν νιν οὐκέτ᾽ οὖσαν οἴχεσθαι δορί.

Ὀρέστης

Ἔστιν γὰρ οὕτως οὐδ᾽ ἄκραντ᾽ ἠκούσατε.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἑλένη δ᾽ ἀφῖκται δῶμα Μενέλεω πάλιν;

Ὀρέστης

Ἥκει, κακῶς γ᾽ ἐλθοῦσα τῶν ἐμῶν τινι.

Ἰφιγένεια

Καὶ ποῦ ᾽στι; Κἀμοὶ γάρ τι προυφείλει κακόν.

Ὀρέστης

Σπάρτῃ ξυνοικεῖ τῷ πάρος ξυνευνέτῃ.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ὦ μῖσος εἰς Ἕλληνας, οὐκ ἐμοὶ μόνῃ.

Ὀρέστης

Ἀπέλαυσα κἀγὼ δή τι τῶν κείνης γάμων.

Ἰφιγένεια

Νόστος δ᾽ Ἀχαιῶν ἐγένεθ᾽, ὡς κηρύσσεται;

Ὀρέστης

Ὡς πάνθ᾽ ἅπαξ με συλλαβοῦσ᾽ ἀνιστορεῖς.

Ἰφιγένεια

Πρὶν γὰρ θανεῖν σε, τοῦδ᾽ ἐπαυρέσθαι θέλω.

Ὀρέστης

Ἔλεγχ᾽, ἐπειδὴ τοῦδ᾽ ἐρᾷς· λέξω δ᾽ ἐγώ.

Ἰφιγένεια

Κάλχας τις ἦλθε μάντις ἐκ Τροίας πάλιν;

Ὀρέστης

Ὤλωλεν, ὡς ἦν ἐν Μυκηναίοις λόγος.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ὦ πότνι᾽, ὡς εὖ. — Τί γὰρ ὁ Λαέρτου γόνος;

Ὀρέστης

Οὔπω νενόστηκ᾽ οἶκον, ἔστι δ᾽, ὡς λόγος.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ὄλοιτο, νόστου μήποτ᾽ ἐς πάτραν τυχών. [535]

Ὀρέστης

Μηδὲν κατεύχου· πάντα τἀκείνου νοσεῖ.

Ἰφιγένεια

Θέτιδος δ᾽ ὁ τῆς Νηρῇδος ἔστι παῖς ἔτι;

Ὀρέστης

Οὐκ ἔστιν· ἄλλως λέκτρ᾽ ἔγημ᾽ ἐν Αὐλίδι.

Ἰφιγένεια

Δόλια γάρ, ὡς ἴσασιν οἱ πεπονθότες.

Ὀρέστης

Τίς εἶ ποθ᾽; Ὡς εὖ πυνθάνῃ τἀφ᾽ Ἑλλάδος. 540

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἐκεῖθέν εἰμι· παῖς ἔτ᾽ οὖσ᾽ ἀπωλόμην.

Ὀρέστης

Ὀρθῶς ποθεῖς ἄρ᾽ εἰδέναι τἀκεῖ, γύναι.

Ἰφιγένεια

Τί δ᾽ ὁ στρατηγός, ὃν λέγουσ᾽ εὐδαιμονεῖν;

Ὀρέστης

Τίς; Οὐ γὰρ ὅν γ᾽ ἐγῷδα τῶν εὐδαιμόνων.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἀτρέως ἐλέγετο δή τις Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ.

Ὀρέστης

Οὐκ οἶδ᾽· ἄπελθε τοῦ λόγου τούτου, γύναι.

Ἰφιγένεια

Μὴ πρὸς θεῶν, ἀλλ᾽ εἴφ᾽, ἵν᾽ εὐφρανθῶ, ξένε.

Ὀρέστης

Τέθνηχ᾽ ὁ τλήμων, πρὸς δ᾽ ἀπώλεσέν τινα.

Ἰφιγένεια

Τέθνηκε; Ποίᾳ συμφορᾷ; Τάλαιν᾽ ἐγώ.

Ὀρέστης

Τί δ᾽ ἐστέναξας τοῦτο; Μῶν προσῆκέ σοι;

Ἰφιγένεια

Τὸν ὄλβον αὐτοῦ τὸν πάροιθ᾽ ἀναστένω.

Ὀρέστης

Δεινῶς γὰρ ἐκ γυναικὸς οἴχεται σφαγείς.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ὦ πανδάκρυτος ἡ κτανοῦσα . . . χὠ κτανών.

Ὀρέστης

Παῦσαί νυν ἤδη μηδ᾽ ἐρωτήσῃς πέρα.

Ἰφιγένεια

Τοσόνδε γ᾽, εἰ ζῇ τοῦ ταλαιπώρου δάμαρ.

Ὀρέστης

Οὐκ ἔστι· παῖς νιν ὃν ἔτεχ᾽, οὗτος ὤλεσεν.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ὦ συνταραχθεὶς οἶκος. ὡς τί δὴ θέλων;

Ὀρέστης

Πατρὸς θανόντος τήνδε τιμωρούμενος.

Ἰφιγένεια

Φεῦ·
ὡς εὖ κακὸν δίκαιον εἰσεπράξατο.

Ὀρέστης

Ἀλλ᾽ οὐ τὰ πρὸς θεῶν εὐτυχεῖ δίκαιος ὤν.

Ἰφιγένεια

Λείπει δ᾽ ἐν οἴκοις ἄλλον Ἀγαμέμνων γόνον;

Ὀρέστης

Λέλοιπεν Ἠλέκτραν γε παρθένον μίαν.

Ἰφιγένεια

Τί δέ; Σφαγείσης θυγατρὸς ἔστι τις λόγος;

Ὀρέστης

Οὐδείς γε, πλὴν θανοῦσαν οὐχ ὁρᾶν φάος.

Ἰφιγένεια

Τάλαιν᾽ ἐκείνη χὠ κτανὼν αὐτὴν πατήρ. [565]

Ὀρέστης

Κακῆς γυναικὸς χάριν ἄχαριν ἀπώλετο.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ὁ τοῦ θανόντος δ᾽ ἔστι παῖς Ἄργει πατρός;

Ὀρέστης

Ἔστ᾽, ἄθλιός γε, κοὐδαμοῦ καὶ πανταχοῦ.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ψευδεῖς ὄνειροι, χαίρετ᾽· οὐδὲν ἦτ᾽ ἄρα.

Ὀρέστης

Οὐδ᾽ οἱ σοφοί γε δαίμονες κεκλημένοι [570]
πτηνῶν ὀνείρων εἰσὶν ἀψευδέστεροι.
Πολὺς ταραγμὸς ἔν τε τοῖς θείοις ἔνι
κἀν τοῖς βροτείοις· ἓν δὲ λυπεῖται μόνον,
ὃς οὐκ ἄφρων ὢν μάντεων πεισθεὶς λόγοις
ὄλωλεν — ὡς ὄλωλε τοῖσιν εἰδόσιν. 575

Χορός

Φεῦ φεῦ· τί δ᾽ ἡμεῖς οἵ τ᾽ ἐμοὶ γεννήτορες;
Ἆρ᾽ εἰσίν; Ἆρ᾽ οὐκ εἰσί; Τίς φράσειεν ἄν;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἀκούσατ᾽· ἐς γὰρ δή τιν᾽ ἥκομεν λόγον, [578]
ὑμῖν τ᾽ ὄνησιν, ὦ ξένοι, σπουδῆς ἅμα
κἀμοί. Τὸ δ᾽ εὖ μάλιστά γ᾽ οὕτω γίγνεται,
εἰ πᾶσι ταὐτὸν πρᾶγμ᾽ ἀρεσκόντως ἔχει.
Θέλοις ἄν, εἰ σῴσαιμί σ᾽, ἀγγεῖλαί τί μοι
πρὸς Ἄργος ἐλθὼν τοῖς ἐμοῖς ἐκεῖ φίλοις,
δέλτον τ᾽ ἐνεγκεῖν, ἥν τις οἰκτίρας ἐμὲ
ἔγραψεν αἰχμάλωτος, οὐχὶ τὴν ἐμὴν
φονέα νομίζων χεῖρα, τοῦ νόμου δ᾽ ὕπο
θνῄσκειν τὰ τῆς θεοῦ, τάδε δίκαι᾽ ἡγουμένης;
Οὐδένα γὰρ εἶχον ὅστις ἀγγείλαι μολὼν
ἐς Ἄργος αὖθις, τάς <τ᾽> ἐμὰς ἐπιστολὰς
πέμψειε σωθεὶς τῶν ἐμῶν φίλων τινί.
Σὺ δ᾽ — εἶ γάρ, ὡς ἔοικας, οὔτε δυσμενὴς
καὶ τὰς Μυκήνας οἶσθα χοὔς κἀγὼ θέλω —
σώθητι, καὶ σὺ μισθὸν οὐκ αἰσχρὸν λαβών,
κούφων ἕκατι γραμμάτων σωτηρίαν.
Οὗτος δ᾽, ἐπείπερ πόλις ἀναγκάζει τάδε,
θεᾷ γενέσθω θῦμα χωρισθεὶς σέθεν.

Ὀρέστης

Καλῶς ἔλεξας τἄλλα πλὴν ἕν, ὦ ξένη· [597]
τὸ γὰρ σφαγῆναι τόνδε μοι βάρος μέγα.
Ὁ ναυστολῶν γάρ εἰμ᾽ ἐγὼ τὰς συμφοράς,
οὗτος δὲ συμπλεῖ τῶν ἐμῶν μόχθων χάριν.
Οὔκουν δίκαιον ἐπ᾽ ὀλέθρῳ τῷ τοῦδ᾽ ἐμὲ
χάριν τίθεσθαι καὐτὸν ἐκδῦναι κακῶν.
Ἀλλ᾽ ὡς γενέσθω· τῷδε μὲν δέλτον δίδου·
πέμψει γὰρ Ἄργος, ὥστε σοι καλῶς ἔχειν·
ἡμᾶς δ᾽ ὁ χρῄζων κτεινέτω. Τὰ τῶν φίλων
αἴσχιστον ὅστις καταβαλὼν ἐς ξυμφορὰς
αὐτὸς σέσῳσται. Τυγχάνει δ᾽ ὅδ᾽ ὢν φίλος,
ὃν οὐδὲν ἧσσον ἢ ᾽μὲ φῶς ὁρᾶν θέλω.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ὦ λῆμ᾽ ἄριστον, ὡς ἀπ᾽ εὐγενοῦς τινος [609]
ῥίζης πέφυκας τοῖς φίλοις τ᾽ ὀρθῶς φίλος.
Τοιοῦτος εἴη τῶν ἐμῶν ὁμοσπόρων
ὅσπερ λέλειπται. Καὶ γὰρ οὐδ᾽ ἐγώ, ξένοι,
ἀνάδελφός εἰμι, πλὴν ὅσ᾽ οὐχ ὁρῶσά νιν.
Ἐπεὶ δὲ βούλῃ ταῦτα, τόνδε πέμψομεν
δέλτον φέροντα, σὺ δὲ θανῇ· πολλὴ δέ τις
προθυμία σε τοῦδ᾽ ἔχουσα τυγχάνει.

Ὀρέστης

Θύσει δὲ τίς με καὶ τὰ δεινὰ τλήσεται;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἐγώ· θεᾶς γὰρ τῆσδε προστροπὴν ἔχω.

Ὀρέστης

Ἄζηλά γ᾽, ὦ νεᾶνι, κοὐκ εὐδαίμονα.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἀλλ᾽ εἰς ἀνάγκην κείμεθ᾽, ἣν φυλακτέον.

Ὀρέστης

Αὐτὴ ξίφει θύουσα θῆλυς ἄρσενας;

Ἰφιγένεια

Οὔκ, ἀλλὰ χαίτην ἀμφὶ σὴν χερνίψομαι.

Ὀρέστης

Ὁ δὲ σφαγεὺς τίς; Εἰ τάδ᾽ ἱστορεῖν με χρή.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἔσω δόμων τῶνδ᾽ εἰσὶν οἷς μέλει τάδε.

Ὀρέστης

Τάφος δὲ ποῖος δέξεταί μ᾽, ὅταν θάνω;

Ἰφιγένεια

Πῦρ ἱερὸν ἔνδον χάσμα τ᾽ εὐρωπὸν πέτρας.

Ὀρέστης

Φεῦ·
πῶς ἄν μ᾽ ἀδελφῆς χεὶρ περιστείλειεν ἄν;

Ἰφιγένεια

Μάταιον εὐχήν, ὦ τάλας, ὅστις ποτ᾽ εἶ,
ηὔξω· μακρὰν γὰρ βαρβάρου ναίει χθονός.
Οὐ μήν, ἐπειδὴ τυγχάνεις Ἀργεῖος ὤν,
ἀλλ᾽ ὧν γε δυνατὸν οὐδ᾽ ἐγὼ λείψω χάριν.
Πολύν τε γάρ σοι κόσμον ἐνθήσω τάφῳ,
ξανθῷ τ᾽ ἐλαίῳ σῶμα σὸν κατασβέσω,
καὶ τῆς ὀρείας ἀνθεμόρρυτον γάνος
ξουθῆς μελίσσης ἐς πυρὰν βαλῶ σέθεν.
Ἀλλ᾽ εἶμι δέλτον τ᾽ ἐκ θεᾶς ἀνακτόρων
οἴσω· τὸ μέντοι δυσμενὲς μὴ ᾽μοὶ λάβῃς.
Φυλάσσετ᾽ αὐτούς, πρόσπολοι, δεσμῶν ἄτερ —
ἴσως ἄελπτα τῶν ἐμῶν φίλων τινὶ
πέμψω πρὸς Ἄργος, ὃν μάλιστ᾽ ἐγὼ φιλῶ,
καὶ δέλτος αὐτῷ ζῶντας οὓς δοκεῖ θανεῖν
λέγουσα πιστὰς ἡδονὰς ἀπαγγελεῖ.

Χορός

Κατολοφύρομαι σὲ τὸν χερνίβων
ῥανίσι μελόμενον αἱμακταῖς.

Ὀρέστης

Οἶκτος γὰρ οὐ ταῦτ᾽, ἀλλὰ χαίρετ᾽, ὦ ξέναι.

Χορός

Σὲ δὲ τύχας μάκαρος, ὦ
νεανία, σεβόμεθ᾽, ἐς
πάτραν ὅτι ποτ᾽ ἐπεμβάσῃ.

Πυλάδης

Ἄζηλά τοι φίλοισι, θνῃσκόντων φίλων.

Χορός

Ὦ σχέτλιοι πομπαί.
Φεῦ φεῦ, διόλλυσαι.
Αἰαῖ αἰαῖ. Πότερος ὁ μᾶλλον;
Ἔτι γὰρ ἀμφίλογα δίδυμα μέμονε φρήν,
σὲ πάρος ἢ σὲ ἀναστενάξω γόοις.

Ὀρέστης

Πυλάδη, πέπονθας ταὐτὸ πρὸς θεῶν ἐμοί; [658]

Πυλάδης

Οὐκ οἶδ᾽· ἐρωτᾷς οὐ λέγειν ἔχοντά με.

Ὀρέστης

Τίς ἐστὶν ἡ νεᾶνις; Ὡς Ἑλληνικῶς
ἀνήρεθ᾽ ἡμᾶς τούς τ᾽ ἐν Ἰλίῳ πόνους
νόστον τ᾽ Ἀχαιῶν τόν τ᾽ ἐν οἰωνοῖς σοφὸν
Κάλχαντ᾽ Ἀχιλλέως τ᾽ ὄνομα, καὶ τὸν ἄθλιον
Ἀγαμέμνον᾽ ὡς ᾤκτιρ᾽ ἀνηρώτα τέ με
γυναῖκα παῖδάς τε. Ἔστιν ἡ ξένη γένος
ἐκεῖθεν Ἀργεία τις· οὐ γὰρ ἄν ποτε
δέλτον τ᾽ ἔπεμπε καὶ τάδ᾽ ἐξεμάνθανεν,
ὡς κοινὰ πράσσουσ᾽, Ἄργος εἰ πράσσει καλῶς.

Πυλάδης

Ἔφθης με μικρόν· ταὐτὰ δὲ φθάσας λέγεις, [669]
πλὴν ἕν· τὰ γὰρ τῶν βασιλέων παθήματα
ἴσασι πάντες, ὧν ἐπιστροφή τις ἦν.
Ἀτὰρ διῆλθον χἄτερον λόγον τινά.

Ὀρέστης

Τίν'; Ἐς τὸ κοινὸν δοὺς ἄμεινον ἂν μάθοις.

Πυλάδης

Αἰσχρὸν θανόντος σοῦ βλέπειν ἡμᾶς φάος· [674]
κοινῇ τ' ἔπλευσα . . . δεῖ με καὶ κοινῇ θανεῖν.
Καὶ δειλίαν γὰρ καὶ κάκην κεκτήσομαι
Ἄργει τε Φωκέων τ' ἐν πολυπτύχῳ χθονί,
δόξω δὲ τοῖς πολλοῖσι — πολλοὶ γὰρ κακοί —
προδοὺς σεσῷσθαί σ' αὐτὸς εἰς οἴκους μόνος
ἢ καὶ φονεύσας ἐπὶ νοσοῦσι δώμασι
ῥάψαι μόρον σοι σῆς τυραννίδος χάριν,
ἔγκληρον ὡς δὴ σὴν κασιγνήτην γαμῶν.
Ταῦτ' οὖν φοβοῦμαι καὶ δι' αἰσχύνης ἔχω,
κοὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως οὐ χρὴ συνεκπνεῦσαί μέ σοι
καὶ σὺν σφαγῆναι καὶ πυρωθῆναι δέμας,
φίλον γεγῶτα καὶ φοβούμενον ψόγον.

Ὀρέστης

Εὔφημα φώνει· τἀμὰ δεῖ φέρειν κακά, [687]
ἁπλᾶς δὲ λύπας ἐξόν, οὐκ οἴσω διπλᾶς.
Ὃ γὰρ σὺ λυπρὸν κἀπονείδιστον λέγεις,
ταὔτ' ἔστιν ἡμῖν, εἴ σε συμμοχθοῦντ' ἐμοὶ
κτενῶ· τὸ μὲν γὰρ εἰς ἔμ' οὐ κακῶς ἔχει,
πράσσονθ' ἃ πράσσω πρὸς θεῶν, λῦσαι βίον.
Σὺ δ' ὄλβιός τ' εἶ, καθαρά τ', οὐ νοσοῦντ', ἔχεις
μέλαθρ', ἐγὼ δὲ δυσσεβῆ καὶ δυστυχῆ.
Σωθεὶς δέ, παῖδας ἐξ ἐμῆς ὁμοσπόρου

κτησάμενος, ἣν ἔδωκά σοι δάμαρτ᾽ ἔχειν —
ὄνομά τ᾽ ἐμοῦ γένοιτ᾽ ἄν, οὐδ᾽ ἅπαις δόμος
πατρῷος οὐμὸς ἐξαλειφθείη ποτ᾽ ἄν.
Ἀλλ᾽ ἕρπε καὶ ζῆ καὶ δόμους οἴκει πατρός.
Ὅταν δ᾽ ἐς Ἑλλάδ᾽ ἵππιόν τ᾽ Ἄργος μόλῃς,
πρὸς δεξιᾶς σε τῆσδ᾽ ἐπισκήπτω τάδε·
τύμβον τε χῶσον κἀπίθες μνημεῖά μοι,
καὶ δάκρυ᾽ ἀδελφὴ καὶ κόμας δότω τάφῳ.
Ἄγγελλε δ᾽ ὡς ὄλωλ᾽ ὑπ᾽ Ἀργείας τινὸς
γυναικός, ἀμφὶ βωμὸν ἁγνισθεὶς φόνῳ.
Καὶ μὴ προδῷς μου τὴν κασιγνήτην ποτέ,
ἔρημα κήδη καὶ δόμους ὁρῶν πατρός.
Καὶ χαῖρ᾽· ἐμῶν γὰρ φίλτατόν σ᾽ ηὗρον φίλων,
ὦ συγκυναγὲ καὶ συνεκτραφεὶς ἐμοί,
ὦ πόλλ᾽ ἐνεγκὼν τῶν ἐμῶν ἄχθη κακῶν.
Ἡμᾶς δ᾽ ὁ Φοῖβος μάντις ὢν ἐψεύσατο·
τέχνην δὲ θέμενος ὡς προσώταθ᾽ Ἑλλάδος
ἀπήλασ᾽, αἰδοῖ τῶν πάρος μαντευμάτων.
Ὦ πάντ᾽ ἐγὼ δοὺς τἀμὰ καὶ πεισθεὶς λόγοις,
μητέρα κατακτὰς αὐτὸς ἀνταπόλλυμαι.

Πυλάδης

Ἔσται τάφος σοι, καὶ κασιγνήτης λέχος [716]
οὐκ ἂν προδοίην, ὦ τάλας, ἐπεί σ᾽ ἐγὼ
θανόντα μᾶλλον ἢ βλέπονθ᾽ ἕξω φίλον.
Ἀτὰρ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ σ᾽ οὐ διέφθορέν γέ πω
μάντευμα· καίτοι γ᾽ ἐγγὺς ἕστηκας φόνου.
Ἀλλ᾽ ἔστιν, ἔστιν, ἡ λίαν δυσπραξία
λίαν διδοῦσα μεταβολάς, ὅταν τύχῃ.

Ὀρέστης

Σίγα· τὰ Φοίβου δ᾽ οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖ μ᾽ ἔπη·
γυνὴ γὰρ ἥδε δωμάτων ἔξω περᾷ.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἀπέλθεθ᾽ ὑμεῖς καὶ παρευτρεπίζετε [725]
τἄνδον μολόντες τοῖς ἐφεστῶσι σφαγῇ.
Δέλτου μὲν αἵδε πολύθυροι διαπτυχαί,
ξένοι, πάρεισιν· ἃ δ᾽ ἐπὶ τοῖσδε βούλομαι,
ἀκούσατ᾽. Οὐδεὶς αὐτὸς ἐν πόνοις <τ᾽> ἀνὴρ
ὅταν τε πρὸς τὸ θάρσος ἐκ φόβου πέσῃ. 730
Ἐγὼ δὲ ταρβῶ μὴ ἀπονοστήσας χθονὸς
θῆται παρ᾽ οὐδὲν τὰς ἐμὰς ἐπιστολὰς
ὁ τήνδε μέλλων δέλτον εἰς Ἄργος φέρειν.

Ὀρέστης

Τί δῆτα βούλῃ; Τίνος ἀμηχανεῖς πέρι;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ὅρκον δότω μοι τάσδε πορθμεύσειν γραφὰς 735
πρὸς Ἄργος, οἷσι βούλομαι πέμψαι φίλων.

Ὀρέστης

Ἦ κἀντιδώσεις τῷδε τοὺς αὐτοὺς λόγους;

Ἰφιγένεια

Τί χρῆμα δράσειν ἢ τί μὴ δράσειν; Λέγε.

Ὀρέστης

Ἐκ γῆς ἀφήσειν μὴ θανόντα βαρβάρου.

Ἰφιγένεια

Δίκαιον εἶπας· πῶς γὰρ ἀγγείλειεν ἄν; 740

Ὀρέστης

Ἦ καὶ τύραννος ταῦτα συγχωρήσεται;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ναί.
Πείσω σφε, καὐτὴ ναὸς εἰσβήσω σκάφος.

Ὀρέστης

Ὄμνυ· σὺ δ᾽ ἔξαρχ᾽ ὅρκον ὅστις εὐσεβής.

Ἰφιγένεια

Δώσω, λέγειν χρή, τήνδε τοῖσι σοῖς φίλοις.

Πυλάδης

Τοῖς σοῖς φίλοισι γράμματ᾽ ἀποδώσω τάδε. [745]

Ἰφιγένεια

Κἀγὼ σὲ σώσω κυανέας ἔξω πέτρας.

Πυλάδης

Τίν᾽ οὖν ἐπόμνυς τοισίδ᾽ ὅρκιον θεῶν;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἄρτεμιν, ἐν ἧσπερ δώμασιν τιμὰς ἔχω.

Πυλάδης

Ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἄνακτά γ᾽ οὐρανοῦ, σεμνὸν Δία.

Ἰφιγένεια

Εἰ δ᾽ ἐκλιπὼν τὸν ὅρκον ἀδικοίης ἐμέ; 750

Πυλάδης

Ἄνοστος εἴην· τί δὲ σύ, μὴ σῴσασά με;

Ἰφιγένεια

Μήποτε κατ᾽ Ἄργος ζῶσ᾽ ἴχνος θείην ποδός.

Πυλάδης

Ἄκουε δή νυν ὃν παρήλθομεν λόγον.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἀλλ᾽ αὖθις ἔσται καινός, ἢν καλῶς ἔχῃ.

Πυλάδης

Ἐξαίρετόν μοι δὸς τόδ᾽, ἤν τι ναῦς πάθῃ,
χἡ δέλτος ἐν κλύδωνι χρημάτων μέτα
ἀφανὴς γένηται, σῶμα δ᾽ ἐκσῴσω μόνον,
τὸν ὅρκον εἶναι τόνδε μηκέτ᾽ ἔμπεδον.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἀλλ᾽ οἶσθ᾽ ὃ δράσω; Πολλὰ γὰρ πολλῶν κυρεῖ· [759]
τἀνόντα κἀγγεγραμμέν᾽ ἐν δέλτου πτυχαῖς
λόγῳ φράσω σοι πάντ᾽ ἀναγγεῖλαι φίλοις.
Ἐν ἀσφαλεῖ γάρ· ἢν μὲν ἐκσῴσῃς γραφήν,
αὐτὴν φράσει σιγῶσα τἀγγεγραμμένα·
ἢν δ᾽ ἐν θαλάσσῃ γράμματ᾽ ἀφανισθῇ τάδε,
τὸ σῶμα σῴσας τοὺς λόγους σῴσεις ἐμοί.

Πυλάδης

Καλῶς ἔλεξας τῶν θεῶν ἐμοῦ θ᾽ ὕπερ.
Σήμαινε δ᾽ ᾧ χρὴ τάσδ᾽ ἐπιστολὰς φέρειν
πρὸς Ἄργος ὅ τι τε χρὴ κλύοντα σοῦ λέγειν.

Ἰφιγένεια

[769] Ἄγγελλ᾽ Ὀρέστῃ, παιδὶ τῷ Ἀγαμέμνονος·
Ἣ ᾽ν Αὐλίδι σφαγεῖσ᾽ ἐπιστέλλει τάδε

ζῶσ᾽ Ἰφιγένεια, τοῖς ἐκεῖ δ᾽ οὐ ζῶσ᾽ ἔτι —

Ὀρέστης

Ποῦ δ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐκείνη; Κατθανοῦσ᾽ ἥκει πάλιν;

Ἰφιγένεια

ἥδ᾽ ἣν ὁρᾷς σύ· μὴ λόγοις ἔκπλησσέ με.
Κόμισαί μ᾽ ἐς Ἄργος, ὦ σύναιμε, πρὶν θανεῖν,
ἐκ βαρβάρου γῆς καὶ μετάστησον θεᾶς
σφαγίων, ἐφ᾽ οἷσι ξενοφόνους τιμὰς ἔχω.

Ὀρέστης

Πυλάδη, τί λέξω; Ποῦ ποτ᾽ ὄνθ᾽ ηὑρήμεθα;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἢ σοῖς ἀραία δώμασιν γενήσομαι.

Πυλάδης

Ὀρέστα — ;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἵν᾽ αὖθις ὄνομα δὶς κλύων μάθῃς.

Πυλάδης

Ὦ θεοί.

Ἰφιγένεια

Τί τοὺς θεοὺς ἀνακαλεῖς ἐν τοῖς ἐμοῖς;

Πυλάδης

Οὐδέν· πέραινε δ᾽· ἐξέβην γὰρ ἄλλοσε.
Τάχ᾽ οὐκ ἐρωτῶν σ᾽ εἰς ἄπιστ᾽ ἀφίξομαι.

Ἰφιγένεια

Λέγ᾽ οὕνεκ᾽ ἔλαφον ἀντιδοῦσά μου θεὰ [783]
Ἄρτεμις ἔσῳσέ μ᾽, ἣν ἔθυσ᾽ ἐμὸς πατήρ,
δοκῶν ἐς ἡμᾶς ὀξὺ φάσγανον βαλεῖν, 785
ἐς τήνδε δ᾽ ᾠκισ᾽ αἶαν. Αἵδ᾽ ἐπιστολαί,
τάδ᾽ ἐστὶ τἀν δέλτοισιν ἐγγεγραμμένα.

Πυλάδης

Ὦ ῥᾳδίοις ὅρκοισι περιβαλοῦσά με,
κάλλιστα δ᾽ ὀμόσασ᾽, οὐ πολὺν σχήσω χρόνον,
τὸν δ᾽ ὅρκον ὃν κατώμοσ᾽ ἐμπεδώσομεν. 790
Ἰδού, φέρω σοι δέλτον ἀποδίδωμί τε,
Ὀρέστα, τῆσδε σῆς κασιγνήτης πάρα.

Ὀρέστης

Δέχομαι· παρεὶς δὲ γραμμάτων διαπτυχὰς
τὴν ἡδονὴν πρῶτ᾽ οὐ λόγοις αἱρήσομαι.
Ὦ φιλτάτη μοι σύγγον᾽, ἐκπεπληγμένος 795
ὅμως σ᾽ ἀπίστῳ περιβαλὼν βραχίονι
ἐς τέρψιν εἶμι, πυθόμενος θαυμάστ᾽ ἐμοί.

Χορός

[798] Ξέν᾽, οὐ δικαίως τῆς θεοῦ τὴν πρόσπολον
χραίνεις ἀθίκτοις περιβαλὼν πέπλοις χέρα.

Ὀρέστης

Ὦ συγκασιγνήτη τε κἀκ ταὐτοῦ πατρὸς 800
Ἀγαμέμνονος γεγῶσα, μή μ᾽ ἀποστρέφου,
ἔχουσ᾽ ἀδελφόν, οὐ δοκοῦσ᾽ ἕξειν ποτέ.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἐγώ σ᾽ ἀδελφὸν τὸν ἐμόν; Οὐ παύσῃ λέγων;
Τὸ δ᾽ Ἄργος αὐτοῦ μεστὸν ἥ τε Ναυπλία.

Ὀρέστης

Οὐκ ἔστ᾽ ἐκεῖ σός, ὦ τάλαινα, σύγγονος.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἀλλ᾽ ἡ Λάκαινα Τυνδαρίς σ᾽ ἐγείνατο;

Ὀρέστης

Πέλοπός γε παιδὶ παιδός, οὗ ᾽κπέφυκ᾽ ἐγώ.

Ἰφιγένεια

Τί φῄς; Ἔχεις τι τῶνδέ μοι τεκμήριον;

Ὀρέστης

Ἔχω· πατρῴων ἐκ δόμων τι πυνθάνου.

Ἰφιγένεια

Οὐκοῦν λέγειν μὲν χρὴ σέ, μανθάνειν δ᾽ ἐμέ.

Ὀρέστης

Λέγοιμ᾽ ἄν, ἀκοῇ πρῶτον Ἠλέκτρας τάδε· [811]
Ἀτρέως Θυέστου τ᾽ οἶσθα γενομένην ἔριν;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἤκουσα· χρυσῆς ἀρνὸς ἦν νείκη πέρι.

Ὀρέστης

Ταῦτ᾽ οὖν ὑφήνασ᾽ οἶσθ᾽ ἐν εὐπήνοις ὑφαῖς;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ὦ φίλτατ᾽, ἐγγὺς τῶν ἐμῶν κάμπτεις φρενῶν.

Ὀρέστης

Εἰκώ τ᾽ ἐν ἱστοῖς ἡλίου μετάστασιν;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ὕφηνα καὶ τόδ᾽ εἶδος εὐμίτοις πλοκαῖς.

Ὀρέστης

Καὶ λούτρ᾽ ἐς Αὖλιν μητρὸς ἀνεδέξω πάρα;

Ἰφιγένεια

Οἶδ᾽· οὐ γὰρ ὁ γάμος ἐσθλὸς ὢν μ᾽ ἀφείλετο.

Ὀρέστης

Τί γάρ; Κόμας σὰς μητρὶ δοῦσα σῇ φέρειν;

Ἰφιγένεια

Μνημεῖά γ᾽ ἀντὶ σώματος τοὐμοῦ τάφῳ.

Ὀρέστης

Ἃ δ᾽ εἶδον αὐτός, τάδε φράσω τεκμήρια· [822]
Πέλοπος παλαιὰν ἐν δόμοις λόγχην πατρός,
ἣν χερσὶ πάλλων παρθένον Πισάτιδα
ἐκτήσαθ᾽ Ἱπποδάμειαν, Οἰνόμαον κτανών,
ἐν παρθενῶσι τοῖσι σοῖς κεκρυμμένην.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ὦ φίλτατ᾽, οὐδὲν ἄλλο, φίλτατος γὰρ εἶ,
ἔχω σ᾽, Ὀρέστα, τηλύγετον [χθονὸς] ἀπὸ πατρίδος
Ἀργόθεν, ὦ φίλος.

Ὀρέστης

Κἀγώ σε τὴν θανοῦσαν, ὡς δοξάζεται.
Κατὰ δὲ δάκρυ, κατὰ δὲ γόος ἅμα χαρᾷ
τὸ σὸν νοτίζει βλέφαρον, ὡσαύτως δ᾽ ἐμόν.

Ἰφιγένεια

Τόδ᾽ ἔτι βρέφος
ἔλιπον ἀγκάλαισι νεαρὸν τροφοῦ
νεαρὸν ἐν δόμοις.
Ὦ κρεῖσσον ἢ λόγοισιν εὐτυχοῦσά μου
ψυχά, τί φῶ; Θαυμάτων
πέρα καὶ λόγου πρόσω τάδ᾽ ἐπέβα.

Ὀρέστης

Τὸ λοιπὸν εὐτυχοῖμεν ἀλλήλων μέτα.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἄτοπον ἀδονὰν ἔλαβον, ὦ φίλαι· [842]
δέδοικα δ᾽ ἐκ χερῶν με μὴ πρὸς αἰθέρα
ἁμπτάμενος φύγῃ·
ἰὼ Κυκλωπὶς ἑστία· ἰὼ πατρίς,
Μυκήνα φίλα,
χάριν ἔχω ζόας, χάριν ἔχω τροφᾶς,
ὅτι μοι συνομαίμονα τόνδε δόμοις
ἐξεθρέψω φάος.

Ὀρέστης

Γένει μὲν εὐτυχοῦμεν, ἐς δὲ συμφοράς,
ὦ σύγγον᾽, ἡμῶν δυστυχὴς ἔφυ βίος.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἐγῷδ᾽ ἁ μέλεος, οἶδ᾽, ὅτε φάσγανον
δέρᾳ θῆκέ μοι μελεόφρων πατήρ.

Ὀρέστης

Οἴμοι. Δοκῶ γὰρ οὐ παρών σ᾽ ὁρᾶν ἐκεῖ.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἀνυμέναιος, <ὦ> σύγγον᾽, Ἀχιλλέως
ἐς κλισίαν λέκτρων
δολίαν ὅτ᾽ ἀγόμαν·
παρὰ δὲ βωμὸν ἦν δάκρυα καὶ γόοι.
Φεῦ φεῦ χερνίβων <τῶν> ἐκεῖ.

Ὀρέστης

Ὤμωξα κἀγὼ τόλμαν ἣν ἔτλη πατήρ.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἀπάτορ᾽ ἀπάτορα πότμον ἔλαχον.
Ἄλλα δ᾽ ἐξ ἄλλων κυρεῖ
δαίμονος τύχᾳ τινός.

Ὀρέστης

Εἰ σόν γ᾽ ἀδελφόν, ὦ τάλαιν᾽, ἀπώλεσας.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ὦ μελέα δεινᾶς τόλμας. Δείν᾽ ἔτλαν [868]
δείν᾽ ἔτλαν, ὤμοι σύγγονε. Παρὰ δ᾽ ὀλίγον
ἀπέφυγες ὄλεθρον ἀνόσιον ἐξ ἐμᾶν
δαϊχθεὶς χερῶν.
Ἀ δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῖσι τίς τελευτά;
Τίς τύχα μοι συγχωρήσει;

Τίνα σοι πόρον εὑρομένα —
πάλιν ἀπὸ πόλεως, ἀπὸ φόνου πέμψω
πατρίδ᾽ ἐς Ἀργείαν,
πρὶν ἐπὶ ξίφος αἵματι σῷ πελάσαι;
Τόδε τόδε σόν, ὦ μελέα ψυχά,
χρέος ἀνευρίσκειν.
Πότερον κατὰ χέρσον, οὐχὶ ναΐ — ;
Ἀλλὰ ποδῶν ῥιπᾷ
θανάτῳ πελάσεις ἄρα βάρβαρα φῦλα
καὶ δι᾽ ὁδοὺς ἀνόδους στείχων· διὰ κυανέας μὴν
στενοπόρου πέτρας μακρὰ κέλευθα να-
ΐοισιν δρασμοῖς.
Τάλαινα, τάλαινα.
Τίς ἂν οὖν τάδ᾽ ἂν ἢ θεὸς ἢ βροτὸς ἢ
τί τῶν ἀδοκήτων,
πόρον ἄπορον ἐξανύσας, δυοῖν
τοῖν μόνοιν Ἀτρείδαιν <φαίνοι>
κακῶν ἔκλυσιν;

Χορός

Ἐν τοῖσι θαυμαστοῖσι καὶ μύθων πέρα
τάδ᾽ εἶδον αὐτὴ κοὐ κλύουσ᾽ ἀπαγγελῶ.

Πυλάδης

[902] Τὸ μὲν φίλους ἐλθόντας εἰς ὄψιν φίλων,
Ὀρέστα, χειρῶν περιβολὰς εἰκὸς λαβεῖν·
λήξαντα δ᾽ οἴκτων κἀπ᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽ ἐλθεῖν χρεών,
ὅπως τὸ κλεινὸν ὄνομα τῆς σωτηρίας
λαβόντες ἐκ γῆς βησόμεσθα βαρβάρου.
Σοφῶν γὰρ ἀνδρῶν ταῦτα, μὴ ᾽κβάντας τύχης,
καιρὸν λαβόντας, ἡδονὰς ἄλλας λαβεῖν.

Ὀρέστης

Καλῶς ἔλεξας· τῇ τύχῃ δ᾽ οἶμαι μέλειν
τοῦδε ξὺν ἡμῖν· ἢν δέ τις πρόθυμος ᾖ,

σθένειν τὸ θεῖον μᾶλλον εἰκότως ἔχει.

Ἰφιγένεια

Μηδέν μ᾽ ἐπίσχῃ γ᾽· οὐδ᾽ ἀποστήσει λόγου,
πρῶτον πυθέσθαι τίνα ποτ᾽ Ἠλέκτρα πότμον
εἴληχε βιότου· φίλα γὰρ ἔστε πάντ᾽ ἐμοί.

Ὀρέστης

Τῷδε ξυνοικεῖ βίον ἔχουσ᾽ εὐδαίμονα. 915

Ἰφιγένεια

Οὗτος δὲ ποδαπὸς καὶ τίνος πέφυκε παῖς;

Ὀρέστης

Στρόφιος ὁ Φωκεὺς τοῦδε κλῄζεται πατήρ.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ὅ δ᾽ ἐστί γ᾽ Ἀτρέως θυγατρός, ὁμογενὴς ἐμός;

Ὀρέστης

Ἀνεψιός γε, μόνος ἐμοὶ σαφὴς φίλος.

Ἰφιγένεια

Οὐκ ἦν τόθ᾽ οὗτος ὅτε πατὴρ ἔκτεινέ με. [920]

Ὀρέστης

Οὐκ ἦν· χρόνον γὰρ Στρόφιος ἦν ἄπαις τινά.

Ἰφιγένεια

Χαῖρ᾽ ὦ πόσις μοι τῆς ἐμῆς ὁμοσπόρου.

Ὀρέστης

Κἀμός γε σωτήρ, οὐχὶ συγγενὴς μόνον.

Ἰφιγένεια

Τὰ δεινὰ δ᾽ ἔργα πῶς ἔτλης μητρὸς πέρι;

Ὀρέστης

Σιγῶμεν αὐτά· πατρὶ τιμωρῶν ἐμῷ. 925

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἡ δ᾽ αἰτία τίς ἀνθ᾽ ὅτου κτείνει πόσιν;

Ὀρέστης

Ἔα τὰ μητρός· οὐδὲ σοὶ κλύειν καλόν.

Ἰφιγένεια

Σιγῶ· τὸ δ᾽ Ἄργος πρὸς σὲ νῦν ἀποβλέπει;

Ὀρέστης

Μενέλαος ἄρχει· φυγάδες ἐσμὲν ἐκ πάτρας.

Ἰφιγένεια

Οὗ που νοσοῦντας θεῖος ὕβρισεν δόμους; 930

Ὀρέστης

Οὔκ, ἀλλ᾽ Ἐρινύων δεῖμά μ᾽ ἐκβάλλει χθονός.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ταῦτ᾽ ἦρ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀκταῖς κἀνθάδ᾽ ἠγγέλης μανείς;

Ὀρέστης

Ὤφθημεν οὐ νῦν πρῶτον ὄντες ἄθλιοι.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἔγνωκα· μητρός σ᾽ οὕνεκ᾽ ἠλάστρουν θεαί.

Ὀρέστης

Ὥσθ᾽ αἱματηρὰ στόμι᾽ ἐπεμβαλεῖν ἐμοί.

Ἰφιγένεια

Τί γάρ ποτ᾽ ἐς γῆν τήνδ᾽ ἐπόρθμευσας πόδα;

Ὀρέστης

Φοίβου κελευσθεὶς θεσφάτοις ἀφικόμην.

Ἰφιγένεια

Τί χρῆμα δράσειν; Ῥητὸν ἢ σιγώμενον;

Ὀρέστης

Λέγοιμ᾽ ἄν· ἀρχαὶ δ᾽ αἵδε μοι πολλῶν πόνων. [939]
Ἐπεὶ τὰ μητρὸς ταῦθ᾽ ἃ σιγῶμεν κακὰ
ἐς χεῖρας ἦλθε, μεταδρομαῖς Ἐρινύων
ἠλαυνόμεσθα φυγάδες, ἔνθεν μοι πόδα
ἐς τὰς Ἀθήνας δῆτ᾽ ἔπεμψε Λοξίας,
δίκην παρασχεῖν ταῖς ἀνωνύμοις θεαῖς.
Ἔστιν γὰρ ὁσία ψῆφος, ἣν Ἄρει ποτὲ
Ζεὺς εἵσατ᾽ ἔκ του δὴ χερῶν μιάσματος.
Ἐλθὼν δ᾽ ἐκεῖσε — πρῶτα μέν μ᾽ οὐδεὶς ξένων
ἑκὼν ἐδέξαθ᾽, ὡς θεοῖς στυγούμενον·
οἳ δ᾽ ἔσχον αἰδῶ, ξένια μονοτράπεζά μοι
παρέσχον, οἴκων ὄντες ἐν ταὐτῷ στέγει,
σιγῇ δ᾽ ἐτεκτήναντ᾽ ἀπόφθεγκτόν μ᾽, ὅπως

δαιτὸς γενοίμην πώματός τ᾽ αὐτοῖς δίχα,
ἐς δ᾽ ἄγγος ἴδιον ἴσον ἅπασι βακχίου
μέτρημα πληρώσαντες εἶχον ἡδονήν.
Κἀγὼ ᾽ξελέγξαι μὲν ξένους οὐκ ἠξίουν,
ἤλγουν δὲ σιγῇ κἀδόκουν οὐκ εἰδέναι,
μέγα στενάζων οὕνεκ᾽ ἦ μητρὸς φονεύς.
Κλύω δ᾽ Ἀθηναίοισι τἀμὰ δυστυχῆ
τελετὴν γενέσθαι, κἄτι τὸν νόμον μένειν,
χοῆρες ἄγγος Παλλάδος τιμᾶν λεών.
Ὡς δ᾽ εἰς Ἄρειον ὄχθον ἦκον, ἐς δίκην
ἔστην, ἐγὼ μὲν θάτερον λαβὼν βάθρον,
τὸ δ᾽ ἄλλο πρέσβειρ᾽ ἥπερ ἦν Ἐρινύων.
Εἰπὼν <δ᾽> ἀκούσας θ᾽ αἵματος μητρὸς πέρι,
Φοῖβός μ᾽ ἔσῳσε μαρτυρῶν, ἴσας δέ μοι
ψήφους διηρίθμησε Παλλὰς ὠλένῃ·
νικῶν δ᾽ ἀπῆρα φόνια πειρατήρια.
Ὅσαι μὲν οὖν ἔζοντο πεισθεῖσαι δίκῃ,
ψῆφον παρ᾽ αὐτὴν ἱερὸν ὡρίσαντ᾽ ἔχειν·
ὅσαι δ᾽ Ἐρινύων οὐκ ἐπείσθησαν νόμῳ,
δρόμοις ἀνιδρύτοισιν ἠλάστρουν μ᾽ ἀεί,
ἕως ἐς ἀγνὸν ἦλθον αὖ Φοίβου πέδον,
καὶ πρόσθεν ἀδύτων ἐκταθείς, νῆστις βορᾶς,
ἐπώμοσ᾽ αὐτοῦ βίον ἀπορρήξειν θανών,
εἰ μή με σώσει Φοῖβος, ὅς μ᾽ ἀπώλεσεν.
Ἐντεῦθεν αὐδὴν τρίποδος ἐκ χρυσοῦ λακὼν
Φοῖβός μ᾽ ἔπεμψε δεῦρο, διοπετὲς λαβεῖν
ἄγαλμ᾽ Ἀθηνῶν τ᾽ ἐγκαθιδρῦσαι χθονί.
Ἀλλ᾽ ἥνπερ ἡμῖν ὥρισεν σωτηρίαν,
σύμπραξον· ἢν γὰρ θεᾶς κατάσχωμεν βρέτας,
μανιῶν τε λήξω καὶ σὲ πολυκώπῳ σκάφει
στείλας Μυκήναις ἐγκαταστήσω πάλιν.
Ἀλλ᾽, ὦ φιληθεῖσ᾽, ὦ κασίγνητον κάρα,
σῶσον πατρῷον οἶκον, ἔκσωσον δ᾽ ἐμέ·
ὡς τἄμ᾽ ὄλωλε πάντα καὶ τὰ Πελοπιδῶν,
οὐράνιον εἰ μὴ ληψόμεσθα θεᾶς βρέτας.

Χορός

Δεινή τις ὀργὴ δαιμόνων ἐπέζεσε
τὸ Ταντάλειον σπέρμα διὰ πόνων τ᾽ ἄγει.

Ἰφιγένεια

[989] Τὸ μὲν πρόθυμον, πρίν σε δεῦρ᾽ ἐλθεῖν, ἔχω
Ἄργει γενέσθαι καὶ σέ, σύγγον᾽, εἰσιδεῖν. 990
Θέλω δ᾽ ἅπερ σύ, σέ τε μεταστῆσαι πόνων
νοσοῦντά τ᾽ οἶκον, οὐχὶ τῷ κτανόντι με
θυμουμένη, πατρῷον ὀρθῶσαι· θέλω·
σφαγῆς τε γὰρ σῆς χεῖρ᾽ ἀπαλλάξαιμεν ἂν
σώσαιμί τ᾽ οἴκους. Τὴν θεὸν δ᾽ ὅπως λάθω 995
δέδοικα καὶ τύραννον, ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν κενὰς
κρηπῖδας εὕρῃ λαΐνας ἀγάλματος.
Πῶς δ᾽ οὐ θανοῦμαι; Τίς δ᾽ ἔνεστί μοι λόγος;
Ἀλλ᾽, εἰ μὲν — ἔν τι — τοῦθ᾽ ὁμοῦ γενήσεται,
ἄγαλμά τ᾽ οἴσεις κἄμ᾽ ἐπ᾽ εὐπρύμνου νεὼς 1000
ἄξεις, τὸ κινδύνευμα γίγνεται καλόν·
τούτου δὲ χωρισθεῖσ᾽ — ἐγὼ μὲν ὄλλυμαι,
σὺ δ᾽ ἂν τὸ σαυτοῦ θέμενος εὖ νόστου τύχοις.
Οὐ μήν τι φεύγω γ᾽, οὐδέ σ᾽ εἰ θανεῖν χρεὼν
σώσασαν· οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ᾽ ἀνὴρ μὲν ἐκ δόμων 1005
θανὼν ποθεινός, τὰ δὲ γυναικὸς ἀσθενῆ.

Ὀρέστης

Οὐκ ἂν γενοίμην σοῦ τε καὶ μητρὸς φονεύς· [1007]
ἅλις τὸ κείνης αἷμα· κοινόφρων δὲ σοὶ
καὶ ζῆν θέλοιμ᾽ ἂν καὶ θανὼν λαχεῖν ἴσον.
Ἄξω δέ γ᾽, ἥνπερ καὐτὸς ἐνταυθοῖ περῶ, 1010
πρὸς οἶκον, ἢ σοῦ κατθανὼν μενῶ μέτα.
Γνώμης δ᾽ ἄκουσον· εἰ πρόσαντες ἦν τόδε
Ἀρτέμιδι, πῶς ἂν Λοξίας ἐθέσπισε
κομίσαι μ᾽ ἄγαλμα θεᾶς πόλισμ᾽ ἐς Παλλάδος
<*>
καὶ σὸν πρόσωπον εἰσιδεῖν; Ἅπαντα γὰρ 1015
συνθεὶς τάδ᾽ εἰς ἓν νόστον ἐλπίζω λαβεῖν.

Ἰφιγένεια

Πῶς οὖν γένοιτ᾽ ἂν ὥστε μήθ᾽ ἡμᾶς θανεῖν,
λαβεῖν θ᾽ ἃ βουλόμεσθα; Τῇδε γὰρ νοσεῖ
νόστος πρὸς οἴκους· ἡ δὲ βούλησις πάρα.

Ὀρέστης

Ἆρ᾽ ἂν τύραννον διολέσαι δυναίμεθ᾽ ἄν;

Ἰφιγένεια

Δεινὸν τόδ᾽ εἶπας, ξενοφονεῖν ἐπήλυδας.

Ὀρέστης

Ἀλλ᾽, εἰ σὲ σώσει κἀμέ, κινδυνευτέον.

Ἰφιγένεια

Οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην· τὸ δὲ πρόθυμον ἤνεσα.

Ὀρέστης

Τί δ᾽, εἴ με ναῷ τῷδε κρύψειας λάθρα;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ὡς δὴ σκότον λαβόντες ἐκσωθεῖμεν ἄν;

Ὀρέστης

Κλεπτῶν γὰρ ἡ νύξ, τῆς δ᾽ ἀληθείας τὸ φῶς.

Ἰφιγένεια

Εἴσ᾽ ἔνδον ἱεροὶ φύλακες, οὓς οὐ λήσομεν.

Ὀρέστης

Οἴμοι, διεφθάρμεσθα· πῶς σωθεῖμεν ἄν;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἔχειν δοκῶ μοι καινὸν ἐξεύρημά τι.

Ὀρέστης

Ποῖόν τι; Δόξης μετάδος, ὡς κἀγὼ μάθω.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ταῖς σαῖς ἀνίαις χρήσομαι σοφίσμασι.

Ὀρέστης

Δειναὶ γὰρ αἱ γυναῖκες εὑρίσκειν τέχνας.

Ἰφιγένεια

Φονέα σε φήσω μητρὸς ἐξ Ἄργους μολεῖν.

Ὀρέστης

Χρῆσαι κακοῖσι τοῖς ἐμοῖς, εἰ κερδανεῖς.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ὡς οὐ θέμις γε λέξομεν θύειν θεᾷ,

Ὀρέστης

Τίν᾽ αἰτίαν ἔχουσ᾽; Ὑποπτεύω τι γάρ.

Ἰφιγένεια

Οὐ καθαρὸν ὄντα· τὸ δ᾽ ὅσιον δώσω φόβῳ.

Ὀρέστης

Τί δῆτα μᾶλλον θεᾶς ἄγαλμ᾽ ἁλίσκεται;

Ἰφιγένεια

Πόντου σε πηγαῖς ἁγνίσαι βουλήσομαι,

Ὀρέστης

Ἔτ᾽ ἐν δόμοισι βρέτας, ἐφ᾽ ᾧ πεπλεύκαμεν. [1040]

Ἰφιγένεια

Κἀκεῖνο νίψαι, σοῦ θιγόντος ὡς, ἐρῶ.

Ὀρέστης

Ποῖ δῆτα; Πόντου νοτερὸν εἶπας ἔκβολον;

Ἰφιγένεια

Οὗ ναῦς χαλινοῖς λινοδέτοις ὁρμεῖ σέθεν.

Ὀρέστης

Σὺ δ᾽ ἤ τις ἄλλος ἐν χεροῖν οἴσει βρέτας;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἐγώ· θιγεῖν γὰρ ὅσιόν ἐστ᾽ ἐμοὶ μόνῃ. 1045

Ὀρέστης

Πυλάδης δ᾽ ὅδ᾽ ἡμῖν ποῦ τετάξεται πόνου;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ταὐτὸν χεροῖν σοὶ λέξεται μίασμ᾽ ἔχων.

Ὀρέστης

Λάθρα δ᾽ ἄνακτος ἢ εἰδότος δράσεις τάδε;

Ἰφιγένεια

Πείσασα μύθοις· οὐ γὰρ ἂν λάθοιμί γε.

Ὀρέστης

Καὶ μὴν νεώς γε πίτυλος εὐήρης πάρα.

Ἰφιγένεια

Σοὶ δὴ μέλειν χρὴ τἄλλ᾽ ὅπως ἕξει καλῶς.

Ὀρέστης

Ἑνὸς μόνου δεῖ, τάσδε συγκρύψαι τάδε. [1052]
ἀλλ᾽ ἀντίαζε καὶ λόγους πειστηρίους
εὕρισκ᾽· ἔχει τοι δύναμιν εἰς οἶκτον γυνή.
τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ἴσως — . ἅπαντα συμβαίη καλῶς.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ὦ φίλταται γυναῖκες, εἰς ὑμᾶς βλέπω, [1056]
καὶ τἄμ᾽ ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστιν ἢ καλῶς ἔχειν
ἢ μηδὲν εἶναι καὶ στερηθῆναι πάτρας
φίλου τ᾽ ἀδελφοῦ φιλτάτης τε συγγόνου.
καὶ πρῶτα μέν μοι τοῦ λόγου τάδ᾽ ἀρχέτω·
γυναῖκές ἐσμεν, φιλόφρον ἀλλήλαις γένος
σῴζειν τε κοινὰ πράγματ᾽ ἀσφαλέσταται.
σιγήσαθ᾽ ἡμῖν καὶ συνεκπονήσατε
φυγάς. καλόν τοι γλῶσσ᾽ ὅτῳ πιστὴ παρῇ.
ὁρᾶτε δ᾽ ὡς τρεῖς μία τύχη τοὺς φιλτάτους,
ἢ γῆς πατρῴας νόστον ἢ θανεῖν ἔχει.
σωθεῖσα δ᾽, ὡς ἂν καὶ σὺ κοινωνῇς τύχης,
σώσω σ᾽ ἐς Ἑλλάδ᾽. ἀλλὰ πρός σε δεξιᾶς
σὲ καὶ σὲ ἱκνοῦμαι, σὲ δὲ φίλης παρηίδος,
γονάτων τε καὶ τῶν ἐν δόμοισι φιλτάτων

μητρὸς πατρός τε καὶ τέκνων ὅτῳ κυρεῖ.
τί φατέ; Τίς ὑμῶν φησιν ἢ τίς οὐ θέλειν —
φθέγξασθε — ταῦτα; Μὴ γὰρ αἰνουσῶν λόγους
ὅλωλα κἀγὼ καὶ κασίγνητος τάλας.

Χορός

Θάρσει, φίλη δέσποινα, καὶ σῴζου μόνον·
ὡς ἔκ γ᾽ ἐμοῦ σοι πάντα σιγηθήσεται —
ἴστω μέγας Ζεύς — ὧν ἐπισκήπτεις πέρι.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ὄναισθε μύθων καὶ γένοισθ᾽ εὐδαίμονες. [1078]
Σὸν ἔργον ἤδη καὶ σὸν ἐσβαίνειν δόμους·
ὡς αὐτίχ᾽ ἥξει τῆσδε κοίρανος χθονός,
θυσίαν ἐλέγχων εἰ κατείργασταί ξένων.
Ὦ πότνι᾽, ἥπερ μ᾽ Αὐλίδος κατὰ πτυχὰς
δεινῆς ἔσωσας ἐκ πατροκτόνου χερός,
σῶσόν με καὶ νῦν τούσδε τ᾽· ἢ τὸ Λοξίου
οὐκέτι βροτοῖσι διὰ σὲ ἐτήτυμον στόμα.
Αλλ᾽ εὐμενὴς ἔκβηθι βαρβάρου χθονὸς
ἐς τὰς Ἀθήνας· καὶ γὰρ ἐνθάδ᾽ οὐ πρέπει
ναίειν, παρόν σοι πόλιν ἔχειν εὐδαίμονα.

Χορός

Ὄρνις, ἃ παρὰ πετρίνας [1089]
πόντου δειράδας, ἀλκυών,
ἔλεγον οἶτον ἀείδεις,
εὐξύνετον ξυνετοῖς βοάν,
ὅτι πόσιν κελαδεῖς ἀεὶ μολπαῖς,
ἐγώ σοι παραβάλλομαι
θρήνους, ἄπτερος ὄρνις,
ποθοῦσ᾽ Ἑλλάνων ἀγόρους,
ποθοῦσ᾽ Ἄρτεμιν λοχίαν,
ἃ παρὰ Κύνθιον ὄχθον οἰ-
κεῖ φοίνικά θ᾽ ἁβροκόμαν

δάφναν τ᾽ εὐερνέα καὶ
γλαυκᾶς θαλλὸν ἱερὸν ἐλαί-
ας, Λατοῦς ὠδῖνα φίλαν,
λίμναν θ᾽ εἱλίσσουσαν ὕδωρ
κύκλιον, ἔνθα κύκνος μελῳ-
δὸς Μούσας θεραπεύει.
Ὦ πολλαὶ δακρύων λιβάδες,
αἳ παρηίδας εἰς ἐμὰς
ἔπεσον, ἀνίκα πύργων
ὀλομένων ἐν ναυσὶν ἔβαν
πολεμίων ἐρετμοῖσι καὶ λόγχαις.
Ζαχρύσου δὲ δι᾽ ἐμπολᾶς
νόστον βάρβαρον ἦλθον,
ἔνθα τᾶς ἐλαφοκτόνου
θεᾶς ἀμφίπολον κόραν
παῖδ᾽ Ἀγαμεμνονίαν λατρεύ-
ω βωμούς τ᾽ οὐ μηλοθύτας,
ζηλοῦσ᾽ ἄταν διὰ παν-
τὸς δυσδαίμον᾽· ἐν γὰρ ἀνάγ-
καις οὐ κάμνεις σύντροφος ὤν.
Μεταβάλλει δυσδαιμονία·
τὸ δὲ μετ᾽ εὐτυχίας κακοῦ-
σθαι θνατοῖς βαρὺς αἰών.
Καὶ σὲ μέν, πότνι᾽, Ἀργεία
πεντηκόντορος οἶκον ἄξει·
συρίζων θ᾽ ὁ κηροδέτας
κάλαμος οὐρείου Πανὸς
κώπαις ἐπιθωΰξει,
ὁ Φοῖβός θ᾽ ὁ μάντις ἔχων
κέλαδον ἑπτατόνου λύρας
ἀείδων ἄξει λιπαρὰν
εὖ σ᾽ Ἀθηναίων ἐπὶ γᾶν.
Ἐμὲ δ᾽ αὐτοῦ λιποῦσα
βήσῃ ῥοθίοισι πλάταις·
ἀέρι δὲ [ἱστία] πρότονοι κατὰ πρῷραν ὑ-
πὲρ στόλον ἐκπετάσουσι πόδα
ναὸς ὠκυπόμπου.

Λαμπροὺς ἱπποδρόμους βαίην,
ἔνθ᾽ εὐάλιον ἔρχεται πῦρ·
οἰκείων δ᾽ ὑπὲρ θαλάμων
πτέρυγας ἐν νώτοις ἁμοῖς
λήξαιμι θοάζουσα·
χοροῖς δ᾽ ἑσταίην, ὅθι καὶ
παρθένος, εὐδοκίμων γάμων,
παρὰ πόδ᾽ εἱλίσσουσα φίλας
ματρὸς ἡλίκων θιάσους,
χαρίτων εἰς ἀμίλλας,
χαίτας ἁβρόπλουτον ἔριν,
ὀρνυμένα, πολυποίκιλα φάρεα
καὶ πλοκάμους περιβαλλομένα
γένυσιν ἐσκίαζον.

Θόας

Ποῦ ᾽σθ᾽ ἡ πυλωρὸς τῶνδε δωμάτων γυνὴ [1153]
Ἑλληνίς; Ἤδη τῶν ξένων κατήρξατο;
Ἀδύτοις ἐν ἁγνοῖς σῶμα λάμπονται πυρί;

Χορός

Ἥδ᾽ ἐστίν, ἥ σοι πάντ᾽, ἄναξ, ἐρεῖ σαφῶς.

Θόας

Ἔα·
τί τόδε μεταίρεις ἐξ ἀκινήτων βάθρων,
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖ, θεᾶς ἄγαλμ᾽ ἐν ὠλέναις;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἄναξ, ἔχ᾽ αὐτοῦ πόδα σὸν ἐν παραστάσιν.

Θόας

Τί δ᾽ ἔστιν, Ἰφιγένεια, καινὸν ἐν δόμοις;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἀπέπτυσ᾽· Ὁσίᾳ γὰρ δίδωμ᾽ ἔπος τόδε.

Θόας

Τί φροιμιάζῃ νεοχμόν; Ἐξαύδα σαφῶς.

Ἰφιγένεια

Οὐ καθαρά μοι τὰ θύματ᾽ ἠγρεύσασθ᾽, ἄναξ.

Θόας

Τί τοὐκδιδάξαν τοῦτό σ᾽; Ἢ δόξαν λέγεις;

Ἰφιγένεια

Βρέτας τὸ τῆς θεοῦ πάλιν ἕδρας ἀπεστράφη. [1165]

Θόας

Αὐτόματον, ἤ νιν σεισμὸς ἔστρεψε χθονός;

Ἰφιγένεια

Αὐτόματον· ὄψιν δ᾽ ὀμμάτων ξυνήρμοσεν.

Θόας

Ἡ δ᾽ αἰτία τίς; Ἦ τὸ τῶν ξένων μύσος;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἥδ᾽, οὐδὲν ἄλλο· δεινὰ γὰρ δεδράκατον.

Θόας

Ἀλλ᾽ ἦ τιν᾽ ἔκανον βαρβάρων ἀκτῆς ἔπι; 1170

Ἰφιγένεια

Οἰκεῖον ἦλθον τὸν φόνον κεκτημένοι.

Θόας

Τίν᾽; Εἰς ἔρον γὰρ τοῦ μαθεῖν πεπτώκαμεν.

Ἰφιγένεια

Μητέρα κατειργάσαντο κοινωνῷ ξίφει.

Θόας

Ἄπολλον, οὐδ᾽ ἐν βαρβάροις ἔτλη τις ἄν.

Ἰφιγένεια

Πάσης διωγμοῖς ἠλάθησαν Ἑλλάδος.

Θόας

Ἦ τῶνδ᾽ ἕκατι δῆτ᾽ ἄγαλμ᾽ ἔξω φέρεις;

Ἰφιγένεια

Σεμνόν γ᾽ ὑπ᾽ αἰθέρ᾽, ὡς μεταστήσω φόνου.

Θόας

Μίασμα δ᾽ ἔγνως τοῖν ξένοιν ποίῳ τρόπῳ;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἤλεγχον, ὡς θεᾶς βρέτας ἀπεστράφη πάλιν.

Θόας

Σοφήν σ᾽ ἔθρεψεν Ἑλλάς, ὡς ᾔσθου καλῶς.

Ἰφιγένεια

Καὶ μὴν καθεῖσαν δέλεαρ ἡδύ μοι φρενῶν.

Θόας

Τῶν Ἀργόθεν τι φίλτρον ἀγγέλλοντέ σοι;

Ἰφιγένεια

Τὸν μόνον Ὀρέστην ἐμὸν ἀδελφὸν εὐτυχεῖν.

Θόας

Ὡς δή σφε σῴσαις ἡδοναῖς ἀγγελμάτων.

Ἰφιγένεια

Καὶ πατέρα γε ζῆν καὶ καλῶς πράσσειν ἐμόν.

Θόας

Σὺ δ᾽ ἐς τὸ τῆς θεοῦ γ᾽ ἐξένευσας εἰκότως.

Ἰφιγένεια

Πᾶσάν γε μισοῦσ᾽ Ἑλλάδ᾽, ἥ μ᾽ ἀπώλεσεν.

Θόας

Τί δῆτα δρῶμεν, φράζε, τοῖν ξένοιν πέρι;

Ἰφιγένεια

Τὸν νόμον ἀνάγκη τὸν προκείμενον σέβειν.

Θόας

Οὔκουν ἐν ἔργῳ χέρνιβες ξίφος τε σόν;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἁγνοῖς καθαρμοῖς πρῶτά νιν νίψαι θέλω.

Θόας

Πηγαῖσιν ὑδάτων ἢ θαλασσίᾳ δρόσῳ;

Ἰφιγένεια

Θάλασσα κλύζει πάντα τἀνθρώπων κακά.

Θόας

Ὁσιώτερον γοῦν τῇ θεᾷ πέσοιεν ἄν.

Ἰφιγένεια

Καὶ τἀμά γ᾽ οὕτω μᾶλλον ἂν καλῶς ἔχοι. [1195]

Θόας

Οὔκουν πρὸς αὐτὸν ναὸν ἐκπίπτει κλύδων;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἐρημίας δεῖ· καὶ γὰρ ἄλλα δράσομεν.

Θόας

Ἄγ᾽ ἔνθα χρῄζεις· οὐ φιλῶ τἄρρηθ᾽ ὁρᾶν.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἀγνιστέον μοι καὶ τὸ τῆς θεοῦ βρέτας.

Θόας

Εἴπερ γε κηλὶς ἔβαλέ νιν μητροκτόνος. 1200

Ἰφιγένεια

Οὐ γάρ ποτ᾽ ἄν νιν ἠράμην βάθρων ἄπο.

Θόας

Δίκαιος ηὐσέβεια καὶ προμηθία.

Ἰφιγένεια

Οἶσθά νυν ἅ μοι γενέσθω;

Θόας

Σὸν τὸ σημαίνειν τόδε.

Ἰφιγένεια

Δεσμὰ τοῖς ξένοισι πρόσθες.

Θόας

Ποῖ δέ σ᾽ ἐκφύγοιεν ἄν;

Ἰφιγένεια

Πιστὸν Ἑλλὰς οἶδεν οὐδέν. 1205

Θόας

Ἴτ᾽ ἐπὶ δεσμά, πρόσπολοι.

Ἰφιγένεια

Κἀκκομιζόντων δὲ δεῦρο τοὺς ξένους —

Θόας

Ἔσται τάδε.

Ἰφιγένεια

Κρᾶτα κρύψαντες πέπλοισιν.

Θόας

Ἡλίου πρόσθεν φλογός.

Ἰφιγένεια

Σῶν τέ μοι σύμπεμπ᾽ ὀπαδῶν.

Θόας

Οἵδ᾽ ὁμαρτήσουσί σοι.

Ἰφιγένεια

Καὶ πόλει πέμψον τιν᾽ ὅστις σημανεῖ —

Θόας

Ποίας τύχας;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἐν δόμοις μίμνειν ἅπαντας. [1210]

Θόας

Μὴ συναντῷεν φόνῳ;

Ἰφιγένεια

Μυσαρὰ γὰρ τὰ τοιάδ᾽ ἐστί.

Θόας

Στεῖχε καὶ σήμαινε σύ —

Ἰφιγένεια

Μηδέν᾽ εἰς ὄψιν πελάζειν.

Θόας

Εὖ γε κηδεύεις πόλιν.

Ἰφιγένεια

Καὶ φίλων γ᾽ οὓς δεῖ μάλιστα.

Θόας

Τοῦτ᾽ ἔλεξας εἰς ἐμέ.

Ἰφιγένεια

. . .

Θόας

Ὡς εἰκότως σε πᾶσα θαυμάζει πόλις.

Ἰφιγένεια

Σὺ δὲ μένων αὐτοῦ πρὸ ναῶν τῇ θεῷ —

Θόας

Τί χρῆμα δρῶ;

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἅγνισον πυρσῷ μέλαθρον.

Θόας

Καθαρὸν ὡς μόλῃς πάλιν.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν δ᾽ ἔξω περῶσιν οἱ ξένοι —

Θόας

Τί χρή με δρᾶν;

Ἰφιγένεια

Πέπλον ὀμμάτων προθέσθαι.

Θόας

Μὴ παλαμναῖον λάβω.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἤν δ᾽ ἄγαν δοκῶ χρονίζειν —

Θόας

Τοῦδ᾽ ὅρος τίς ἐστί μοι;

Ἰφιγένεια

Θαυμάσῃς μηδέν. 1220

Θόας

Τὰ τῆς θεοῦ πρᾶσσ᾽ — ἐπεὶ σχολή — καλῶς.

Ἰφιγένεια

Εἰ γὰρ ὡς θέλω καθαρμὸς ὅδε πέσοι.

Θόας

Συνεύχομαι.

Ἰφιγένεια

Τούσδ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἐκβαίνοντας ἤδη δωμάτων ὁρῶ ξένους [1222]
καὶ θεᾶς κόσμους νεογνούς τ᾽ ἄρνας, ὡς φόνῳ φόνον
μυσαρὸν ἐκνίψω, σέλας τε λαμπάδων τά τ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ὅσα
προυθέμην ἐγὼ ξένοισι καὶ θεᾷ καθάρσια. 1225
Ἐκποδὼν δ᾽ αὐδῶ πολίταις τοῦδ᾽ ἔχειν μιάσματος,
εἴ τις ἢ ναῶν πυλωρὸς χεῖρας ἁγνεύει θεοῖς
ἢ γάμον στείχει συνάψων ἢ τόκοις βαρύνεται,
φεύγετ᾽, ἐξίστασθε, μή τῳ προσπέσῃ μύσος τόδε.
Ὦ Διὸς Λητοῦς τ᾽ ἄνασσα παρθέν᾽, ἣν νίψω φόνον 1230
τῶνδε καὶ θύσωμεν οὗ χρή, καθαρὸν οἰκήσεις δόμον,
εὐτυχεῖς δ᾽ ἡμεῖς ἐσόμεθα. Τἄλλα δ᾽ οὐ λέγουσ᾽, ὅμως
τοῖς τὰ πλείον᾽ εἰδόσιν θεοῖς σοί τε σημαίνω, θεά.

Χορός

Εὔπαις ὁ Λατοῦς γόνος, [1234]
τόν ποτε Δηλιὰς ἐν καρποφόροις γυάλοις 1235
<ἔτικτε,> χρυσοκόμαν
ἐν κιθάρᾳ σοφόν, ἅ τ᾽ ἐπὶ τόξων 1238
εὐστοχίᾳ γάνυται· φέρε <δ᾽ αὐτά>
νιν ἀπὸ δειράδος εἰναλίας, 1240
λοχεῖα κλεινὰ λιποῦσα μά-
τηρ, τὰν ἀστάκτων ὑδάτων
βακχεύουσαν Διονύ-
σῳ Παρνάσιον κορυφάν·
ὅθι ποικιλόνωτος οἰ-
νωπὸς δράκων, 1245
σκιερᾷ κατάχαλκος εὐ-
φύλλῳ δάφνᾳ,
γᾶς πελώριον τέρας, ἄμφεπε μαντεῖ-
ον Χθόνιον.
Ἔτι μιν ἔτι βρέφος, ἔτι φίλας
ἐπὶ ματέρος ἀγκάλαισι θρῴσκων 1250
ἔκανες, ὦ Φοῖβε, μαντείων δ᾽ ἐπέβας ζαθέων,
τρίποδί τ᾽ ἐν χρυσέῳ θάσσεις, ἐν ἀψευδεῖ θρόνῳ 1254

μαντείας βροτοῖς θεσφάτων νέμων
ἀδύτων ὕπο, Κασταλίας ῥεέθρων γείτων, μέσον
γᾶς ἔχων μέλαθρον.

Θέμιν δ᾽ ἐπεὶ γᾶς ἰὼν
παῖδ᾽ ἀπενάσσατο <Πυθῶνος> ἀπὸ ζαθέων
χρηστηρίων, νύχια
Χθὼν ἐτεκνώσατο φάσματ᾽ ὀ<νείρων>,
οἳ πολέσιν μερόπων τά τε πρῶτα, τά τ᾽
ἔπειθ᾽, ὅσσα τ᾽ ἔμελλε τυχεῖν,
ὕπνου κατὰ δνοφερὰς γᾶς εὐ-
νὰς ἔφραζον· Γαῖα δὲ τὰν
μαντεῖον ἀφείλετο τι-
μὰν Φοῖβον, φθόνῳ θυγατρός.
Ταχύπους δ᾽ ἐς Ὄλυμπον ὀρ-
μαθεὶς ἄναξ
χέρα παιδνὸν ἕλιξεν ἐκ
Διὸς θρόνων
Πυθίων δόμων χθονίαν ἀφελεῖν μῆ-
νιν θεᾶς. [Νυχίους τ᾽ ἐνοπὰς.]
Γέλασε δ᾽, ὅτι τέκος ἄφαρ ἔβα
πολύχρυσα θέλων λατρεύματα σχεῖν·
ἐπὶ δ᾽ ἔσεισεν κόμαν, παῦσαι νυχίους ἐνοπάς,
ἀπὸ δ᾽ ἀλαθοσύναν νυκτωπὸν ἐξεῖλεν βροτῶν,
καὶ τιμὰς πάλιν θῆκε Λοξίᾳ,
πολυάνορι δ᾽ ἐν ξενόεντι θρόνῳ θάρση βροτοῖς
θεσφάτων ἀοιδαῖς.

Ἄγγελος

Ὦ ναοφύλακες βώμιοί τ᾽ ἐπιστάται, [1284]
Θόας ἄναξ γῆς τῆσδε ποῦ κυρεῖ βεβώς;
Καλεῖτ᾽ ἀναπτύξαντες εὐγόμφους πύλας
ἔξω μελάθρων τῶνδε κοίρανον χθονός.

Χορός

Τί δ᾽ ἔστιν, εἰ χρὴ μὴ κελευσθεῖσαν λέγειν;

Ἄγγελος

Βεβᾶσι φροῦδοι δίπτυχοι νεανίαι
Ἀγαμεμνονείας παιδὸς ἐκ βουλευμάτων
φεύγοντες ἐκ γῆς τῆσδε καὶ σεμνὸν βρέτας
λαβόντες ἐν κόλποισιν Ἑλλάδος νεώς.

Χορός

Ἄπιστον εἶπας μῦθον· ὃν δ᾽ ἰδεῖν θέλεις
ἄνακτα χώρας, φροῦδος ἐκ ναοῦ συθείς.

Ἄγγελος

Ποῖ; Δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν εἰδέναι τὰ δρώμενα.

Χορός

Οὐκ ἴσμεν· ἀλλὰ στεῖχε καὶ δίωκέ νιν
ὅπου κυρήσας τούσδ᾽ ἀπαγγελεῖς λόγους.

Ἄγγελος

Ὁρᾶτ᾽, ἄπιστον ὡς γυναικεῖον γένος·
μέτεστι χὑμῖν τῶν πεπραγμένων μέρος.

Χορός

Μαίνῃ· τί δ᾽ ἡμῖν τῶν ξένων δρασμοῦ μέτα;
Οὐκ εἶ κρατούντων πρὸς πύλας ὅσον τάχος;

Ἄγγελος

Οὔ, πρίν γ᾽ ἂν εἴπῃ τοὔπος ἑρμηνεὺς ὅδε,
εἴτ᾽ ἔνδον εἴτ᾽ οὐκ ἔνδον ἀρχηγὸς χθονός.
Ὢή, χαλᾶτε κλῆθρα, τοῖς ἔνδον λέγω,
καὶ δεσπότῃ σημήναθ᾽ οὕνεκ᾽ ἐν πύλαις
πάρειμι, καινῶν φόρτον ἀγγέλλων κακῶν.

Θόας

Τίς ἀμφὶ δῶμα θεᾶς τόδ᾽ ἴστησιν βοήν, [1307]
πύλας ἀράξας καὶ ψόφον πέμψας ἔσω;

Ἄγγελος

Φεῦ·
πῶς ἔλεγον αἴδε, καί μ᾽ ἀπήλαυνον δόμων,
ὡς ἐκτὸς εἴης· σὺ δὲ κατ᾽ οἶκον ἦσθ᾽ ἄρα.

Θόας

Τί προσδοκῶσαι κέρδος ἢ θηρώμεναι;

Ἄγγελος

Αὖθις τὰ τῶνδε σημανῶ· τὰ δ᾽ ἐν ποσὶ
παρόντ᾽ ἄκουσον. Ἡ νεᾶνις ἣ ᾽νθάδε
βωμοῖς παρίστατ᾽, Ἰφιγένει᾽, ἔξω χθονὸς
σὺν τοῖς ξένοισιν οἴχεται, σεμνὸν θεᾶς
ἄγαλμ᾽ ἔχουσα· δόλια δ᾽ ἦν καθάρματα.

Θόας

Πῶς φῄς; Τί πνεῦμα συμφορᾶς κεκτημένη;

Ἄγγελος

Σῴζουσ᾽ Ὀρέστην· τοῦτο γὰρ σὺ θαυμάσῃ.

Θόας

Τὸν ποῖον; Ἆρ᾽ ὃν Τυνδαρὶς τίκτει κόρη;

Ἄγγελος

Ὃν τοῖσδε βωμοῖς θεὰ καθωσιώσατο.

Θόας

Ὦ θαῦμα — πῶς σε μεῖζον ὀνομάσας τύχω;

Ἄγγελος

Μὴ ᾽νταῦθα τρέψῃς σὴν φρέν᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἄκουέ μου·
σαφῶς δ᾽ ἀθρήσας καὶ κλύων ἐκφρόντισον
διωγμὸς ὅστις τοὺς ξένους θηράσεται.

Θόας

Λέγ᾽· εὖ γὰρ εἶπας· οὐ γὰρ ἀγχίπλουν πόρον
φεύγουσιν, ὥστε διαφυγεῖν τοὐμὸν δόρυ.

Ἄγγελος

Ἐπεὶ πρὸς ἀκτὰς ἤλθομεν θαλασσίας, [1327]
οὗ ναῦς Ὀρέστου κρύφιος ἦν ὡρμισμένη,
ἡμᾶς μέν, οὓς σὺ δεσμὰ συμπέμπεις ξένων
ἔχοντας, ἐξένευσ᾽ ἀποστῆναι πρόσω
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖς, ὡς ἀπόρρητον φλόγα
θύουσα καὶ καθαρμὸν ὃν μετῴχετο,
αὐτὴ δ᾽ ὄπισθε δέσμ᾽ ἔχουσα τοῖν ξένοιν
ἔστειχε χερσί. Καὶ τάδ᾽ ἦν ὕποπτα μέν,
ἤρεσκε μέντοι σοῖσι προσπόλοις, ἄναξ.
Χρόνῳ δ᾽, ἵν᾽ ἡμῖν δρᾶν τι δὴ δοκοῖ πλέον,
ἀνωλόλυξε καὶ κατῇδε βάρβαρα
μέλη μαγεύουσ᾽, ὡς φόνον νίζουσα δή.
Ἐπεὶ δὲ δαρὸν ἦμεν ἥμενοι χρόνον,
ἐσῆλθεν ἡμᾶς μὴ λυθέντες οἱ ξένοι
κτάνοιεν αὐτὴν δραπέται τ᾽ οἰχοίατο.
Φόβῳ δ᾽ ἃ μὴ χρῆν εἰσορᾶν καθήμεθα
σιγῇ· τέλος δὲ πᾶσιν ἦν αὐτὸς λόγος
στείχειν ἵν᾽ ἦσαν, καίπερ οὐκ ἐωμένοις.
Κἀνταῦθ᾽ ὁρῶμεν Ἑλλάδος νεὼς σκάφος
ταρσῷ κατήρει πίτυλον ἐπτερωμένον,
ναύτας τε πεντήκοντ᾽ ἐπὶ σκαλμῶν πλάτας

ἔχοντας, ἐκ δεσμῶν δὲ τοὺς νεανίας
ἐλευθέρους πρύμνηθεν ἑστῶτας νεώς.
Κοντοῖς δὲ πρῷραν εἶχον, οἳ δ᾽ ἐπωτίδων
ἄγκυραν ἐξανῆπτον· οἳ δέ, κλίμακας
σπεύδοντες, ἦγον διὰ χερῶν πρυμνήσια,
πόντῳ δὲ δόντες τοῖν ξένοιν καθίεσαν.
Ἡμεῖς δ᾽ ἀφειδήσαντες, ὡς ἐσείδομεν
δόλια τεχνήματ᾽, εἰχόμεσθα τῆς ξένης
πρυμνησίων τε, καὶ δι᾽ εὐθυντηρίας
οἴακας ἐξηροῦμεν εὐπρύμνου νεώς.
Λόγοι δ᾽ ἐχώρουν· Τίνι λόγῳ πορθμεύετε
κλέπτοντες ἐκ γῆς ξόανα καὶ θυηπόλους;
Τίνος τίς ὢν σὺ τήνδ᾽ ἀπεμπολᾷς χθονός;
Ὁ δ᾽ εἶπ᾽· Ὀρέστης, τῆσδ᾽ ὅμαιμος, ὡς μάθῃς,
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖς, τήνδ᾽ ἐμὴν κομίζομαι
λαβὼν ἀδελφήν, ἣν ἀπώλεσ᾽ ἐκ δόμων.

Ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν ἧσσον εἰχόμεσθα τῆς ξένης
καὶ πρὸς σὲ ἔπεσθαι διεβιαζόμεσθά νιν·
ὅθεν τὰ δεινὰ πλήγματ᾽ ἦν γενειάδων.
Κεῖνοί τε γὰρ σίδηρον οὐκ εἶχον χεροῖν
ἡμεῖς τε· πυγμαί τ᾽ ἦσαν ἐγκροτούμεναι,
καὶ κῶλ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ἀμφοῖν τοῖν νεανίαιν ἅμα
ἐς πλευρὰ καὶ πρὸς ἧπαρ ἠκοντίζετο,
ὡς τῷ ξυνάπτειν καὶ συναποκαμεῖν μέλη.
Δεινοῖς δὲ σημάντροισιν ἐσφραγισμένοι
ἐφεύγομεν πρὸς κρημνόν, οἳ μὲν ἐν κάρᾳ
κάθαιμ᾽ ἔχοντες τραύματ᾽, οἳ δ᾽ ἐν ὄμμασιν·
ὄχθοις δ᾽ ἐπισταθέντες εὐλαβεστέρως
ἐμαρνάμεσθα καὶ πέτρους ἐβάλλομεν.
Ἀλλ᾽ εἶργον ἡμᾶς τοξόται πρύμνης ἔπι
σταθέντες ἰοῖς, ὥστ᾽ ἀναστεῖλαι πρόσω.
Κἀν τῷδε — δεινὸς γὰρ κλύδων ὤκειλε ναῦν
πρὸς γῆν, φόβος δ᾽ ἦν <παρθένῳ> τέγξαι πόδα —
λαβὼν Ὀρέστης ὦμον εἰς ἀριστερόν,
βὰς ἐς θάλασσαν κἀπὶ κλίμακος θορών,
ἔθηκ᾽ ἀδελφὴν ἐντὸς εὐσήμου νεώς,

τό τ᾽ οὐρανοῦ πέσημα, τῆς Διὸς κόρης
ἄγαλμα. Ναὸς <δ᾽> ἐκ μέσης ἐφθέγξατο
βοή τις· ὦ γῆς Ἑλλάδος ναῦται, νεὼς
λάβεσθε κώπαις ῥόθιά τ᾽ ἐκλευκαίνετε·
ἔχομεν γὰρ ὧνπερ οὕνεκ᾽ ἄξενον πόρον
Συμπληγάδων ἔσωθεν εἰσεπλεύσαμεν.

Οἳ δὲ στεναγμὸν ἡδὺν ἐκβρυχώμενοι
ἔπαισαν ἅλμην. Ναῦς δ᾽, ἕως μὲν ἐντὸς ἦν
λιμένος, ἐχώρει στόμια, διαπερῶσα δὲ
λάβρῳ κλύδωνι συμπεσοῦσ᾽ ἠπείγετο·
δεινὸς γὰρ ἐλθὼν ἄνεμος ἐξαίφνης νεὼς
ὠθεῖ παλίμπρυμν᾽ ἱστί᾽· οἳ δ᾽ ἐκαρτέρουν
πρὸς κῦμα λακτίζοντες· ἐς δὲ γῆν πάλιν
κλύδων παλίρρους ἦγε ναῦν. Σταθεῖσα δὲ
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖς ηὔξατ᾽· ὦ Λητοῦς κόρη
σῷσόν με τὴν σὴν ἱερέαν πρὸς Ἑλλάδα
ἐκ βαρβάρου γῆς καὶ κλοπαῖς σύγγνωθ᾽ ἐμαῖς.
Φιλεῖς δὲ καὶ σὺ σὸν κασίγνητον, θεά·
φιλεῖν δὲ κἀμὲ τοὺς ὁμαίμονας δόκει.
Ναῦται δ᾽ ἐπευφήμησαν εὐχαῖσιν κόρης
παιᾶνα, γυμνὰς ἐκ <πέπλων> ἐπωμίδας
κώπῃ προσαρμόσαντες ἐκ κελεύσματος.
Μᾶλλον δὲ μᾶλλον πρὸς πέτρας ᾔει σκάφος·
χὠ μέν τις ἐς θάλασσαν ὡρμήθη ποσίν,
ἄλλος δὲ πλεκτὰς ἐξανῆπτεν ἀγκύλας.
Κἀγὼ μὲν εὐθὺς πρὸς σὲ δεῦρ᾽ ἀπεστάλην,
σοὶ τὰς ἐκεῖθεν σημανῶν, ἄναξ, τύχας.
Ἀλλ᾽ ἕρπε, δεσμὰ καὶ βρόχους λαβὼν χεροῖν·
εἰ μὴ γὰρ οἶδμα νήνεμον γενήσεται,
οὐκ ἔστιν ἐλπὶς τοῖς ξένοις σωτηρίας.
Πόντου δ᾽ ἀνάκτωρ Ἴλιόν τ᾽ ἐπισκοπεῖ
σεμνὸς Ποσειδῶν, Πελοπίδαις ἐναντίος,
καὶ νῦν παρέξει τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος γόνον
σοὶ καὶ πολίταις, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐν χεροῖν
λαβεῖν, ἀδελφήν θ᾽, ἣ φόνον τὸν Αὐλίδι
ἀμνημόνευτον θεᾷ προδοῦσ᾽ ἁλίσκεται.

Χορός

Ὦ τλῆμον Ἰφιγένεια, συγγόνου μέτα
θανῇ πάλιν μολοῦσα δεσποτῶν χέρας.

Θόας

Ὦ πάντες ἀστοὶ τῆσδε βαρβάρου χθονός, [1422]
οὐκ εἶα πώλοις ἐμβαλόντες ἡνίας
παράκτιοι δραμεῖσθε κἀκβολὰς νεὼς
Ἑλληνίδος δέξεσθε, σὺν δὲ τῇ θεῷ
σπεύδοντες ἄνδρας δυσσεβεῖς θηράσετε,
οἳ δ᾽ ὠκυπομποὺς ἕλξετ᾽ ἐς πόντον πλάτας;
Ὡς ἐκ θαλάσσης ἔκ τε γῆς ἱππεύμασι
λαβόντες αὐτοὺς ἢ κατὰ στύφλου πέτρας
ῥίψωμεν, ἢ σκόλοψι πήξωμεν δέμας.
Ὑμᾶς δὲ τὰς τῶνδ᾽ ἵστορας βουλευμάτων,
γυναῖκες, αὖθις, ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν σχολὴν λάβω,
ποινασόμεσθα· νῦν δὲ τὴν προκειμένην
σπουδὴν ἔχοντες οὐ μενοῦμεν ἥσυχοι.

Ἀθήνα

Ποῖ ποῖ διωγμὸν τόνδε πορθμεύεις, ἄναξ [1435]
Θόας; Ἄκουσον τῆσδ᾽ Ἀθηναίας λόγους.
Παῦσαι διώκων ῥεῦμά τ᾽ ἐξορμῶν στρατοῦ·
πεπρωμένος γὰρ θεσφάτοισι Λοξίου
δεῦρ᾽ ἦλθ᾽ Ὀρέστης, τόν τ᾽ Ἐρινύων χόλον
φεύγων ἀδελφῆς τ᾽ Ἄργος ἐσπέμψων δέμας
ἄγαλμά θ᾽ ἱερὸν εἰς ἐμὴν ἄξων χθόνα,
τῶν νῦν παρόντων πημάτων ἀναψυχάς. 1441a
Πρὸς μὲν σὲ ὅδ᾽ ἡμῖν μῦθος· ὃν δ᾽ ἀποκτενεῖν 1442
δοκεῖς Ὀρέστην ποντίῳ λαβὼν σάλῳ,
ἤδη Ποσειδῶν χάριν ἐμὴν ἀκύμονα
πόντου τίθησι νῶτα πορθμεύειν πλάτῃ.
Μαθὼν δ᾽, Ὀρέστα, τὰς ἐμὰς ἐπιστολάς —
κλύεις γὰρ αὐδὴν καίπερ οὐ παρὼν θεᾶς —
χώρει λαβὼν ἄγαλμα σύγγονόν τε σήν.

Ὅταν δ᾽ Ἀθήνας τὰς θεοδμήτους μόλῃς,
χῶρός τις ἔστιν Ἀτθίδος πρὸς ἐσχάτοις
ὅροισι, γείτων δειράδος Καρυστίας,
ἱερός, Ἁλάς νιν οὐμὸς ὀνομάζει λεώς·
ἐνταῦθα τεύξας ναὸν ἵδρυσαι βρέτας,
ἐπώνυμον γῆς Ταυρικῆς πόνων τε σῶν,
οὓς ἐξεμόχθεις περιπολῶν καθ᾽ Ἑλλάδα
οἴστροις Ἐρινύων. Ἄρτεμιν δέ νιν βροτοὶ
τὸ λοιπὸν ὑμνήσουσι Ταυροπόλον θεάν.
Νόμον τε θὲς τόνδ᾽· ὅταν ἑορτάζῃ λεώς,
τῆς σῆς σφαγῆς ἄποιν᾽ ἐπισχέτω ξίφος
δέρῃ πρὸς ἀνδρὸς αἷμά τ᾽ ἐξανιέτω,
ὁσίας ἕκατι θεά θ᾽ ὅπως τιμὰς ἔχῃ.
Σὲ δ᾽ ἀμφὶ σεμνάς, Ἰφιγένεια, κλίμακας
Βραυρωνίας δεῖ τῇδε κληδουχεῖν θεᾷ·
οὗ καὶ τεθάψῃ κατθανοῦσα, καὶ πέπλων
ἄγαλμά σοι θήσουσιν εὐπήνους ὑφάς,
ἃς ἂν γυναῖκες ἐν τόκοις ψυχορραγεῖς
λίπωσ᾽ ἐν οἴκοις. Τάσδε δ᾽ ἐκπέμπειν χθονὸς
Ἑλληνίδας γυναῖκας ἐξεφίεμαι
γνώμης δικαίας οὕνεκ᾽
<*>
ἐκσῴσασα δὲ
καὶ πρίν σ᾽ Ἀρείοις ἐν πάγοις ψήφους ἴσας
κρίνασ᾽, Ὀρέστα· καὶ νόμισμ᾽ ἔσται τόδε,
νικᾶν ἰσήρεις ὅστις ἂν ψήφους λάβῃ.
Ἀλλ᾽ ἐκκομίζου σὴν κασιγνήτην χθονός,
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖ. — Καὶ σὺ μὴ θυμοῦ, Θόας.

Θόας

Ἄνασσ᾽ Ἀθάνα, τοῖσι τῶν θεῶν λόγοις
ὅστις κλύων ἄπιστος, οὐκ ὀρθῶς φρονεῖ.
Ἐγὼ δ᾽ Ὀρέστῃ τ᾽, εἰ φέρων βρέτας θεᾶς
βέβηκ᾽, ἀδελφῇ τ᾽ οὐχὶ θυμοῦμαι· τί γὰρ
πρὸς τοὺς σθένοντας θεοὺς ἁμιλλᾶσθαι καλόν;
Ἴτωσαν ἐς σὴν σὺν θεᾶς ἀγάλματι

γαῖαν, καθιδρύσαιντό τ᾽ εὐτυχῶς βρέτας.
Πέμψω δὲ καὶ τάσδ᾽ Ἑλλάδ᾽ εἰς εὐδαίμονα
γυναῖκας, ὥσπερ σὸν κέλευσμ᾽ ἐφίεται.
Παύσω δὲ λόγχην ἣν ἐπαίρομαι ξένοις
ναῶν τ᾽ ἐρετμά, σοὶ τάδ᾽ ὡς δοκεῖ, θεά.

Ἀθήνα

Αἰνῶ· τὸ γὰρ χρεὼν σοῦ τε καὶ θεῶν κρατεῖ.
Ἴτ᾽, ὦ πνοαί, ναυσθλοῦσθε τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος
παῖδ᾽ εἰς Ἀθήνας· συμπορεύσομαι δ᾽ ἐγὼ
σῴζουσ᾽ ἀδελφῆς τῆς ἐμῆς σεμνὸν βρέτας.

Χορός

Ἴτ᾽ ἐπ᾽ εὐτυχίᾳ τῆς σῳζομένης [1490]
μοίρας εὐδαίμονες ὄντες.
Ἀλλ᾽, ὦ σεμνὴ παρά τ᾽ ἀθανάτοις
καὶ παρὰ θνητοῖς, Παλλὰς Ἀθάνα,
δράσομεν οὕτως ὡς σὺ κελεύεις.
Μάλα γὰρ τερπνὴν κἀνέλπιστον
φήμην ἀκοαῖσι δέδεγμαι.

——— —

Ὦ μέγα σεμνὴ Νίκη, τὸν ἐμὸν
βίοτον κατέχοις
καὶ μὴ λήγοις στεφανοῦσα.

ION

Ἑρμῆς

Ἄτλας, ὁ χαλκέοισι † νώτοις οὐρανὸν
θεῶν παλαιὸν οἶκον ἐκτρίβων, θεῶν
μιᾶς † ἔφυσε Μαῖαν, ἣ ‘μ’ ἐγείνατο
Ἑρμῆν μεγίστῳ Ζηνί, δαιμόνων λάτριν.
[5] Ἥκω δὲ Δελφῶν τήνδε γῆν, ἵν’ ὀμφαλὸν
μέσον καθίζων Φοῖβος ὑμνῳδεῖ βροτοῖς
τά τ’ ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα θεσπίζων ἀεί.
ἔστιν γὰρ οὐκ ἄσημος Ἑλλήνων πόλις,
τῆς χρυσολόγχου Παλλάδος κεκλημένη,
[10] Οὗ παῖδ’ Ἐρεχθέως Φοῖβος ἔζευξεν γάμοις
βίᾳ Κρέουσαν, ἔνθα προσβόρρους πέτρας
Παλλάδος ὑπ’ ὄχθῳ τῆς Ἀθηναίων χθονὸς
Μακρὰς καλοῦσι γῆς ἄνακτες Ἀτθίδος.
Ἀγνὼς δὲ πατρί — τῷ θεῷ γὰρ ἦν φίλον —
[15] γαστρὸς διήνεγκ’ ὄγκον. Ὡς δ’ ἦλθεν χρόνος,
τεκοῦσ’ ἐν οἴκοις παῖδ’ ἀπήνεγκεν βρέφος
ἐς ταὐτὸν ἄντρον οὗπερ ηὐνάσθη θεῷ
Κρέουσα, κἀκτίθησιν ὡς θανούμενον
κοίλης ἐν ἀντίπηγος εὐτρόχῳ κύκλῳ,
[20] προγόνων νόμον σῴζουσα τοῦ τε γηγενοῦς
Ἐριχθονίου. Κείνῳ γὰρ ἡ Διὸς κόρη
φρουρὼ παραζεύξασα φύλακε σώματος
δισσὼ δράκοντε, παρθένοις Ἀγλαυρίσι
δίδωσι σῴζειν· ὅθεν Ἐρεχθείδαις ἐκεῖ
[25] νόμος τις ἔστιν ὄφεσιν ἐν χρυσηλάτοις
τρέφειν τέκνα. Ἀλλ’ ἣν εἶχε παρθένος χλιδὴν
τέκνῳ προσάψασ’ ἔλιπεν ὡς θανουμένῳ.
Κἄμ’ ὢν ἀδελφὸς Φοῖβος αἰτεῖται τάδε·

[29] ὦ σύγγον’, ἐλθὼν λαὸν εἰς αὐτόχθονα
[30] κλεινῶν Ἀθηνῶν — οἶσθα γὰρ θεᾶς πόλιν —
λαβὼν βρέφος νεογνὸν ἐκ κοίλης πέτρας

αὐτῷ σὺν ἄγγει σπαργάνοισί θ’ οἷς ἔχει
ἔνεγκε Δελφῶν τἀμὰ πρὸς χρηστήρια,
καὶ θὲς πρὸς αὐταῖς εἰσόδοις δόμων ἐμῶν.
[35] Τὰ δ’ ἄλλ’ — ἐμὸς γάρ ἐστιν, ὡς εἰδῇς, ὁ παῖς —
ἡμῖν μελήσει. Λοξίᾳ δ’ ἐγὼ χάριν
πράσσων ἀδελφῷ πλεκτὸν ἐξάρας κύτος
ἤνεγκα, καὶ τὸν παῖδα κρηπίδων ἔπι
τίθημι ναοῦ τοῦδ’, ἀναπτύξας κύτος
[40]ἑλικτὸν ἀντίπηγος, ὡς ὁρῷθ’ ὁ παῖς.

[41] Κυρεῖ δ’ ἅμ’ ἱππεύοντος ἡλίου κύκλῳ
προφῆτις ἐσβαίνουσα μαντεῖον θεοῦ·
ὄψιν δὲ προσβαλοῦσα παιδὶ νηπίῳ
ἐθαύμασ’ εἴ τις Δελφίδων τλαίη κόρη
[45] λαθραῖον ὠδῖν’ ἐς θεοῦ ῥῖψαι δόμον,
ὑπέρ τε θυμέλας διορίσαι πρόθυμος ἦν·
οἴκτῳ δ’ ἀφῆκεν ὠμότητα καὶ θεὸς
συνεργὸς ἦν τῷ παιδὶ μὴ ‘κπεσεῖν δόμων
τρέφει δέ νιν λαβοῦσα. Τὸν σπείραντα δὲ
[50] οὐκ οἶδε Φοῖβον οὐδὲ μητέρ’ ἧς ἔφυ,
ὁ παῖς τε τοὺς τεκόντας οὐκ ἐπίσταται.

[52] Νέος μὲν οὖν ὢν ἀμφὶ βωμίους τροφὰς
ἠλᾶτ’ ἀθύρων· ὡς δ’ ἀπηνδρώθη δέμας,
Δελφοί σφ’ ἔθεντο χρυσοφύλακα τοῦ θεοῦ
[55] ταμίαν τε πάντων πιστόν, ἐν δ’ ἀνακτόροις
θεοῦ καταζῇ δεῦρ’ ἀεὶ σεμνὸν βίον.
Κρέουσα δ’ ἡ τεκοῦσα τὸν νεανίαν
Ξούθῳ γαμεῖται συμφορᾶς τοιᾶσδ’ ὕπο·
ἦν ταῖς Ἀθήναις τοῖς τε Χαλκωδοντίδαις,
[60] οἳ γῆν ἔχουσ’ Εὐβοῖδα, πολέμιος κλύδων·
ὃν συμπονήσας καὶ συνεξελὼν δορὶ
γάμων Κρεούσης ἀξίωμ’ ἐδέξατο,
οὐκ ἐγγενὴς ὤν, Αἰόλου δὲ τοῦ Διὸς
γεγὼς Ἀχαιός. Χρόνια δὲ σπείρας λέχη
[65] ἄτεκνός ἐστι, καὶ Κρέουσ’· ὧν οὕνεκα
ἥκουσι πρὸς μαντεῖ’ Ἀπόλλωνος τάδε

ἔρωτι παίδων. Λοξίας δὲ τὴν τύχην
ἐς τοῦτ’ ἐλαύνει, κοὐ λέληθεν, ὡς δοκεῖ.
Δώσει γὰρ εἰσελθόντι μαντεῖον τόδε
Ξούθῳ τὸν αὐτοῦ παῖδα, καὶ πεφυκέναι
κείνου σφε φήσει, μητρὸς ὡς ἐλθὼν δόμους
γνωσθῇ Κρεούσῃ, καὶ γάμοι τε Λοξίου
κρυπτοὶ γένωνται παῖς τ’ ἔχῃ τὰ πρόσφορα.
Ἴωνα δ’ αὐτόν, κτίστορ’ Ἀσιάδος χθονός,
ὄνομα κεκλῆσθαι θήσεται καθ’ Ἑλλάδα.

Ἀλλ’ ἐς δαφνώδη γύαλα βήσομαι τάδε,
τὸ κρανθὲν ὡς ἂν ἐκμάθω παιδὸς πέρι.
Ὁρῶ γὰρ ἐκβαίνοντα Λοξίου γόνον
τόνδ’, ὡς πρὸ ναοῦ λαμπρὰ θῇ πυλώματα
δάφνης κλάδοισιν. Ὄνομα δ’, οὗ μέλλει τυχεῖν,
Ἴων’ ἐγώ <νιν> πρῶτος ὀνομάζω θεῶν.

Ἴων

Ἅρματα μὲν τάδε λαμπρὰ τεθρίππων
Ἥλιος ἤδη λάμπει κατὰ γῆν,
ἄστρα δὲ φεύγει πυρὶ τῷδ’ αἰθέρος
ἐς νύχθ’ ἱεράν·
Παρνησιάδες δ’ ἄβατοι κορυφαὶ
καταλαμπόμεναι τὴν ἡμερίαν
ἀψῖδα βροτοῖσι δέχονται.
Σμύρνης δ’ ἀνύδρου καπνὸς εἰς ὀρόφους
Φοίβου πέταται.
Θάσσει δὲ γυνὴ τρίποδα ζάθεον
Δελφίς, ἀείδουσ’ Ἕλλησι βοάς,
ἃς ἂν Ἀπόλλων κελαδήσῃ.
Ἀλλ’, ὦ Φοίβου Δελφοὶ θέραπες,
τὰς Κασταλίας ἀργυροειδεῖς
βαίνετε δίνας, καθαραῖς δὲ δρόσοις
ἀφυδρανάμενοι στείχετε ναούς·
στόμα τ’ εὔφημον φρουρεῖν ἀγαθόν,
φήμας τ’ ἀγαθὰς

τοῖς ἐθέλουσιν μαντεύεσθαι
γλώσσης ἰδίας ἀποφαίνειν.
Ἡμεῖς δέ, πόνους οὓς ἐκ παιδὸς
μοχθοῦμεν ἀεί, πτόρθοισι δάφνης
στέφεσίν θ' ἱεροῖς ἐσόδους Φοίβου
καθαρὰς θήσομεν, ὑγραῖς τε πέδον
ῥανίσιν νοτερόν· πτηνῶν τ' ἀγέλας,
αἳ βλάπτουσιν σέμν' ἀναθήματα,
τόξοισιν ἐμοῖς φυγάδας θήσομεν·
ὡς γὰρ ἀμήτωρ ἀπάτωρ τε γεγὼς
τοὺς θρέψαντας
Φοίβου ναοὺς θεραπεύω.

Ἄγ', ὦ νεηθαλὲς ὦ
καλλίστας προπόλευμα δά-
φνας, ἃ τὰν Φοίβου θυμέλαν
σαίρεις ὑπὸ ναοῖς,
κήπων ἐξ ἀθανάτων,
ἵνα δρόσοι τέγγουσ' ἱεραί,
<ῥοὰν> ἀέναον
παγᾶν ἐκπροϊ¨εῖσαι,
μυρσίνας ἱερὰν φόβαν·
ᾇ σαίρω δάπεδον θεοῦ
παναμέριος ἅμ' ἁλίου
πτέρυγι θοᾷ
λατρεύων τὸ κατ' ἦμαρ.
Ἴ Ὦ Παιὰν ὦ Παιάν,
εὐαίων εὐαίων
εἴης, ὦ Λατοῦς παῖ.

Καλόν γε τὸν πόνον, ὦ
Φοῖβε, σοὶ πρὸ δόμων λατρεύ-
ω τιμῶν μαντεῖον ἕδραν·
κλεινὸς δ' ὁ πόνος μοι
θεοῖσιν δούλαν χέρ' ἔχειν
οὐ θνατοῖς, ἀλλ' ἀθανάτοις·
εὐφάμους δὲ πόνους

μοχθεῖν οὐκ ἀποκάμνω.
Φοῖβός μοι γενέτωρ πατήρ·
τὸν βόσκοντα γὰρ εὐλογῶ,
τὸ δ᾽ ὠφέλιμον ἐμοὶ πατέρος
ὄνομα λέγω
Φοίβου τοῦ κατὰ ναόν.
Ὦ Παιὰν ὦ Παιάν,
εὐαίων εὐαίων
εἴης, ὦ Λατοῦς παῖ.

Ἀλλ᾽ ἐκπαύσω γὰρ μόχθους
δάφνας ὁλκοῖς,
χρυσέων δ᾽ ἐκ τευχέων ῥίψω
Γαίας παγάν,
ἂν ἀποχεύονται
Κασταλίας δῖναι,
νοτερὸν ὕδωρ βάλλων,
ὅσιος ἀπ᾽ εὐνᾶς ὤν.
Εἴθ᾽ οὕτως αἰεὶ Φοίβῳ
λατρεύων μὴ παυσαίμαν,
ἢ παυσαίμαν ἀγαθᾷ μοίρᾳ.
Ἔα ἔα·
φοιτῶσ᾽ ἤδη λείπουσίν τε
πτανοὶ Παρνασοῦ κοίτας·
αὐδῶ μὴ χρίμπτειν θριγκοῖς
μηδ᾽ ἐς χρυσήρεις οἴκους
μάρψω σ᾽ αὖ τόξοις, ὦ Ζηνὸς
κῆρυξ, ὀρνίθων γαμφηλαῖς
ἰσχὺν νικῶν.
Ὅδε πρὸς θυμέλας ἄλλος ἐρέσσει
κύκνος. Οὐκ ἄλλᾳ
φοινικοφαῆ πόδα κινήσεις;
Οὐδέν σ᾽ ἀ φόρμιγξ ἀ Φοίβου
σύμμολπος τόξων ῥύσαιτ᾽ ἄν.
Πάραγε πτέρυγας·
λίμνας ἐπίβα τᾶς Δηλιάδος·
αἰμάξεις, εἰ μὴ πείσῃ,

τὰς καλλιφθόγγους ᾠδάς.
[170] Ἔα ἔα·
τίς ὅδ’ ὀρνίθων καινὸς προσέβα;
Μῶν ὑπὸ θριγκοὺς εὐναίας
καρφυρὰς θήσων τέκνοις;
Ψαλμοί σ’ εἴρξουσιν τόξων.
Οὐ πείσῃ; Χωρῶν δίναις
[175] ταῖς Ἀλφειοῦ παιδούργει,
ἢ νάπος Ἴσθμιον,
ὡς ἀναθήματα μὴ βλάπτηται
ναοί θ’ οἱ Φοίβου. . . .
Κτείνειν δ’ ὑμᾶς αἰδοῦμαι
[180] τοὺς θεῶν ἀγγέλλοντας φήμας
θνατοῖς· οἷς δ’ ἔγκειμαι μόχθοις,
Φοίβῳ δουλεύσω, κοὐ λήξω
τοὺς βόσκοντας θεραπεύων.

Χορός

[184] Οὐκ ἐν ταῖς ζαθέαις Ἀθά-
[185] ναις εὐκίονες ἦσαν αὐ-
λαὶ θεῶν μόνον, οὐδ’ ἀγυι-
άτιδες θεραπεῖαι·
ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ Λοξίᾳ
τῷ Λατοῦς διδύμων προσώ-
πων καλλιβλέφαρον φῶς.
[190] Ἰδοὺ τάνδ’, ἄθρησον,
Λερναῖον ὕδραν ἐναίρει
χρυσέαις ἅρπαις ὁ Διὸς παῖς·
φίλα, πρόσιδ’ ὄσσοις.

Ὁρῶ. Καὶ πέλας ἄλλος αὐ-
[195] τοῦ πανὸν πυρίφλεκτον αἴ-
ρει τις ἦρ’ ὃς ἐμαῖσι μυ-
θεύεται παρὰ πήναις,
ἀσπιστὰς Ἰόλαος, ὃς
κοινοὺς αἰρόμενος πόνους

[200] Δίῳ παιδὶ συναντλεῖ;
Καὶ μὰν τόνδ’ ἄθρησον
πτεροῦντος ἔφεδρον ἵππου·
τὰν πῦρ πνέουσαν ἐναίρει
τρισώματον ἀλκάν.

[205] Πάντᾳ τοι βλέφαρον διώ-
κω. Σκέψαι κλόνον ἐν τείχεσ-
σι λαί¨νοισι Γιγάντων.
[208] Ὦ φίλαι, ὧδε δερκόμεσθα.
Λεύσσεις οὖν ἐπ’ Ἐγκελάδῳ
[210] γοργωπὸν πάλλουσαν ἴτυν
λεύσσω Παλλάδ’, ἐμὰν θεόν.
Τί γάρ; Κεραυνὸν ἀμφίπυρον
ὄβριμον ἐν Διὸς
ἐκηβόλοισι χερσίν;
[215] ὁρῶ· τὸν δάι¨ον
Μίμαντα πυρὶ καταιθαλοῖ.
Καὶ Βρόμιος ἄλλον ἀπολέμοι-
[217β] σι κισσίνοισι βάκτροις
ἐναίρει Γᾶς τέκνων ὁ Βακχεύς.

Σέ τοι, τὸν παρὰ ναὸν αὐ-
[220] δῶ· θέμις γυάλων ὑπερ-
βῆναι, λευκῷ ποδί γ’ ;

Ἴων

[222] Οὐ θέμις, ὦ ξέναι.

Χορός

Οὐδ’ ἂν
ἐκ σέθεν ἂν πυθοίμεθ’ αὐδάν;

Ἴων

Τίνα τήνδε θέλεις;

Χορός

Ἆρ’ ὄντως μέσον ὀμφαλὸν
γᾶς Φοίβου κατέχει δόμος;

Ἴων

Στέμμασί γ’ ἐνδυτόν, ἀμφὶ δὲ Γοργόνες.

Χορός

[225] Οὕτω καὶ φάτις αὐδᾷ.

Ἴων

Εἰ μὲν ἐθύσατε πέλανον πρὸ δόμων
καί τι πυθέσθαι χρῄζετε Φοίβου,
πάριτ’ ἐς θυμέλας· ἐπὶ δ’ ἀσφάκτοις
μήλοισι δόμων μὴ πάριτ’ ἐς μυχόν.

Χορός

[230] Ἔχω μαθοῦσα· θεοῦ δὲ νόμον
οὐ παραβαίνομεν,
ἃ δ’ ἐκτός, ὄμμα τέρψει.

Ἴων

Πάντα θεᾶσθ’, ὅ τι καὶ θέμις, ὄμμασι.

Χορός

Μεθεῖσαν δεσπόται
με θεοῦ γύαλα τάδ’ εἰσιδεῖν.

Ἴων

Δμῳαὶ δὲ τίνων κλῄζεσθε δόμων;

Χορός

[235] Παλλάδι σύνοικα τρόφιμα μέλα-
[235β] θρα τῶν ἐμῶν τυράννων·
παρούσας δ’ ἀμφὶ τᾶσδ’ ἐρωτᾷς.

Ἴων

[237] Γενναιότης σοι, καὶ τρόπων τεκμήριον
τὸ σχῆμ’ ἔχεις τόδ’, ἥτις εἶ ποτ’, ὦ γύναι.
Γνοίη δ’ ἂν ὡς τὰ πολλά γ’ ἀνθρώπου πέρι
[240] τὸ σχῆμ’ ἰδών τις εἰ πέφυκεν εὐγενής.
Ἔα·
ἀλλ’ ἐξέπληξάς μ’, ὄμμα συγκλήσασα σὸν
δακρύοις θ’ ὑγράνασ’ εὐγενῆ παρηίδα,
ὡς εἶδες ἁγνὰ Λοξίου χρηστήρια.
Τί ποτε μερίμνης ἐς τόδ’ ἦλθες, ὦ γύναι;
[245] Ὃ πάντες ἄλλοι γύαλα λεύσσοντες θεοῦ
χαίρουσιν, ἐνταῦθ’ ὄμμα σὸν δακρυρροεῖ;

Κρέουσα

[247] Ὦ ξένε, τὸ μὲν σὸν οὐκ ἀπαιδεύτως ἔχει
ἐς θαύματ’ ἐλθεῖν δακρύων ἐμῶν πέρι·
ἐγὼ δ’ ἰδοῦσα τούσδ’ Ἀπόλλωνος δόμους
[250] μνήμην παλαιὰν ἀνεμετρησάμην τινά·
οἴκοι δὲ τὸν νοῦν ἔσχον ἐνθάδ’ οὖσά που.
Ὦ τλήμονες γυναῖκες· ὦ τολμήματα
θεῶν. Τί δῆτα; Ποῖ δίκην ἀνοίσομεν,
εἰ τῶν κρατούντων ἀδικίαις ὀλούμεθα;

Ἴων

[255] Τί χρῆμ’ ἀνερμήνευτα δυσθυμῇ, γύναι;

Κρέουσα

Οὐδέν· μεθῆκα τόξα· τἀπὶ τῷδε δὲ
ἐγώ τε σιγῶ, καὶ σὺ μὴ φρόντιζ’ ἔτι.

Ἴων

Τίς δ’ εἶ; Πόθεν γῆς ἦλθες; Ἐκ ποίας πάτρας
πέφυκας; Ὄνομα τί σε καλεῖν ἡμᾶς χρεών;

Κρέουσα

[260] Κρέουσα μέν μοι τοὔνομ’, ἐκ δ’ Ἐρεχθέως
πέφυκα, πατρὶς γῆ δ’ Ἀθηναίων πόλις.

Ἴων

Ὦ κλεινὸν οἰκοῦσ’ ἄστυ γενναίων τ’ ἄπο
τραφεῖσα πατέρων, ὥς σε θαυμάζω, γύναι.

Κρέουσα

Τοσαῦτα κεὐτυχοῦμεν, ὦ ξέν’, οὐ πέρα.

Ἴων

[265] Πρὸς θεῶν ἀληθῶς, ὡς μεμύθευται βροτοῖς . . .;

Κρέουσα

Τί χρῆμ’ ἐρωτᾷς, ὦ ξέν’, ἐκμαθεῖν θέλων;

Ἴων

Ἐκ γῆς πατρός σου πρόγονος ἔβλαστεν πατήρ;

Κρέουσα

Ἐριχθόνιός γε· τὸ δὲ γένος μ’ οὐκ ὠφελεῖ.

Ἴων

῎Η καί σφ’ Ἀθάνα γῆθεν ἐξανείλετο;

Κρέουσα

[270] Ἐς παρθένους γε χεῖρας, οὐ τεκοῦσά νιν.

Ἴων

Δίδωσι δ’, ὥσπερ ἐν γραφῇ νομίζεται . . .;

Κρέουσα

Κέκροπός γε σῴζειν παισὶν οὐχ ὁρώμενον.

Ἴων

Ἤκουσα λῦσαι παρθένους τεῦχος θεᾶς.

Κρέουσα

Τοιγὰρ θανοῦσαι σκόπελον ἥμαξαν πέτρας.

Ἴων

[275] Εἶέν·
τί δαὶ τόδ’; ἦρ’ ἀληθὲς ἢ μάτην λόγος . . .

Κρέουσα

Τί χρῆμ’ ἐρωτᾷς; Καὶ γὰρ οὐ κάμνω σχολῇ.

Ἴων

Πατὴρ Ἐρεχθεὺς σὰς ἔθυσε συγγόνους;

Κρέουσα

Ἔτλη πρὸ γαίας σφάγια παρθένους κτανεῖν.

Ἴων

Σὺ δ’ ἐξεσώθης πῶς κασιγνήτων μόνη;

Κρέουσα

Βρέφος νεογνὸν μητρὸς ἦν ἐν ἀγκάλαις.

Ἴων

Πατέρα δ’ ἀληθῶς χάσμα σὸν κρύπτει χθονός;

Κρέουσα

Πληγαὶ τριαίνης ποντίου σφ’ ἀπώλεσαν.

Ἴων

Μακραὶ δὲ χῶρός ἐστ’ ἐκεῖ κεκλημένος;

Κρέουσα

Τί δ’ ἱστορεῖς τόδ’; Ὡς μ’ ἀνέμνησάς τινος.

Ἴων

Τιμᾷ σφε Πύθιος ἀστραπαί τε Πύθιαι.

Κρέουσα

Τιμᾶ τιμᾶ · ὡς μήποτ’ ὤφελόν σφ’ ἰδεῖν.

Ἴων

Τί δὲ στυγεῖς σὺ τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ φίλτατα;

Κρέουσα

Οὐδέν· ξύνοιδ’ ἄντροισιν αἰσχύνην τινά.

Ἴων

Πόσις δὲ τίς σ’ ἔγημ’ Ἀθηναίων, γύναι;

Κρέουσα

Οὐκ ἀστός, ἀλλ’ ἐπακτὸς ἐξ ἄλλης χθονός.

Ἴων

Τίς; Εὐγενῆ νιν δεῖ πεφυκέναι τινά.

Κρέουσα

Ξοῦθος, πεφυκὼς Αἰόλου Διός τ’ ἄπο.

Ἴων

Καὶ πῶς ξένος σ’ ὢν ἔσχεν οὖσαν ἐγγενῆ;

Κρέουσα

Εὔβοι’ Ἀθήναις ἔστι τις γείτων πόλις . . .

Ἴων

Ὄροις ὑγροῖσιν, ὡς λέγουσ’, ὡρισμένη.

Κρέουσα

Ταύτην ἔπερσε Κεκροπίδαις κοινῷ δορί.

Ἴων

Ἐπίκουρος ἐλθών; Κᾆτα σὸν γαμεῖ λέχος;

Κρέουσα

Φερνάς γε πολέμου καὶ δορὸς λαβὼν γέρας.

Ἴων

Σὺν ἀνδρὶ δ’ ἥκεις ἢ μόνη χρηστήρια;

Κρέουσα

[300] Σὺν ἀνδρί. σηκοὺς δ’ ἐκστρέφει Τροφωνίου.

Ἴων

Πότερα θεατὴς ἢ χάριν μαντευμάτων;

Κρέουσα

Κείνου τε Φοίβου θ’ ἓν θέλων μαθεῖν ἔπος.

Ἴων

Καρποῦ δ’ ὕπερ γῆς ἥκετ’, ἢ παίδων πέρι;

Κρέουσα

Ἄπαιδές ἐσμεν, χρόνι’ ἔχοντ’ εὐνήματα.

Ἴων

[305] Οὐδ’ ἔτεκες οὐδὲν πώποτ’, ἀλλ’ ἄτεκνος εἶ;

Κρέουσα

Ὁ Φοῖβος οἶδε τὴν ἐμὴν ἀπαιδίαν.

Ἴων

Ὦ τλῆμον, ὡς τἄλλ’ εὐτυχοῦσ’ οὐκ εὐτυχεῖς.

Κρέουσα

Σὺ δ’ εἶ τίς; Ὡς σου τὴν τεκοῦσαν ὤλβισα.

Ἴων

Τοῦ θεοῦ καλοῦμαι δοῦλος εἰμί τ’, ὦ γύναι.

Κρέουσα

Ἀνάθημα πόλεως, ἤ τινος πραθεὶς ὕπο;

Ἴων

Οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἕν· Λοξίου κεκλήμεθα.

Κρέουσα

Ἡμεῖς σ’ ἄρ’ αὖθις, ὦ ξέν’, ἀντοικτίρομεν.

Ἴων

Ὡς μὴ εἰδόθ’ ἥτις μ’ ἔτεκεν ἐξ ὅτου τ’ ἔφυν.

Κρέουσα

Ναοῖσι δ’ οἰκεῖς τοισίδ’ ἢ κατὰ στέγας;

Ἴων

Ἅπαν θεοῦ μοι δῶμ’, ἵν’ ἂν λάβῃ μ’ ὕπνος.

Κρέουσα

Παῖς δ’ ὢν ἀφίκου ναὸν ἢ νεανίας;

Ἴων

Βρέφος λέγουσιν οἱ δοκοῦντες εἰδέναι.

Κρέουσα

Καὶ τίς γάλακτί σ’ ἐξέθρεψε Δελφίδων;

Ἴων

Οὐπώποτ’ ἔγνων μαστόν· ἣ δ’ ἔθρεψέ με . . .

Κρέουσα

Τίς, ὦ ταλαίπωρ’; Ὡς νοσοῦσ’ ηὗρον νόσους.

Ἴων

Φοίβου προφῆτις, μητέρ’ ὡς νομίζομεν.

Κρέουσα

Ἐς δ’ ἄνδρ’ ἀφίκου τίνα τροφὴν κεκτημένος;

Ἴων

Βωμοί μ’ ἔφερβον οὐπιών τ’ ἀεὶ ξένος.

Κρέουσα

Τάλαινά σ’ ἡ τεκοῦσα· τίς ποτ’ ἦν ἄρα;

Ἴων

Ἀδίκημά του γυναικὸς ἐγενόμην ἴσως.

Κρέουσα

Ἔχεις δὲ βίοτον· εὖ γὰρ ἤσκησαι πέπλοις.

Ἴων

Τοῖς τοῦ θεοῦ κοσμούμεθ’, ᾧ δουλεύομεν.

Κρέουσα

Οὐδ’ ᾔξας εἰς ἔρευναν ἐξευρεῖν γονάς;

Ἴων

Ἔχω γὰρ οὐδέν, ὦ γύναι, τεκμήριον.

Κρέουσα

Φεῦ·
πέπονθέ τις σῇ μητρὶ ταὔτ᾽ ἄλλη γυνή.

Ἴων

Τίς; Εἰ πόνου μοι ξυλλάβοι, χαίροιμεν ἄν.

Κρέουσα

Ἧς οὕνεκ᾽ ἦλθον δεῦρο πρὶν πόσιν μολεῖν.

Ἴων

Ποῖόν τι χρῄζουσ᾽; Ὡς ὑπουργήσω, γύναι.

Κρέουσα

Μάντευμα κρυπτὸν δεομένη Φοίβου μαθεῖν.

Ἴων

Λέγοις ἄν· ἡμεῖς τἄλλα προξενήσομεν.

Κρέουσα

Ἄκουε δὴ τὸν μῦθον. ἀλλ᾽ αἰδούμεθα.

Ἴων

Οὔ τἄρα πράξεις οὐδέν· ἀργὸς ἡ θεός.

Κρέουσα

Φοίβῳ μιγῆναί φησί τις φίλων ἐμῶν.

Ἴων

Φοίβῳ γυνὴ γεγῶσα; Μὴ λέγ’, ὦ ξένη.

Κρέουσα

Καὶ παῖδά γ’ ἔτεκε τῷ θεῷ λάθρα πατρός.

Ἴων

Οὐκ ἔστιν· ἀνδρὸς ἀδικίαν αἰσχύνεται.

Κρέουσα

Οὗ φησιν αὐτή, καὶ πέπονθεν ἄθλια.

Ἴων

Τί χρῆμα δράσασ’, εἰ θεῷ συνεζύγη;

Κρέουσα

Τὸν παῖδ’ ὃν ἔτεκεν ἐξέθηκε δωμάτων.

Ἴων

Ὁ δ’ ἐκτεθεὶς παῖς ποῦ ‘στιν; Εἰσορᾷ φάος;

Κρέουσα

Οὐκ οἶδεν οὐδείς. Ταῦτα καὶ μαντεύομαι.

Ἴων

Εἰ δ’ οὐκέτ’ ἔστι, τίνι τρόπῳ διεφθάρη;

Κρέουσα

Θῆράς σφε τὸν δύστηνον ἐλπίζει κτανεῖν.

Ἴων

Ποίῳ τόδ’ ἔγνω χρωμένη τεκμηρίῳ;

Κρέουσα

[350] Ἐλθοῦσ’ ἵν’ αὐτὸν ἐξέθηκ’ οὐχ ηὗρ’ ἔτι.

Ἴων

Ἦν δὲ σταλαγμὸς ἐν στίβῳ τις αἵματος;

Κρέουσα

Οὔ φησι. καίτοι πόλλ’ ἐπεστράφη πέδον.

Ἴων

Χρόνος δὲ τίς τῷ παιδὶ διαπεπραγμένῳ;

Κρέουσα

Σοὶ ταὐτὸν ἥβης, εἴπερ, εἶχεν ἂν μέτρον.

Ἴων

[355] Ἀδικεῖ νιν ὁ θεός· ἡ τεκοῦσα δ’ ἀθλία.

Κρέουσα

Οὔκουν ἔτ’ ἄλλον γ’ ὕστερον τίκτει γόνον.

Ἴων

Τί δ’, εἰ λάθρα νιν Φοῖβος ἐκτρέφει λαβών;

Κρέουσα

Τὰ κοινὰ χαίρων οὐ δίκαια δρᾷ μόνος.

Ἴων

Οἴμοι· προσῳδὸς ἡ τύχη τὠμῷ πάθει.

Κρέουσα

Καὶ σέ, ὦ ξέν’, οἶμαι μητέρ’ ἀθλίαν ποθεῖν.

Ἴων

Καὶ μή γ’ ἐπ’ οἴκτόν μ’ ἔξαγ’ οὗ ‘λελήσμεθα.

Κρέουσα

Σιγῶ· πέραινε δ’ ὧν σ’ ἀνιστορῶ πέρι.

Ἴων

Οἶσθ’ οὖν ὃ κάμνει τοῦ λόγου μάλιστά σοι;

Κρέουσα

Τί δ’ οὐκ ἐκείνῃ τῇ ταλαιπώρῳ νοσεῖ;

Ἴων

Πῶς ὁ θεὸς ὃ λαθεῖν βούλεται μαντεύσεται;

Κρέουσα

Εἴπερ καθίζει τρίποδα κοινὸν Ἑλλάδος.

Ἴων

Αἰσχύνεται τὸ πρᾶγμα· μὴ ‘ξέλεγχέ νιν.

Κρέουσα

Ἀλγύνεται δέ γ’ ἡ παθοῦσα τῇ τύχῃ.

Ἴων

[369] Οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις σοι προφητεύσει τάδε.
[370] Ἐν τοῖς γὰρ αὐτοῦ δώμασιν κακὸς φανεὶς
Φοῖβος δικαίως τὸν θεμιστεύοντά σοι
δράσειεν ἄν τι πῆμα. Ἀπαλλάσσου, γύναι.
Τῷ γὰρ θεῷ τἀναντί᾽ οὐ μαντευτέον.
Ἐς γὰρ τοσοῦτον ἀμαθίας ἔλθοιμεν ἄν,
[375] εἰ τοὺς θεοὺς ἄκοντας ἐκπονήσομεν
φράζειν ἃ μὴ θέλουσιν, ἢ προβωμίοις
σφαγαῖσι μήλων ἢ δι᾽ οἰωνῶν πτεροῖς.
Ἂν γὰρ βίᾳ σπεύδωμεν ἀκόντων θεῶν,
ἄκοντα κεκτήμεσθα τἀγάθ᾽, ὦ γύναι·
[380] ἃ δ᾽ ἂν διδῶσ᾽ ἑκόντες, ὠφελούμεθα.

Χορός

Πολλαί γε πολλοῖς εἰσι συμφοραὶ βροτῶν,
μορφαὶ δὲ διαφέρουσιν· ἓν δ᾽ ἂν εὐτυχὲς
μόλις ποτ᾽ ἐξεύροι τις ἀνθρώπων βίῳ.

Κρέουσα

[384] Ὦ Φοῖβε, κἀκεῖ κἀνθάδ᾽ οὐ δίκαιος εἶ
[385] ἐς τὴν ἀποῦσαν, ἧς πάρεισιν οἱ λόγοι·
ὃς οὔτ᾽ ἔσωσας τὸν σὸν ὃν σῶσαί σ᾽ ἐχρῆν,
οὔθ᾽ ἱστορούσῃ μητρὶ μάντις ὢν ἐρεῖς,
ὡς, εἰ μὲν οὐκέτ᾽ ἔστιν, ὀγκωθῇ τάφῳ,
εἰ δ᾽ ἔστιν . . .
[390] Ἀλλ᾽ ἐᾶν χρὴ τάδ᾽, εἰ πρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ
κωλυόμεσθα μὴ μαθεῖν ἃ βούλομαι.

Ἀλλ᾽, ὦ ξέν᾽, εἰσορῶ γὰρ εὐγενῆ πόσιν
Ξοῦθον πέλας δὴ τόνδε, τὰς Τροφωνίου
λιπόντα θαλάμας, τοὺς λελεγμένους λόγους
[395] σίγα πρὸς ἄνδρα, μή τιν᾽ αἰσχύνην λάβω
διακονοῦσα κρυπτά, καὶ προβῇ λόγος
οὐχ ᾗπερ ἡμεῖς αὐτὸν ἐξειλίσσομεν.
Τὰ γὰρ γυναικῶν δυσχερῆ πρὸς ἄρσενας,

κἀν ταῖς κακαῖσιν ἀγαθαὶ μεμειγμέναι
μισούμεθ'· οὕτω δυστυχεῖς πεφύκαμεν.

Ξοῦθος

Πρῶτον μὲν ὁ θεὸς τῶν ἐμῶν προσφθεγμάτων
λαβὼν ἀπαρχὰς χαιρέτω, σύ τ', ὦ γύναι.
Μῶν χρόνιος ἐλθών σ' ἐξέπληξ' ὀρρωδίᾳ;

Κρέουσα

Οὐδέν γ'· ἀφίκου δ' ἐς μέριμναν. Ἀλλά μοι
λέξον, τί θέσπισμ' ἐκ Τροφωνίου φέρεις,
παίδων ὅπως νῷν σπέρμα συγκραθήσεται;

Ξοῦθος

Οὐκ ἠξίωσε τοῦ θεοῦ προλαμβάνειν
μαντεύμαθ'· ἓν δ' οὖν εἶπεν· οὐκ ἄπαιδά με
πρὸς οἶκον ἥξειν οὐδὲ σὲ ἐκ χρηστηρίων.

Κρέουσα

Ὦ πότνια Φοίβου μῆτερ, εἰ γὰρ αἰσίως
ἔλθοιμεν, ἅ τε νῷν συμβόλαια πρόσθεν ἦν
ἐς παῖδα τὸν σόν, μεταπέσοι βελτίονα.

Ξοῦθος

ἔσται τάδ'· ἀλλὰ τίς προφητεύει θεοῦ;

Ἴων

Ἡμεῖς τά γ' ἔξω, τῶν ἔσω δ' ἄλλοις μέλει,
οἳ πλησίον θάσσουσι τρίποδος, ὦ ξένε,
Δελφῶν ἀριστῆς, οὓς ἐκλήρωσεν πάλος.

Ξοῦθος

Καλῶς· ἔχω δὴ πάνθ’ ὅσων ἐχρῄζομεν.
Στείχοιμ’ ἂν εἴσω· καὶ γάρ, ὡς ἐγὼ κλύω,
χρηστήριον πέπτωκε τοῖς ἐπήλυσι
κοινὸν πρὸ ναοῦ· βούλομαι δ’ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ
τῇδ’ αἰσία γάρ θεοῦ λαβεῖν μαντεύματα.
Σὺ δ’ ἀμφὶ βωμούς, ὦ γύναι, δαφνηφόρους
λαβοῦσα κλῶνας, εὐτέκνους εὔχου θεοῖς
χρησμούς μ’ ἐνεγκεῖν ἐξ Ἀπόλλωνος δόμων.

Κρέουσα

Ἔσται τάδ’, ἔσται. Λοξίας δ’ ἐὰν θέλῃ
νῦν ἀλλὰ τὰς πρὶν ἀναλαβεῖν ἁμαρτίας,
ἅπας μὲν οὐ γένοιτ’ ἂν εἰς ἡμᾶς φίλος,
ὅσον δὲ χρῄζει θεὸς γάρ ἐστι δέξομαι.

Ἴων

Τί ποτε λόγοισιν ἡ ξένη πρὸς τὸν θεὸν
κρυπτοῖσιν αἰεὶ λοιδοροῦσ’ αἰνίσσεται;
Ἤτοι φιλοῦσά γ’ ἧς ὕπερ μαντεύεται,
ἢ καί τι σιγῶσ’ ὧν σιωπᾶσθαι χρεών;
Ἀτὰρ θυγατρὸς τῆς Ἐρεχθέως τί μοι
μέλει; Προσήκει γ’ οὐδέν. Ἀλλὰ χρυσέαις
πρόχοισιν ἐλθὼν εἰς ἀπορραντήρια
δρόσον καθήσω. Νουθετητέος δέ μοι
Φοῖβος, τί πάσχει· Παρθένους βίᾳ γαμῶν
προδίδωσι; Παῖδας ἐκτεκνούμενος λάθρᾳ
θνῄσκοντας ἀμελεῖ; Μὴ σύ γ’· ἀλλ’, ἐπεὶ κρατεῖς,
ἀρετὰς δίωκε. Καὶ γὰρ ὅστις ἂν βροτῶν
κακὸς πεφύκῃ, ζημιοῦσιν οἱ θεοί.
Πῶς οὖν δίκαιον τοὺς νόμους ὑμᾶς βροτοῖς
γράψαντας, αὐτοὺς ἀνομίαν ὀφλισκάνειν;
Εἰ δ’ οὐ γὰρ ἔσται, τῷ λόγῳ δὲ χρήσομαι
δίκας βιαίων δώσετ’ ἀνθρώποις γάμων,
σὺ καὶ Ποσειδῶν Ζεύς θ’ ὃς οὐρανοῦ κρατεῖ,
ναοὺς τίνοντες ἀδικίας κενώσετε.
Τὰς ἡδονὰς γὰρ τῆς προμηθίας πάρος

σπεύδοντες ἀδικεῖτ’. οὐκέτ’ ἀνθρώπους κακῶς
λέγειν δίκαιον, εἰ τὰ τῶν θεῶν καλὰ
μιμούμεθ’, ἀλλὰ τοὺς διδάσκοντας τάδε.

Χορός

Σὲ τὰν ὠδίνων λοχιᾶν
ἀνειλείθυιαν, ἐμὰν
Ἀθάναν, ἱκετεύω,
Προμηθεῖ Τιτᾶνι λοχευ-
θεῖσαν κατ’ ἀκροτάτας
κορυφᾶς Διός, ὦ μάκαιρα Νίκα,
μόλε Πύθιον οἶκον,
Ὀλύμπου χρυσέων θαλάμων
πταμένα πρὸς ἀγυιάς,
Φοιβήιος ἔνθα γᾶς
μεσσόμφαλος ἑστία
παρὰ χορευομένῳ τρίποδι
μαντεύματα κραίνει,
σὺ καὶ παῖς ἁ Λατογενής,
δύο θεαὶ δύο παρθένοι,
κασίγνηται σεμναὶ Φοίβου.
ἱκετεύσατε δ’, ὦ κόραι,
τὸ παλαιὸν Ἐρεχθέως
γένος εὐτεκνίας χρονίου καθαροῖς
μαντεύμασι κῦρσαι.

Ὑπερβαλλούσας γὰρ ἔχει
θνατοῖς εὐδαιμονίας
ἀκίνητον ἀφορμάν,
τέκνων οἷς ἂν καρποτρόφοι
λάμπωσιν ἐν θαλάμοις
πατρίοισι νεάνιδες ἦβαι,
διαδέκτορα πλοῦτον
ὡς ἔξοντες ἐκ πατέρων
ἑτέροις ἐπὶ τέκνοις.
Ἀλκά τε γὰρ ἐν κακοῖς

σύν τ’ εὐτυχίαις φίλον,
δορί τε γᾷ πατρίᾳ φέρει
σωτήριον ἀλκάν.
[485] Ἐμοὶ μὲν πλούτου τε πάρος
βασιλικῶν τ’ εἶεν θαλάμων
τροφαὶ κήδειοι κεδνῶν γε τέκνων.
τὸν ἄπαιδα δ’ ἀποστυγῶ
βίον, ᾧ τε δοκεῖ ψέγω·
[490] μετὰ δὲ κτεάνων μετρίων βιοτᾶς
εὔπαιδος ἐχοίμαν.

[492] Ὦ Πανὸς θακήματα καὶ
παραυλίζουσα πέτρα
μυχώδεσι Μακραῖς,
[495] ἵνα χοροὺς στείβουσι ποδοῖν
Ἀγλαύρου κόραι τρίγονοι
στάδια χλοερὰ πρὸ Παλλάδος
ναῶν, συρίγγων
ὑπ’ αἰόλας ἰαχᾶς
[500] ὕμνων, ὅτ’ ἀναλίοις
συρίζεις, ὦ Πάν,
τοῖς σοῖσιν ἐν ἄντροις,
ἵνα τεκοῦσά τις Φοίβῳ
παρθένος, ὦ μελέα, βρέφος,
πτανοῖς ἐξόρισεν θοίναν
[505] θηρσί τε φοινίαν δαῖτα, πικρῶν γάμων
ὕβριν· οὔτ’ ἐπὶ κερκίσιν οὔτε λόγοις
φάτιν ἄιον εὐτυχίας μετέχειν
θεόθεν τέκνα θνατοῖς.

Ἴων

[510] Πρόσπολοι γυναῖκες, αἳ τῶνδ’ ἀμφὶ κρηπῖδας δόμων
θυοδόκων φρούρημ’ ἔχουσαι δεσπότιν φυλάσσετε,
ἐκλέλοιπ’ ἤδη τὸν ἱερὸν τρίποδα καὶ χρηστήριον
Ξοῦθος, ἢ μίμνει κατ’ οἶκον ἱστορῶν ἀπαιδίαν;

Χορός

Ἐν δόμοις ἔστ’, ὦ ξέν’· οὔπω δῶμ’ ὑπερβαίνει τόδε.
[515] ὡς δ’ ἐπ’ ἐξόδοισιν ὄντος, τῶνδ’ ἀκούομεν πυλῶν
δοῦπον, ἐξιόντα τ’ ἤδη δεσπότην ὁρᾶν πάρα.

Ξοῦθος

Ὦ τέκνον, χαῖρ’· ἡ γὰρ ἀρχὴ τοῦ λόγου πρέπουσά μοι.

Ἴων

Χαίρομεν· σὺ δ’ εὖ φρόνει γε, καὶ δύ’ ὄντ’ εὖ πράξομεν.

Ξοῦθος

Δὸς χερὸς φίλημά μοι σῆς σώματός τ’ ἀμφιπτυχάς.

Ἴων

[520] Εὖ φρονεῖς μέν; Ἤ σ’ ἔμηνε θεοῦ τις, ὦ ξένε, βλάβη;

Ξοῦθος

Σωφρονῶ· τὰ φίλταθ’ εὑρὼν οὐ φυγεῖν ἐφίεμαι.

Ἴων

Παῦε, μὴ ψαύσας τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ στέμματα ῥήξῃς χερί.

Ξοῦθος

Ἅψομαι· κοὐ ῥυσιάζω, τἀμὰ δ’ εὑρίσκω φίλα.

Ἴων

Οὐκ ἀπαλλάξῃ, πρὶν εἴσω τόξα πλευμόνων λαβεῖν;

Ξοῦθος

[525] Ὢ τί δὴ φεύγεις με; Σαυτοῦ γνωρίσας τὰ φίλτατα

Ἴων

Οὐ φιλῶ φρενοῦν ἀμούσους καὶ μεμηνότας ξένους.

Ξοῦθος

Κτεῖνε καὶ πίμπρη· πατρὸς γάρ, ἢν κτάνῃς, ἔσῃ φονεύς.

Ἴων

Ποῦ δέ μοι πατὴρ σύ; Ταῦτ᾽ οὖν οὐ γέλως κλύειν ἐμοῦ;

Ξοῦθος

Οὔ· τρέχων ὁ μῦθος ἄν σοι τἀμὰ σημήνειεν ἄν.

Ἴων

[530] Καὶ τί μοι λέξεις;

Ξοῦθος

Πατὴρ σός εἰμι καὶ σὺ παῖς ἐμός.

Ἴων

Τίς λέγει τάδε;

Ξοῦθος

Ὅς σ᾽ ἔθρεψεν ὄντα Λοξίας ἐμόν.

Ἴων

Μαρτυρεῖς σαυτῷ.

Ξοῦθος

Τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ γ᾽ ἐκμαθὼν χρηστήρια.

Ἴων

Ἐσφάλης αἴνιγμ’ ἀκούσας.

Ξοῦθος

Οὐκ ἄρ’ ὀρθ’ ἀκούομεν.

Ἴων

Ὁ δὲ λόγος τίς ἐστι Φοίβου;

Ξοῦθος

Τὸν συναντήσαντά μοι

Ἴων

[535] Τίνα συνάντησιν;

Ξοῦθος

Δόμων τῶνδ’ ἐξιόντι τοῦ θεοῦ

Ἴων

Συμφορᾶς τίνος κυρῆσαι;

Ξοῦθος

Παῖδ’ ἐμὸν πεφυκέναι.

Ἴων

Σὸν γεγῶτ’, ἢ δῶρον ἄλλως;

Ξοῦθος

Δῶρον, ὄντα δ’ ἐξ ἐμοῦ.

Ἴων

Πρῶτα δῆτ᾽ ἐμοὶ ξυνάπτεις πόδα σόν;

Ξοῦθος

Οὐκ ἄλλῳ, τέκνον.

Ἴων

Ἡ τύχη πόθεν ποθ᾽ ἥκει;

Ξοῦθος

Δύο μίαν θαυμάζομεν.

Ἴων

[540] Ἔα. τίνος δέ σοι πέφυκα μητρός;

Ξοῦθος

Οὐκ ἔχω φράσαι.

Ἴων

Οὐδὲ Φοῖβος εἶπε;

Ξοῦθος

Τερφθεὶς τοῦτο, κεῖν᾽ οὐκ ἠρόμην.

Ἴων

Γῆς ἄρ᾽ ἐκπέφυκα μητρός.

Ξοῦθος

Οὐ πέδον τίκτει τέκνα.

Ἴων

Πῶς ἂν οὖν εἴην σός;

Ξοῦθος

Οὐκ οἶδ’, ἀναφέρω δ’ ἐς τὸν θεόν.

Ἴων

Φέρε λόγων ἁψώμεθ’ ἄλλων.

Ξοῦθος

Ταῦτ’ ἀμείνον’, ὦ τέκνον.

Ἴων

[545] Ἦλθες ἐς νόθον τι λέκτρον;

Ξοῦθος

Μωρίᾳ γε τοῦ νέου.

Ἴων

Πρὶν κόρην λαβεῖν Ἐρεχθέως;

Ξοῦθος

Οὐ γὰρ ὕστερόν γέ πω.

Ἴων

Ἆρα δῆτ’ ἐκεῖ μ’ ἔφυσας;

Ξοῦθος

Τῷ χρόνῳ γε συντρέχει.

Ἴων

Κᾆτα πῶς ἀφικόμεσθα δεῦρο

Ξοῦθος

Ταῦτ’ ἀμηχανῶ.

Ἴων

Διὰ μακρᾶς ἐλθὼν κελεύθου;

Ξοῦθος

Τοῦτο κἄμ’ ἀπαιολεῖ.

Ἴων

[550] Πυθίαν δ’ ἦλθες πέτραν πρίν;

Ξοῦθος

Ἐς φανάς γε Βακχίου.

Ἴων

Προξένων δ’ ἔν του κατέσχες;

Ξοῦθος

Ὅς με Δελφίσιν κόραις . . .

Ἴων

Ἐθιάσευσ’, ἢ πῶς τάδ’ αὐδᾷς;

Ξοῦθος

Μαινάσιν γε Βακχίου.

Ἴων

Ἔμφρον’ ἢ κάτοινον ὄντα;

Ξοῦθος

Βακχίου πρὸς ἡδοναῖς.

Ἴων

Τοῦτ’ ἐκεῖν’ ἴν’ ἐσπάρημεν.

Ξοῦθος

Ὁ πότμος ἐξηῦρεν, τέκνον.

Ἴων

[555] Πῶς δ’ ἀφικόμεσθα ναούς;

Ξοῦθος

Ἔκβολον κόρης ἴσως.

Ἴων

Ἐκπεφεύγαμεν τὸ δοῦλον.

Ξοῦθος

Πατέρα νυν δέχου, τέκνον.

Ἴων

Τῷ θεῷ γοῦν οὐκ ἀπιστεῖν εἰκός.

Ξοῦθος

Εὖ φρονεῖς ἄρα.

Ἴων

Καὶ τί βουλόμεσθά γ’ ἄλλο

Ξοῦθος

Νῦν ὁρᾷς ἃ χρή σ’ ὁρᾶν.

Ἴων

Ἢ Διὸς παιδὸς γενέσθαι παῖς;

Ξοῦθος

Ὃ σοί γε γίγνεται.

Ἴων

[560] Ἦ θίγω δῆθ’ οἵ μ’ ἔφυσαν;

Ξοῦθος

Πιθόμενός γε τῷ θεῷ.

Ἴων

Χαῖρέ μοι, πάτερ

Ξοῦθος

Φίλον γε φθέγμ’ ἐδεξάμην τόδε.

Ἴων

Ἡμέρα θ’ ἡ νῦν παροῦσα.

Ξοῦθος

Μακάριόν γ’ ἔθηκέ με.

Ἴων

Ὦ φίλη μῆτερ, πότ᾽ ἆρα καὶ σὸν ὄψομαι δέμας;
Νῦν ποθῶ σε μᾶλλον ἢ πρίν, ἥτις εἶ ποτ᾽, εἰσιδεῖν.
[565] Ἀλλ᾽ ἴσως τέθνηκας, ἡμεῖς δ᾽ οὐδὲν ἂν δυναίμεθα.

Χορός

Κοιναὶ μὲν ἡμῖν δωμάτων εὐπραξίαι·
ὅμως δὲ καὶ δέσποιναν ἐς τέκν᾽ εὐτυχεῖν
ἐβουλόμην ἂν τούς τ᾽ Ἐρεχθέως δόμους.

Ξοῦθος

[569] Ὦ τέκνον, ἐς μὲν σὴν ἀνεύρεσιν θεὸς
[570] ὀρθῶς ἔκρανε, καὶ συνῆψ᾽ ἐμοί τε σέ,
σύ τ᾽ αὖ τὰ φίλταθ᾽ ηὗρες οὐκ εἰδὼς πάρος.
Ὃ δ᾽ ᾔξας ὀρθῶς, τοῦτο κἄμ᾽ ἔχει πόθος,
ὅπως σύ τ᾽, ὦ παῖ, μητέρ᾽ εὑρήσεις σέθεν,
ἐγώ θ᾽ ὁποίας μοι γυναικὸς ἐξέφυς.
[575] Χρόνῳ δὲ δόντες ταῦτ᾽ ἴσως εὕροιμεν ἄν.
Ἀλλ᾽ ἐκλιπὼν θεοῦ δάπεδ᾽ ἀληteίαν τε σὴν
ἐς τὰς Ἀθήνας στεῖχε κοινόφρων πατρί,
οὗ σ᾽ ὄλβιον μὲν σκῆπτρον ἀναμένει πατρός,
πολὺς δὲ πλοῦτος· οὐδὲ θάτερον νοσῶν
[580] δυοῖν κεκλήσῃ δυσγενὴς πένης θ᾽ ἅμα,
ἀλλ᾽ εὐγενής τε καὶ πολυκτήμων βίου.
Σιγᾷς; Τί πρὸς γῆν ὄμμα σὸν βαλὼν ἔχεις;
Ἐς φροντίδας δ᾽ ἀπῆλθες, ἐκ δὲ χαρμονῆς
πάλιν μεταστὰς δεῖμα προσβάλλεις πατρί.

Ἴων

[585] Οὐ ταὐτὸν εἶδος φαίνεται τῶν πραγμάτων
πρόσωθεν ὄντων ἐγγύθεν θ᾽ ὁρωμένων.
Ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν μὲν συμφορὰν ἀσπάζομαι,
πατέρα σ᾽ ἀνευρών· ὧν δὲ γιγνώσκω, πάτερ,
ἄκουσον. Εἶναί φασι τὰς αὐτόχθονας

κλεινὰς Ἀθήνας οὐκ ἐπείσακτον γένος,
ἵν’ ἐσπεσοῦμαι δύο νόσω κεκτημένος,
πατρός τ’ ἐπακτοῦ καὐτὸς ὢν νοθαγενής.
Καὶ τοῦτ’ ἔχων τοὔνειδος, ἀσθενὴς μὲν ὤν
μηδὲν καὶ οὐδὲν ὢν κεκλήσομαι·
ἦν δ’ ἐς τὸ πρῶτον πόλεος ὁρμηθεὶς ζυγὸν
ζητῶ τις εἶναι, τῶν μὲν ἀδυνάτων ὕπο
μισησόμεσθα· λυπρὰ γὰρ τὰ κρείσσονα·
ὅσοι δέ, χρηστοὶ δυνάμενοί τ’ εἶναι σοφοί,
σιγῶσι κοὐ σπεύδουσιν ἐς τὰ πράγματα,
γέλωτ’ ἐν αὐτοῖς μωρίαν τε λήψομαι
οὐχ ἡσυχάζων ἐν πόλει φόβου πλέᾳ.
Τῶν δ’ αὖ λογίων τε χρωμένων τε τῇ πόλει
ἐς ἀξίωμα βὰς πλέον φρουρήσομαι
ψήφοισιν. Οὕτω γὰρ τάδ’, ὦ πάτερ, φιλεῖ·
οἳ τὰς πόλεις ἔχουσι κἀξιώματα,
τοῖς ἀνθαμίλλοις εἰσὶ πολεμιώτατοι.

Ἐλθὼν δ’ ἐς οἶκον ἀλλότριον ἔπηλυς ὢν
γυναῖκά θ’ ὡς ἄτεκνον, ἣ κοινουμένη
τὰς συμφορὰς σοι πρόσθεν, ἀπολαχοῦσα νῦν
αὐτὴ καθ’ αὑτὴν τὴν τύχην οἴσει πικρῶς,
πῶς οὐχ ὑπ’ αὐτῆς εἰκότως μισήσομαι,
ὅταν παραστῶ σοὶ μὲν ἐγγύθεν ποδός,
ἣ δ’ οὖσ’ ἄτεκνος τὰ σὰ φίλ’ εἰσορᾷ πικρῶς,
κᾆτ’ ἢ προδοὺς σύ μ’ ἐς δάμαρτα σὴν βλέπῃς
ἢ τἀμὰ τιμῶν δῶμα συγχέας ἔχῃς;
Ὅσας σφαγὰς δὴ φαρμάκων τε θανασίμων
γυναῖκες ηὗρον ἀνδράσιν διαφθοράς.
Ἄλλως τε τὴν σὴν ἄλοχον οἰκτίρω, πάτερ,
ἄπαιδα γηράσκουσαν· οὐ γὰρ ἀξία
πατέρων ἀπ’ ἐσθλῶν οὖσ’ ἀπαιδίᾳ νοσεῖν.

Τυραννίδος δὲ τῆς μάτην αἰνουμένης
τὸ μὲν πρόσωπον ἡδύ, τἀν δόμοισι δὲ
λυπηρά· τίς γὰρ μακάριος, τίς εὐτυχής,
ὅστις δεδοικὼς καὶ παραβλέπων βίον

[625] αἰῶνα τείνει; Δημότης ἂν εὐτυχὴς
ζῆν ἂν θέλοιμι μᾶλλον ἢ τύραννος ὤν,
ᾧ τοὺς πονηροὺς ἡδονὴ φίλους ἔχειν,
ἐσθλοὺς δὲ μισεῖ κατθανεῖν φοβούμενος.
Εἴποις ἂν ὡς ὁ χρυσὸς ἐκνικᾷ τάδε,
[630] πλουτεῖν τε τερπνόν; Οὐ φιλῶ ψόφους κλύειν
ἐν χερσὶ σῴζων ὄλβον οὐδ' ἔχειν πόνους·
εἴη γ' ἐμοὶ <μὲν> μέτρια μὴ λυπουμένῳ.

Ἃ δ' ἐνθάδ' εἶχον ἀγάθ' ἄκουσόν μου, πάτερ·
τὴν φιλτάτην μὲν πρῶτον ἀνθρώπῳ σχολὴν
[635] ὄχλον τε μέτριον, οὐδέ μ' ἐξέπληξ' ὁδοῦ
πονηρὸς οὐδείς· κεῖνο δ' οὐκ ἀνασχετόν,
εἴκειν ὁδοῦ χαλῶντα τοῖς κακίοσιν.
Θεῶν δ' ἐν εὐχαῖς ἢ γόοισιν ἦ βροτῶν,
ὑπηρετῶν χαίρουσιν, οὐ γοωμένοις.
[640] Καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἐξέπεμπον, οἳ δ' ἦκον ξένοι,
ὥσθ' ἡδὺς αἰεὶ καινὸς ἐν καινοῖσιν ἦ.
Ὃ δ' εὐκτὸν ἀνθρώποισι, κἂν ἄκουσιν ᾖ,
δίκαιον εἶναί μ' ὁ νόμος ἡ φύσις θ' ἅμα
παρεῖχε τῷ θεῷ. Ταῦτα συννοούμενος
[645] κρείσσω νομίζω τἀνθάδ' ἢ τἀκεῖ, πάτερ.
Ἔα δ' ἔμ' αὐτοῦ ζῆν· ἴση γὰρ ἡ χάρις,
μεγάλοισι χαίρειν σμικρά θ' ἡδέως ἔχειν.

Χορός

[648] Καλῶς ἔλεξας, εἴπερ οὓς ἐγὼ φιλῶ
ἐν τοῖσι σοῖσιν εὐτυχήσουσιν φίλοις.

Ξοῦθος

[650] Παῦσαι λόγων τῶνδ', εὐτυχεῖν δ' ἐπίστασο·
θέλω γὰρ οὔπέρ σ' ηὖρον ἄρξασθαι, τέκνον,
κοινῆς τραπέζης, δαῖτα πρὸς κοινὴν πεσών,
θῦσαί θ' ἅ σου πρὶν γενέθλι' οὐκ ἐθύσαμεν.
Καὶ νῦν μὲν ὡς δὴ ξένον ἄγων σ' ἐφέστιον
[655] δείπνοισι τέρψω, τῆς δ' Ἀθηναίων χθονὸς

ἄξω θεατὴν δῆθεν, ὡς οὐκ ὄντ᾽ ἐμόν.
Καὶ γὰρ γυναῖκα τὴν ἐμὴν οὐ βούλομαι
λυπεῖν ἄτεκνον οὖσαν αὐτὸς εὐτυχῶν.
Χρόνῳ δὲ καιρὸν λαμβάνων προσάξομαι
[660] δάμαρτ᾽ ἐᾶν σε σκῆπτρα τἄμ᾽ ἔχειν χθονός.
Ἴωνα δ᾽ ὀνομάζω σε τῇ τύχῃ πρέπον,
ὀθούνεκ᾽ ἀδύτων ἐξιόντι μοι θεοῦ
ἵχνος συνῆψας πρῶτος. Ἀλλὰ τῶν φίλων
πλήρωμ᾽ ἀθροίσας βουθύτῳ σὺν ἡδονῇ
[665] πρόσειπε, μέλλων Δελφίδ᾽ ἐκλιπεῖν πόλιν.
Ὑμῖν δὲ σιγᾶν, δμωί¨δες, λέγω τάδε,
ἢ θάνατον εἰπούσαισι πρὸς δάμαρτ᾽ ἐμήν.

Ἴων

[668] Στείχοιμ᾽ ἄν. Ἓν δὲ τῆς τύχης ἄπεστί μοι·
εἰ μὴ γὰρ ἥτις μ᾽ ἔτεκεν εὑρήσω, πάτερ,
[670] ἀβίωτον ἡμῖν. Εἰ δ᾽ ἐπεύξασθαι χρεών,
ἐκ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν μ᾽ ἡ τεκοῦσ᾽ εἴη γυνή,
ὥς μοι γένηται μητρόθεν παρρησία.
Καθαρὰν γὰρ ἴσην τις ἐς πόλιν πέσῃ ξένος,
κἂν τοῖς λόγοισιν ἀστὸς ᾖ, τό γε στόμα
[675] δοῦλον πέπαται κοὐκ ἔχει παρρησίαν.

Χορός

[676] Ὁρῶ δάκρυα καὶ πενθίμους
<ἀλαλαγὰς> στεναγμάτων τ᾽ ἐσβολάς,
ὅταν ἐμὰ τύραννος εὐπαιδίαν
πόσιν ἔχοντ᾽ εἰδῇ,
[680] αὐτὴ δ᾽ ἄπαις ᾖ καὶ λελειμμένη τέκνων.
Τίν᾽, ὦ παῖ πρόμαντι Λατοῦς, ἔχρη-
σας ὑμνῳδίαν;
Πόθεν ὁ παῖς ὅδ᾽ ἀμφὶ ναοὺς σέθεν
τρόφιμος ἐξέβα; Γυναικῶν τίνος;
[685] Οὐ γάρ με σαίνει θέσφατα μή τιν᾽ ἔχῃ δόλον.
[688] Δειμαίνω συμφοράν,
ἐφ᾽ ὅ ποτε βάσεται.

[690] Ἄτοπος ἄτοπα γὰρ δίδωσί μοι,
τὸ δ᾽ ἔτ᾽ εὔφημ᾽ ἔχει,
δόλον τύχαν θ᾽, ὁ παῖς
ἄλλων τραφεὶς ἐξ αἱμάτων.
Τίς οὐ τάδε ξυνοίσεται;

[695] Φίλαι, πότερ᾽ ἐμᾷ δεσποίνᾳ
τάδε τορῶς ἐς οὖς γεγωνήσομεν;
Πόσιν, ἐν ᾧ τὰ πάντ᾽ ἔχουσ᾽ ἐλπίδων
μέτοχος ἦν, τλάμων, . . .
Νῦν δ᾽ ἢ μὲν ἔρρει συμφοραῖς, ὃ δ᾽ εὐτυχεῖ.
[700] Πολιὸν ἐσπεσοῦσα γῆρας, πόσις δ᾽ . . .
Ἀτίετος φίλων.
Μέλεος, ὃς θυραῖος ἐλθὼν δόμους,
μέγαν ἐς ὄλβον, οὐκ ἴσωσεν τύχης . . .
ὄλοιτ᾽, ὄλοιτοπότνιαν ἐξαπαφὼν ἐμάν.
[705] Καὶ θεοῖσιν μὴ τύχοι
καλλίφλογα πέλανον ἐπὶ
πυρὶ καθαγνίσας· τὸ δ᾽ ἐμὸν εἴσεται,
<ὅσον ἀμᾶς ἔφυν>
[710] τυραννίδος φίλα.
Ἦ δὴ πέλας δείπνων κυρεῖ
[713] παῖς καὶ πατὴρ νέος νέων.

Ἰὼ δειράδες Παρνασοῦ πέτρας
[715] ἔχουσαι σκόπελον οὐράνιόν θ᾽ ἕδραν,
ἵνα Βάκχιος ἀμφιπύρους ἀνέχων πεύκας
λαιψηρὰ πηδᾷ νυκτιπόλοις ἅμα σὺν Βάκχαις,
[719] μή ποτ᾽ εἰς ἐμὰν πόλιν ἵκοιθ᾽ ὁ παῖς,
[720] νέαν δ᾽ ἀμέραν ἀπολιπὼν θάνοι.
Στενομένα γὰρ ἂν πόλις ἔχοι σκῆψιν
ξενικὸν ἐσβολὰν . . .
[γαπ ιν τεχτ·]
ἁΛίσας ὁ πάρος ἀρχαγὸς ὢν
Ἐρεχθεὺς ἄναξ.

Κρέουσα

[725] ὦ πρέσβυ παιδαγώγ᾽ Ἐρεχθέως πατρὸς
τοὐμοῦ ποτ᾽ ὄντος, ἡνίκ᾽ ἦν ἔτ᾽ ἐν φάει,
ἔπαιρε σαυτὸν πρὸς θεοῦ χρηστήρια,
ὥς μοι συνησθῇς, εἴ τι Λοξίας ἄναξ
θέσπισμα παίδων ἐς γονὰς ἐφθέγξατο.
[730] σὺν τοῖς φίλοις γὰρ ἡδὺ μὲν πράσσειν καλῶς·
ἃ μὴ γένοιτο δ᾽, εἴ τι τυγχάνοι κακόν,
ἐς ὄμματ᾽ εὔνου φωτὸς ἐμβλέψαι γλυκύ.
ἐγὼ δέ σ᾽, ὥσπερ καὶ σὺ πατέρ᾽ ἐμόν ποτε,
δέσποιν᾽ ὅμως οὖσ᾽ ἀντικηδεύω πατρός.

Πρεσβύτης

[735] Ὦ θύγατερ, ἄξι᾽ ἀξίων γεννητόρων
ἦθη φυλάσσεις, κοὐ καταισχύνασ᾽ ἔχεις
τοὺς σοὺς παλαιούς, ἐκγόνους αὐτόχθονας.
Ἔλχ᾽ ἕλκε πρὸς μέλαθρα καὶ κόμιζέ με.
Αἰπεινά τοι μαντεῖα· τοῦ γήρως δέ μοι
[740] συνεκπονοῦσα κῶλον ἰατρὸς γενοῦ.

Κρέουσα

Ἕπου νυν· ἴχνος δ᾽ ἐκφύλασσ᾽ ὅπου τίθης.

Πρεσβύτης

Ἰδού.
τὸ τοῦ ποδὸς μὲν βραδύ, τὸ τοῦ δὲ νοῦ ταχύ.

Κρέουσα

Βάκτρῳ δ᾽ ἐρείδου περιφερῆ στίβον χθονός.

Πρεσβύτης

Ναὶ τοῦτο τυφλόν, ὅταν ἐγὼ βλέπω βραχύ.

Κρέουσα

[745] Ὀρθῶς ἔλεξας· ἀλλὰ μὴ παρῇς κόπῳ.

Πρεσβύτης

Οὔκουν ἑκών γε· τοῦ δ’ ἀπόντος οὐ κρατῶ.

Κρέουσα

[747] Γυναῖκες, ἱστῶν τῶν ἐμῶν καὶ κερκίδος
δούλευμα πιστόν, τίνα τύχην λαβὼν πόσις
βέβηκε παίδων, ὧνπερ οὕνεχ’ ἥκομεν;
[750] Σημήνατ’· εἰ γὰρ ἀγαθά μοι μηνύσετε,
οὐκ εἰς ἀπίστους δεσπότας βαλεῖς χάριν.

Χορός

Ἰὼ δαῖμον.

Πρεσβύτης

Τὸ φροίμιον μὲν τῶν λόγων οὐκ εὐτυχές.

Χορός

Ἰὼ τλᾶμον.

Πρεσβύτης

[755] Ἀλλ’ ἦ τι θεσφάτοισι δεσποτῶν νοσῶ;

Χορός

Εἶέν· τί δρῶμεν; Θάνατος ὧν κεῖται πέρι . . .

Κρέουσα

Τίς ἥδε μοῦσα, χὠ φόβος τίνων πέρι;

Χορός

Εἴπωμεν ἢ σιγῶμεν; Ἢ τί δράσομεν;

Κρέουσα

Εἶφ᾽· ὡς ἔχεις γε συμφοράν τιν᾽ εἰς ἐμέ.

Χορός

Εἰρήσεταί τοι, κεἰ θανεῖν μέλλω διπλῇ.
οὐκ ἔστι σοι, δέσποιν᾽, ἐπ᾽ ἀγκάλαις λαβεῖν
τέκν᾽, οὐδὲ μαστῷ σῷ προσαρμόσαι ποτέ.

Κρέουσα

Ὤμοι, θάνοιμι.

Πρεσβύτης

Θύγατερ.

Κρέουσα

Ὦ τάλαιν᾽
ἐγὼ συμφορᾶς, ἔλαβον ἔπαθον ἄχος
ἀβίοτον, φίλαι.
διοιχόμεσθα.

Πρεσβύτης

Τέκνον.

Κρέουσα

Αἰαῖ αἰαῖ·
διανταῖος ἔτυπεν ὀδύνα με πλευ-
μόνων τῶνδ᾽ ἔσω.

Πρεσβύτης

Μήπω στενάξῃς

Κρέουσα

Ἀλλὰ πάρεισι γόοι.

Πρεσβύτης

Πρὶν ἂν μάθωμεν

Κρέουσα

Ἀγγελίαν τίνα μοι;

Πρεσβύτης

Εἰ ταὐτὰ πράσσων δεσπότης τῆς συμφορᾶς
κοινωνός ἐστιν, ἢ μόνη σὺ δυστυχεῖς.

Χορός

Κείνῳ μέν, ὦ γεραιέ, παῖδα Λοξίας
ἔδωκεν, ἰδίᾳ δ’ εὐτυχεῖ ταύτης δίχα.

Κρέουσα

Τόδ’ ἐπὶ τῷδε κακὸν ἄκρον ἔλακες
ἄχος ἐμοὶ στένειν.

Πρεσβύτης

Πότερα δὲ φῦναι δεῖ γυναικὸς ἔκ τινος
τὸν παῖδ’ ὃν εἶπας, ἢ γεγῶτ’ ἐθέσπισεν;

Χορός

Ἤδη πεφυκότ’ ἐκτελῆ νεανίαν
δίδωσιν αὐτῷ Λοξίας· παρῆ δ’ ἐγώ.

Κρέουσα

Πῶς φῄς; Ἄφατον ἄφατον ἀναύδητον
λόγον ἐμοὶ θροεῖς.

Πρεσβύτης

[785] Κἄμοιγε. πῶς δ' ὁ χρησμὸς ἐκπεραίνεται,
σαφέστερόν μοι φράζε, χὥστις ἔσθ' ὁ παῖς.

Χορός

Ὅτῳ ξυναντήσειεν ἐκ θεοῦ συθεὶς
πρώτῳ πόσις σός, παῖδ' ἔδωκ' αὐτῷ θεός.

Κρέουσα

Ὀττοτοττοτοῖ· τὸν δ' ἐμὸν ἄτεκνον ἄτεκνον ἔλακεν
[790] ἄρα βίοτον; Ἐρημίᾳ δ' ὀρφανοὺς
δόμους οἰκήσω.

Πρεσβύτης

Τίς οὖν ἐχρήσθη; Τῷ συνῆψ' ἴχνος ποδὸς
πόσις ταλαίνης; Πῶς δὲ ποῦ νιν εἰσιδών;

Χορός

Οἶσθ', ὦ φίλη δέσποινα, τὸν νεανίαν
[795] ὃς τόνδ' ἔσαιρε ναόν; Οὗτος ἔσθ' ὁ παῖς.

Κρέουσα

Ἀν' ὑγρὸν ἀμπταίην αἰθέρα πόρσω γαί-
ας Ἑλλανίας, ἀστέρας ἑσπέρους,
[799] οἷον οἷον ἄλγος ἔπαθον, φίλαι.

Πρεσβύτης

[800] Ὄνομα δὲ ποῖον αὐτὸν ὀνομάζει πατήρ;
Οἶσθ’, ἢ σιωπῇ τοῦτ’ ἀκύρωτον μένει;

Χορός

Ἴων’, ἐπείπερ πρῶτος ἥντησεν πατρί.

Πρεσβύτης

Μητρὸς δ’ ὁποίας ἐστὶν

Χορός

Οὐκ ἔχω φράσαι.
Φροῦδος δ’ ἵν’ εἰδῇς πάντα τἀπ’ ἐμοῦ, γέρον
[805] παιδὸς προθύσων ξένια καὶ γενέθλια
σκηνὰς ἐς ἱερὰς τῆσδε λαθραίως πόσις,
κοινὴν ξυνάψων δαῖτα παιδὶ τῷ νέῳ.

Πρεσβύτης

[808] Δέσποινα, προδεδόμεσθα σὺν γάρ σοι νοσῶ
τοῦ σοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρός, καὶ μεμηχανημένως
[810] ὑβριζόμεσθα δωμάτων τ’ Ἐρεχθέως
ἐκβαλλόμεσθα. Καὶ σὸν οὐ στυγῶν πόσιν
λέγω, σὲ μέντοι μᾶλλον ἢ κεῖνον φιλῶν·
ὅστις σε γήμας ξένος ἐπεισελθὼν πόλιν
καὶ δῶμα καὶ σὴν παραλαβὼν παγκληρίαν,
[815] ἄλλης γυναικὸς παῖδας ἐκκαρπούμενος
λάθρα πέφηνεν· ὡς λάθρα δ’, ἐγὼ φράσω.
Ἐπεί σ’ ἄτεκνον ᾔσθετ’, οὐκ ἔστεργέ σοι
ὅμοιος εἶναι τῆς τύχης τ’ ἴσον φέρειν,
λαβὼν δὲ δοῦλα λέκτρα νυμφεύσας λάθρα
[820] τὸν παῖδ’ ἔφυσεν, ἐξενωμένον δέ τῳ
Δελφῶν δίδωσιν ἐκτρέφειν. Ὃ δ’ ἐν θεοῦ
δόμοισιν ἄφετος, ὡς λάθοι, παιδεύεται.
Νεανίαν δ’ ὡς ᾔσθετ’ ἐκτεθραμμένον,
ἐλθεῖν σ’ ἔπεισε δεῦρ’ ἀπαιδίας χάριν.

Κᾆθ’ ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἐψεύσαθ’, ὅδε δ’ ἐψεύσατο
πάλαι τρέφων τὸν παῖδα, κἄπλεκεν πλοκὰς
τοιάσδ’· ἁλοὺς μὲν ἀνέφερ’ ἐς τὸν δαίμονα,
ἐλθὼν δὲ καὶ τὸν χρόνον ἀμύνεσθαι θέλων
τυραννίδ’ αὐτῷ περιβαλεῖν ἔμελλε γῆς.
Καινὸν δὲ τοὔνομ’ ἀνὰ χρόνον πεπλασμένον
Ἴων, ἰόντι δῆθεν ὅτι συνήντετο.

Χορός

Οἴμοι, κακούργους ἄνδρας ὡς αἰεὶ στυγῶ,
οἳ συντιθέντες τἄδικ’ εἶτα μηχαναῖς
κοσμοῦσι. Φαῦλον χρηστὸν ἂν λαβεῖν φίλον
θέλοιμι μᾶλλον ἢ κακὸν σοφώτερον.

Πρεσβύτης

Καὶ τῶνδ’ ἁπάντων ἔσχατον πείσῃ κακόν·
ἀμήτορ’, ἀναρίθμητον, ἐκ δούλης τινὸς
γυναικός, ἐς σὸν δῶμα δεσπότην ἄγειν.
Ἁπλοῦν ἂν ἦν γὰρ τὸ κακόν, εἰ παρ’ εὐγενοῦς
μητρός, πιθών σε, σὴν λέγων ἀπαιδίαν,
ἐσῴκισ’ οἴκους· εἰ δὲ σοὶ τόδ’ ἦν πικρόν,
τῶν Αἰόλου νιν χρῆν ὀρεχθῆναι γάμων.
Ἐκ τῶνδε δεῖ σε δὴ γυναικεῖόν τι δρᾶν·
ἢ γὰρ ξίφος λαβοῦσαν ἢ δόλῳ τινὶ
ἢ φαρμάκοισι σὸν κατακτεῖναι πόσιν
καὶ παῖδα, πρὶν σοὶ θάνατον ἐκ κείνων μολεῖν.
Εἰ γάρ γ’ ὑφήσεις τοῦδ’, ἀπαλλάξῃ βίου.
Δυοῖν γὰρ ἐχθροῖν εἰς ἓν ἐλθόντοιν στέγος,
ἢ θάτερον δεῖ δυστυχεῖν ἢ θάτερον.
Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν σοι καὶ συνεκπονεῖν θέλω,
καὶ συμφονεύειν παῖδ’ ἐπεισελθὼν δόμους
οὗ δαῖθ’ ὁπλίζει, καὶ τροφεῖα δεσπόταις
ἀποδοὺς θανεῖν τε ζῶν τε φέγγος εἰσορᾶν.
Ἓν γάρ τι τοῖς δούλοισιν αἰσχύνην φέρει,
τοὔνομα· τὰ δ’ ἄλλα πάντα τῶν ἐλευθέρων
οὐδὲν κακίων δοῦλος, ὅστις ἐσθλὸς ᾖ.

Χορός

Κἀγώ, φίλη δέσποινα, συμφορὰν θέλω
κοινουμένη τήνδ᾽ ἢ θανεῖν ἢ ζῆν καλῶς.

Κρέουσα

[859] ἮΩ ψυχά, πῶς σιγάσω;
[860] Πῶς δὲ σκοτίας ἀναφήνω
εὐνάς, αἰδοῦς δ᾽ ἀπολειφθῶ;
Τί γὰρ ἐμπόδιον κώλυμ᾽ ἔτι μοι;
Πρὸς τίν᾽ ἀγῶνας τιθέμεσθ᾽ ἀρετῆς;
Οὐ πόσις ἡμῶν προδότης γέγονεν,
[865] στέρομαι δ᾽ οἴκων, στέρομαι παίδων,
φροῦδαι δ᾽ ἐλπίδες, ἃς διαθέσθαι
χρῄζουσα καλῶς οὐκ ἐδυνήθην,
σιγῶσα γάμους,
σιγῶσα τόκους πολυκλαύτους;
[870] Ἀλλ᾽ οὐ τὸ Διὸς πολύαστρον ἕδος
καὶ τὴν ἐπ᾽ ἐμοῖς σκοπέλοισι θεὰν
λίμνης τ᾽ ἐνύδρου Τριτωνιάδος
πότνιαν ἀκτάν,
οὐκέτι κρύψω λέχος, ὡς στέρνων
[875] ἀπονησαμένη ῥᾴων ἔσομαι.
Στάζουσι κόραι δακρύοισιν ἐμαί,
ψυχὴ δ᾽ ἀλγεῖ κακοβουλευθεῖσ᾽
ἔκ τ᾽ ἀνθρώπων ἔκ τ᾽ ἀθανάτων,
οὓς ἀποδείξω
[880] λέκτρων προδότας ἀχαρίστους.

ἮΩ τᾶς ἐπταφθόγγου μέλπων
κιθάρας ἐνοπάν, ἅτ᾽ ἀγραύλοις
κέρασιν ἐν ἀψύχοις ἀχεῖ
μουσᾶν ὕμνους εὐαχήτους,
[885] σοὶ μομφάν, ὦ Λατοῦς παῖ,
πρὸς τάνδ᾽ αὐγὰν αὐδάσω.
ἮΗλθές μοι χρυσῷ χαίταν
μαρμαίρων, εὖτ᾽ ἐς κόλπους

κρόκεα πέταλα φάρεσιν ἔδρεπον,
ἀνθίζειν χρυσανταυγῆ·
λευκοῖς δ’ ἐμφὺς καρποῖσιν
χειρῶν εἰς ἄντρου κοίτας
κραυγὰν Ὦ μᾶτέρ μ’ αὐδῶσαν
θεὸς ὁμευνέτας
ἄγες ἀναιδείᾳ
Κύπριδι χάριν πράσσων.
Τίκτω δ’ ἁ δύστανός σοι
κοῦρον, τὸν φρίκᾳ ματρὸς
εἰς εὐνὰν βάλλω τὰν σάν,
ἵνα με λέχεσι μελέαν μελέοις
ἐζεύξω τὰν δύστανον.
Οἴμοι μοι· καὶ νῦν ἔρρει
πτανοῖς ἁρπασθεὶς θοίνα
παῖς μοι καὶ σός, τλάμων·
σὺ δὲ κιθάρᾳ κλάζεις
παιᾶνας μέλπων.

Ὠή,
τὸν Λατοῦς αὐδῶ <σ’>,
ὅστ’ ὀμφὰν κληροῖς
πρὸς χρυσέους θάκους
καὶ γαίας μεσσήρεις ἕδρας,
εἰς οὗς αὐδὰν καρύξω·
Ἰὼ κακὸς εὐνάτωρ,
ὃς τῷ μὲν ἐμῷ νυμφεύτᾳ
χάριν οὐ προλαβὼν
παῖδ’ εἰς οἴκους οἰκίζεις·
ὁ δ’ ἐμὸς γενέτας καὶ σός γ’, ἀμαθής,
οἰωνοῖς ἔρρει συλαθείς,
σπάργανα ματέρος ἐξαλλάξας.
Μισεῖ σ’ ἁ Δᾶλος καὶ δάφνας
ἔρνεα φοίνικα παρ’ ἁβροκόμαν,
ἔνθα λοχεύματα σέμν’ ἐλοχεύσατο
Λατὼ Δίοισί σε καρποῖς.

Χορός

Οἴμοι, μέγας θησαυρὸς ὡς ἀνοίγνυται
κακῶν, ἐφ᾽ οἷσι πᾶς ἂν ἐκβάλοι δάκρυ.

Πρεσβύτης

[925] Ὦ θύγατερ, οὗτοι σὸν βλέπων ἐμπίμπλαμαι
πρόσωπον, ἔξω δ᾽ ἐγενόμην γνώμης ἐμῆς.
Κακῶν γὰρ ἄρτι κῦμ᾽ ὑπεξαντλῶν φρενί,
πρύμνηθεν αἴρει μ᾽ ἄλλο σῶν λόγων ὕπο,
Οὓς ἐκβαλοῦσα τῶν παρεστώτων κακῶν
[930] μετῆλθες ἄλλων πημάτων κακὰς ὁδούς.
τί φῄς; Τίνα λόγον Λοξίου κατηγορεῖς;
Ποῖον τεκεῖν φῂς παῖδα; Ποῦ θεῖναι πόλεως
θηρσὶν φίλον τύμβευμ᾽; Ἄνελθέ μοι πάλιν.

Κρέουσα

Αἰσχύνομαι μέν σ᾽, ὦ γέρον, λέξω δ᾽ ὅμως.

Πρεσβύτης

[935] Ὡς συστενάζειν γ᾽ οἶδα γενναίως φίλοις.

Κρέουσα

Ἄκουε τοίνυν· οἶσθα Κεκροπίας πέτρας
πρόσβορρον ἄντρον, ἃς Μακρὰς κικλήσκομεν;

Πρεσβύτης

Οἶδ᾽, ἔνθα Πανὸς ἄδυτα καὶ βωμοὶ πέλας.

Κρέουσα

Ἐνταῦθ᾽ ἀγῶνα δεινὸν ἠγωνίσμεθα.

Πρεσβύτης

[940] Τίν’; Ὡς ἀπαντᾷ δάκρυά μοι τοῖς σοῖς λόγοις.

Κρέουσα

Φοίβῳ ξυνῆψ’ ἄκουσα δύστηνον γάμον.

Πρεσβύτης

Ὦ θύγατερ, ἆρ’ ἦν ταῦθ’ ἃ γ’ ᾐσθόμην ἐγώ;

Κρέουσα

Οὐκ οἶδ’· ἀληθῆ δ’ εἰ λέγεις φαίημεν ἄν.

Πρεσβύτης

Νόσον κρυφαίαν ἡνίκ’ ἔστενες λάθρα;

Κρέουσα

[945] Τότ’ ἦν ἃ νῦν σοι φανερὰ σημαίνω κακά.

Πρεσβύτης

Κᾆτ’ ἐξέκλεψας πῶς Ἀπόλλωνος γάμους;

Κρέουσα

Ἔτεκον ἀνάσχου ταῦτ’ ἐμοῦ κλύων, γέρον.

Πρεσβύτης

Ποῦ; Τίς λοχεύει σ’; Ἦ μόνη μοχθεῖς τάδε;

Κρέουσα

Μόνη κατ’ ἄντρον οὗπερ ἐζεύχθην γάμοις.

Πρεσβύτης

[950] Ὁ παῖς δὲ ποῦ ‘στιν; Ἵνα σὺ μηκέτ’ ᾖς ἄπαις.

Κρέουσα

Τέθνηκεν, ὦ γεραιέ, θηρσὶν ἐκτεθείς.

Πρεσβύτης

Τέθνηκ’; Ἀπόλλων δ’ ὁ κακὸς οὐδὲν ἤρκεσεν;

Κρέουσα

Οὐκ ἤρκεσ’· Ἅιδου δ’ ἐν δόμοις παιδεύεται.

Πρεσβύτης

Τίς γάρ νιν ἐξέθηκεν; Οὐ γὰρ δὴ σύ γε.

Κρέουσα

[955] Ἡμεῖς, ἐν ὄρφνῃ σπαργανώσαντες πέπλοις.

Πρεσβύτης

Οὐδὲ ξυνῄδει σοί τις ἔκθεσιν τέκνου;

Κρέουσα

Αἱ ξυμφοραί γε καὶ τὸ λανθάνειν μόνον.

Πρεσβύτης

Καὶ πῶς ἐν ἄντρῳ παῖδα σὸν λιπεῖν ἔτλης;

Κρέουσα

Πῶς δ’ οἰκτρὰ πολλὰ στόματος ἐκβαλοῦσ’ ἔπη

Πρεσβύτης

[960] Φεῦ·
τλήμων σὺ τόλμης, ὁ δὲ θεὸς μᾶλλον σέθεν.

Κρέουσα

Εἰ παῖδά γ’ εἶδες χεῖρας ἐκτείνοντά μοι.

Πρεσβύτης

μαστὸν διώκοντ’ ἢ πρὸς ἀγκάλαις πεσεῖν;

Κρέουσα

Ἐνταῦθ’, ἵν’ οὐκ ὢν ἄδικ’ ἔπασχεν ἐξ ἐμοῦ.

Πρεσβύτης

Σοὶ δ’ ἐς τί δόξ’ ἐσῆλθεν ἐκβαλεῖν τέκνον;

Κρέουσα

[965] Ὡς τὸν θεὸν σῴζοντα τόν γ’ αὐτοῦ γόνον.

Πρεσβύτης

Οἴμοι, δόμων σῶν ὄλβος ὡς χειμάζεται.

Κρέουσα

Τί κρᾶτα κρύψας, ὦ γέρον, δακρυρροεῖς;

Πρεσβύτης

Σὲ καὶ πατέρα σὸν δυστυχοῦντας εἰσορῶ.

Κρέουσα

Τὰ θνητὰ τοιαῦτ’· οὐδὲν ἐν ταὐτῷ μένει.

Πρεσβύτης

[970] Μή νυν ἔτ’ οἴκτων, θύγατερ, ἀντεχώμεθα.

Κρέουσα

Τί γάρ με χρὴ δρᾶν; Ἀπορία τὸ δυστυχεῖν.

Πρεσβύτης

Τὸν πρῶτον ἀδικήσαντά σ’ ἀποτίνου θεόν.

Κρέουσα

Καὶ πῶς τὰ κρείσσω θνητὸς οὖσ’ ὑπερδράμω;

Πρεσβύτης

Πίμπρη τὰ σεμνὰ Λοξίου χρηστήρια.

Κρέουσα

[975] Δέδοικα· καὶ νῦν πημάτων ἄδην ἔχω.

Πρεσβύτης

Τὰ δυνατά νυν τόλμησον, ἄνδρα σὸν κτανεῖν.

Κρέουσα

Οἰδούμεθ’ εὐνὰς τὰς τόθ’ ἡνίκ’ ἐσθλὸς ἦν.

Πρεσβύτης

Νῦν δ’ ἀλλὰ παῖδα τὸν ἐπὶ σοὶ πεφηνότα.

Κρέουσα

Πῶς; Εἰ γὰρ εἴη δυνατόν· ὡς θέλοιμί γ’ ἄν.

Πρεσβύτης

[980] Ξιφηφόρους σοὺς ὁπλίσασ᾽ ὀπάονας.

Κρέουσα

Στείχοιμ᾽ ἄν· ἀλλὰ ποῦ γενήσεται τόδε;

Πρεσβύτης

Ἱεραῖσιν ἐν σκηναῖσιν, οὗ θοινᾷ φίλους.

Κρέουσα

Ἐπίσημον ὁ φόνος, καὶ τὸ δοῦλον ἀσθενές.

Πρεσβύτης

Ὤμοι, κακίζῃ· φέρε, σὺ νῦν βούλευέ τι.

Κρέουσα

[985] Καὶ μὴν ἔχω γε δόλια καὶ δραστήρια.

Πρεσβύτης

Ἀμφοῖν ἂν εἴην τοῖνδ᾽ ὑπηρέτης ἐγώ.

Κρέουσα

Ἄκουε τοίνυν· οἶσθα γηγενῆ μάχην;

Πρεσβύτης

Οἶδ᾽, ἣν Φλέγρᾳ Γίγαντες ἔστησαν θεοῖς.

Κρέουσα

Ἐνταῦθα Γοργόν᾽ ἔτεκε Γῆ, δεινὸν τέρας.

Πρεσβύτης

[990] Ἦ παισὶν αὐτῆς σύμμαχον, θεῶν πόνον;

Κρέουσα

Ναί· καί νιν ἔκτειν’ ἡ Διὸς Παλλὰς θεά.

Πρεσβύτης

Ποῖόν τι μορφῆς σχῆμ’ ἔχουσαν ἀγρίας;

Κρέουσα

Θώρακ’ ἐχίδνης περιβόλοις ὡπλισμένον.

Πρεσβύτης

Ἆρ’ οὗτός ἐσθ’ ὁ μῦθος ὃν κλύω πάλαι;

Κρέουσα

[995] Ταύτης Ἀθάναν δέρος ἐπὶ στέρνοις ἔχειν.

Πρεσβύτης

Ἣν αἰγίδ’ ὀνομάζουσι, Παλλάδος στολήν;

Κρέουσα

Τόδ’ ἔσχεν ὄνομα θεῶν ὅτ’ ᾖξεν ἐς δόρυ.

Πρεσβύτης

Τί δῆτα, θύγατερ, τοῦτο σοῖς ἐχθροῖς βλάβος;

Κρέουσα

Ἐριχθόνιον οἶσθ’, ἢ ; Τί δ’ οὐ μέλλεις, γέρον;

Πρεσβύτης

[1000] Ὃν πρῶτον ὑμῶν πρόγονον ἐξανῆκε γῆ;

Κρέουσα

Τούτῳ δίδωσι Παλλὰς ὄντι νεογόνῳ

Πρεσβύτης

Τί χρῆμα; Μέλλον γάρ τι προσφέρεις ἔπος.

Κρέουσα

Δισσοὺς σταλαγμοὺς αἵματος Γοργοῦς ἄπο.

Πρεσβύτης

Ἰσχὺν ἔχοντας τίνα πρὸς ἀνθρώπου φύσιν;

Κρέουσα

[1005] Τὸν μὲν θανάσιμον, τὸν δ’ ἀκεσφόρον νόσων.

Πρεσβύτης

Ἐν τῷ καθάψασ’ ἀμφὶ παιδὶ σώματος;

Κρέουσα

Χρυσοῖσι δεσμοῖς· ὁ δὲ δίδωσ’ ἐμῷ πατρί.

Πρεσβύτης

Κείνου δὲ κατθανόντος ἐς σὲ ἀφίκετο;

Κρέουσα

Ναί· κἀπὶ καρπῷ γ’ αὖτ’ ἐγὼ χερὸς φέρω.

Πρεσβύτης

[1010] Πῶς οὖν κέκρανται δίπτυχον δῶρον θεᾶς;

Κρέουσα

Κοίλης μὲν ὅστις φλεβὸς ἀπέσταξεν φόνῳ

Πρεσβύτης

Τί τῷδε χρῆσθαι; Δύνασιν ἐκφέρει τίνα;

Κρέουσα

Νόσους ἀπείργει καὶ τροφὰς ἔχει βίου.

Πρεσβύτης

Ὁ δεύτερος δ᾽ ἀριθμὸς ὢν λέγεις τί δρᾷ;

Κρέουσα

[1015] Κτείνει, δρακόντων ἰὸς ὢν τῶν Γοργόνος.

Πρεσβύτης

Ἐς ἓν δὲ κραθέντ᾽ αὐτὸν ἢ χωρὶς φορεῖς;

Κρέουσα

Χωρίς· κακῷ γὰρ ἐσθλὸν οὐ συμμείγνυται.

Πρεσβύτης

Ὦ φιλτάτη παῖ, πάντ᾽ ἔχεις ὅσων σε δεῖ.

Κρέουσα

Τούτῳ θανεῖται παῖς· σὺ δ᾽ ὁ κτείνων ἔσῃ.

Πρεσβύτης

[1020] Ποῦ καὶ τί δράσας; Σὸν λέγειν, τολμᾶν δ’ ἐμόν.

Κρέουσα

Ἐν ταῖς Ἀθήναις, δῶμ’ ὅταν τοὐμὸν μόλῃ.

Πρεσβύτης

Οὐκ εὖ τόδ’ εἶπας· καὶ σὺ γὰρ τοὐμὸν ψέγεις.

Κρέουσα

Πῶς; Ἆρ’ ὑπείδου τοῦθ’ ὃ κἄμ’ ἐσέρχεται;

Πρεσβύτης

Σὺ παῖδα δόξεις διολέσαι, κεἰ μὴ κτενεῖς.

Κρέουσα

[1025] Ὀρθῶς· φθονεῖν γάρ φασι μητρυιὰς τέκνοις.

Πρεσβύτης

Αὐτοῦ νυν αὐτὸν κτεῖν’, ἵν’ ἀρνήσῃ φόνους.

Κρέουσα

Προλάζυμαι γοῦν τῷ χρόνῳ τῆς ἡδονῆς.

Πρεσβύτης

Καὶ σόν γε λήσεις πόσιν ἅ σε σπεύδει λαθεῖν.

Κρέουσα

[1029] Οἶσθ’ οὖν ὃ δρᾶσον; Χειρὸς ἐξ ἐμῆς λαβὼν
[1030] χρύσωμ’ Ἀθάνας τόδε, παλαιὸν ὄργανον,
ἐλθὼν ἵν’ ἡμῖν βουθυτεῖ λάθρα πόσις,

δείπνων ὅταν λήγωσι καὶ σπονδὰς θεοῖς
μέλλωσι λείβειν, ἐν πέπλοις ἔχων τόδε
κάθες βαλὼν ἐς πῶμα τῷ νεανίᾳ
ἰδίᾳ δέ, μή τι πᾶσι, χωρίσας ποτὸν
τῷ τῶν ἐμῶν μέλλοντι δεσπόζειν δόμων.
Κἄνπερ διέλθῃ λαιμόν, οὔποθ' ἵξεται
κλεινὰς Ἀθήνας, κατθανὼν δ' αὐτοῦ μενεῖ.

Πρεσβύτης

Σὺ μέν νυν εἴσω προξένων μέθες πόδα·
ἡμεῖς δ' ἐφ' ᾧ τετάγμεθ' ἐκπονήσομεν.
Ἄγ', ὦ γεραιὲ πούς, νεανίας γενοῦ
ἔργοισι, κεἰ μὴ τῷ χρόνῳ πάρεστί σοι.
Ἐχθρὸν δ' ἐπ' ἄνδρα στεῖχε δεσποτῶν μέτα,
καὶ συμφόνευε καὶ συνεξαίρει δόμων.
Τὴν δ' εὐσέβειαν εὐτυχοῦσι μὲν καλὸν
τιμᾶν· ὅταν δὲ πολεμίους δρᾶσαι κακῶς
θέλῃ τις, οὐδεὶς ἐμποδὼν κεῖται νόμος.

Χορός

Εἰνοδία θύγατερ Δάματρος, ἃ τῶν
νυκτιπόλων ἐφόδων ἀνάσσεις
καὶ μεθαμερίων, ὅδωσον
δυσθανάτων κρατήρων πλη-
ρώματ' ἐφ' οἷσι πέμπει
πότνια πότνι' ἐμὰ χθονίας
Γοργοῦς λαιμοτόμων ἀπὸ
σταλαγμῶν
τῷ τῶν Ἐρεχθει¨δᾶν
δόμων ἐφαπτομένῳ·
μηδέ ποτ' ἄλλος ἄλλων ἀπ' οἴ-
κων πόλεως ἀνάσσοι
πλὴν τῶν εὐγενετᾶν Ἐρεχθειδᾶν.

Εἰ δ' ἀτελὴς θάνατος σπουδαί τε δεσποί-
νας, ὅ τε καιρὸς ἄπεισι τόλμας,

ᾗ νῦν ἐλπὶς ἐφαίνετ’, ἢ θη-
κτὸν ξίφος ἢ δαίμων ἐξά-
ψει βρόχον ἀμφὶ δειρήν,
πάθεσι πάθεα δ’ ἐξανύτουσ’
εἰς ἄλλας βιότου κάτει-
σι μορφάς.
Οὐ γὰρ δόμων γ’ ἑτέρους
ἄρχοντας ἀλλοδαποὺς
ζῶσά ποτ’ ὄμμασι ἐν φαεν-
ναῖς ἀνέχοιτ’ ἂν αὐγαῖς
ἃ τῶν εὐπατριδᾶν γεγῶσ’ οἴκων.

Αἰσχύνομαι τὸν πολύ-
μνον θεόν, εἰ παρὰ καλλιχόροισι παγαῖς
λαμπάδα θεωρὸν εἰκάδων
ὄψεται ἐννύχιος ἄυπνος ὤν, ὅτε
καὶ Διὸς ἀστερωπὸς
ἀνεχόρευσεν αἰθήρ,
χορεύει δὲ σελάνα
καὶ πεντήκοντα κόραι
Νηρέος, αἱ κατὰ πόντον
ἀενάων τε ποταμῶν
δίνας, χορευόμεναι
τὰν χρυσοστέφανον κόραν
καὶ ματέρα σεμνάν·
ἵν’ ἐλπίζει βασιλεύ-
σειν ἄλλων πόνον ἐσπεσὼν
ὁ Φοίβειος ἀλάτας.

Ὁρᾶθ’ ὅσοι δυσκελάδοι-
σιν κατὰ μοῦσαν ἰόντες ἀείδεθ’ ὕμνοις
ἀμέτερα λέχεα καὶ γάμους
Κύπριδος ἀθέμιτας ἀνοσίους, ὅσον
εὐσεβίᾳ κρατοῦμεν
ἄδικον ἄροτον ἀνδρῶν.
Παλίμφαμος ἀοιδὰ
καὶ μοῦσ’ εἰς ἄνδρας ἴτω

δυσκέλαδος ἀμφὶ λέκτρων.
Δείκνυσι γὰρ ὁ Διὸς ἐκ
παίδων ἀμνημοσύναν,
οὐ κοινὰν τεκέων τύχαν
οἴκοισι φυτεύσας
δεσποίνᾳ· πρὸς δ’ Ἀφροδί-
ταν ἄλλαν θέμενος χάριν
νόθου παιδὸς ἔκυρσεν.

Θεράπων

Κλειναὶ γυναῖκες, ποῦ κόρην Ἐρεχθέως,
δέσποιναν εὕρω; Πανταχῇ γὰρ ἄστεως
ζητῶν νιν ἐξέπλησα κοὐκ ἔχω λαβεῖν.

Χορός

Τί δ’ ἔστιν, ὦ ξύνδουλε; Τίς προθυμία
ποδῶν ἔχει σε, καὶ λόγους τίνας φέρεις;

Θεράπων

Θηρώμεθ’· ἀρχαὶ δ’ ἀπιχώριοι χθονὸς
ζητοῦσιν αὐτήν, ὡς θάνῃ πετρουμένη.

Χορός

Οἴμοι, τί λέξεις; Οὔτι που λελήμμεθα
κρυφαῖον ἐς παῖδ’ ἐκπορίζουσαι φόνον;

Θεράπων

Ἔγνως; Μεθέξεις οὐκ ἐν ὑστάτοις κακοῦ.

Χορός

Ὤφθη δὲ πῶς τὰ κρυπτὰ μηχανήματα;

Θεράπων

Τὸ μὴ δίκαιον τῆς δίκης ἡσσώμενον
ἐξηῦρεν ὁ θεός, οὐ μιανθῆναι θέλων.

Χορός

Πῶς; Ἀντιάζω σ' ἱκέτις ἐξειπεῖν τάδε.
[1120] Πεπυσμέναι γάρ, εἰ θανεῖν ὅμως χρεών,
ἥδιον ἂν θάνοιμεν, εἴθ' ὁρᾶν φάος.

Θεράπων

[1122] Ἐπεὶ θεοῦ μαντεῖον ᾤχετ' ἐκλιπὼν
πόσις Κρεούσης, παῖδα τὸν καινὸν λαβὼν
πρὸς δεῖπνα θυσίας θ' ἃς θεοῖς ὡπλίζετο,
[1125] Ξοῦθος μὲν ᾤχετ' ἔνθα πῦρ πηδᾷ θεοῦ
βακχεῖον, ὡς σφαγαῖσι Διονύσου πέτρας
δεύσειε δισσὰς παιδὸς ἀντ' ὀπτηρίων,
λέξας· Σὺ μὲν νῦν, τέκνον, ἀμφήρεις μένων
σκηνὰς ἀνίστη τεκτόνων μοχθήμασι.
[1130] Θύσας δὲ Γενέταις Θεοῖσιν ἦν μακρὸν χρόνον
μένω, παροῦσι δαῖτες ἔστωσαν φίλοις.

Λαβὼν δὲ μόσχους ᾤχεθ'· ὁ δὲ νεανίας
σεμνῶς ἀτοίχους περιβολὰς σκηνωμάτων
ὀρθοστάταις ἱδρύεθ', ἡλίου βολὰς
[1135] καλῶς φυλάξας, οὔτε πρὸς μέσας φλογὸς
ἀκτῖνας, οὔτ' αὖ πρὸς τελευτώσας βίον,
πλέθρου σταθμήσας μῆκος εἰς εὐγωνίαν,
μέτρημ' ἔχουσαν τοὐν μέσῳ γε μυρίων
ποδῶν ἀριθμόν, ὡς λέγουσιν οἱ σοφοί,
[1140] ὡς πάντα Δελφῶν λαὸν ἐς θοίνην καλῶν.
Λαβὼν δ' ὑφάσμαθ' ἱερὰ θησαυρῶν πάρα
κατεσκίαζε, θαύματ' ἀνθρώποις ὁρᾶν.
Πρῶτον μὲν ὀρόφῳ πτέρυγα περιβάλλει πέπλων,
ἀνάθημα Δίου παιδός, οὓς Ἡρακλέης
[1145] Ἀμαζόνων σκυλεύματ' ἤνεγκεν θεῷ.
Ἐνῆν δ' ὑφανταὶ γράμμασιν τοιαίδ' ὑφαί,
Οὐρανὸς ἀθροίζων ἄστρ' ἐν αἰθέρος κύκλῳ.

Ἵππους μὲν ἅλαυν᾽ ἐς τελευταίαν φλόγα
Ἥλιος, ἐφέλκων λαμπρὸν Ἑσπέρου φάος·
[1150] μελάμπεπλος δὲ Νὺξ ἀσείρωτον ζυγοῖς
ὄχημ᾽ ἔπαλλεν, ἄστρα δ᾽ ὡμάρτει θεᾷ·
Πλειὰς μὲν ᾖει μεσοπόρου δι᾽ αἰθέρος
ὅ τε ξιφήρης Ὠρίων, ὕπερθε δὲ
Ἄρκτος στρέφουσ᾽ οὐραῖα χρυσήρη πόλῳ·
[1155] κύκλος δὲ πανσέληνος ἠκόντιζ᾽ ἄνω
μηνὸς διχήρης, Ὑάδες τε, ναυτίλοις
σαφέστατον σημεῖον, ἥ τε φωσφόρος
Ἕως διώκουσ᾽ ἄστρα. Τοίχοισιν δ᾽ ἔπι
ἤμπισχεν ἄλλα βαρβάρων ὑφάσματα·
[1160] εὐηρέτμους ναῦς ἀντίας Ἑλληνίσιν,
καὶ μιξόθηρας φῶτας, ἱππείας τ᾽ ἄγρας
ἐλάφων, λεόντων τ᾽ ἀγρίων θηράματα.
Κατ᾽ εἰσόδους δὲ Κέκροπα θυγατέρων πέλας
σπείραισιν εἱλίσσοντ᾽, Ἀθηναίων τινὸς
[1165] ἀνάθημα· χρυσέους τ᾽ ἐν μέσῳ συσσιτίῳ
κρατῆρας ἔστησ᾽. Ἐν δ᾽ ἄκροισι βὰς ποσὶ
κῆρυξ ἀνεῖπε τὸν θέλοντ᾽ ἐγχωρίων
ἐς δαῖτα χωρεῖν. Ὡς δ᾽ ἐπληρώθη στέγη,
στεφάνοισι κοσμηθέντες εὐόχθου βορᾶς
[1170] ψυχὴν ἐπλήρουν. Ὡς δ᾽ ἀνεῖσαν ἡδονήν,
παρελθὼν πρέσβυς ἐς μέσον πέδον
ἔστη, γέλων δ᾽ ἔθηκε συνδείπνοις πολύν,
πρόθυμα πράσσων· ἔκ τε γὰρ κρωσσῶν ὕδωρ
χεροῖν ἔπεμπε νίπτρα, κἀξεθυμία
[1175] σμύρνης ἱδρῶτα, χρυσέων τ᾽ ἐκπωμάτων
ἦρχ᾽, αὐτὸς αὐτῷ τόνδε προστάξας πόνον.

Ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἐς αὐλοὺς ἦκον ἐς κρατῆρά τε
κοινόν, γέρων ἔλεξ᾽· Ἀφαρπάζειν χρεὼν
οἰνηρὰ τεύχη σμικρά, μεγάλα δ᾽ ἐσφέρειν,
[1180] ὡς θᾶσσον ἔλθωσ᾽ οἵδ᾽ ἐς ἡδονὰς φρενῶν.
Ἦν δὴ φερόντων μόχθος ἀργυρηλάτους
χρυσέας τε φιάλας· ὃ δὲ λαβὼν ἐξαίρετον,
ὡς τῷ νέῳ δὴ δεσπότῃ χάριν φέρων,

ἔδωκε πλῆρες τεῦχος, εἰς οἶνον βαλὼν
ὅ φασι δοῦναι φάρμακον δραστήριον
δέσποιναν, ὡς παῖς ὁ νέος ἐκλίποι φάος·
κοὐδεὶς τάδ᾽ ᾔδειν. Ἐν χεροῖν ἔχοντι δὲ
σπονδὰς μετ᾽ ἄλλων παιδὶ τῷ πεφηνότι
βλασφημίαν τις οἰκετῶν ἐφθέγξατο·
ὁ δ᾽, ὡς ἐν ἱερῷ μάντεσίν τ᾽ ἐσθλοῖς τραφείς,
οἰωνὸν ἔθετο, κἀκέλευσ᾽ ἄλλον νέον
κρατῆρα πληροῦν· τὰς δὲ πρὶν σπονδὰς θεοῦ
δίδωσι γαίᾳ, πᾶσί τ᾽ ἐκσπένδειν λέγει.
Σιγὴ δ᾽ ὑπῆλθεν. Ἐκ δ᾽ ἐπίμπλαμεν δρόσου
κρατῆρας ἱεροὺς Βυβλίνου τε πώματος.
Κἀν τῷδε μόχθῳ πτηνὸς ἐσπίπτει δόμοις
κῶμος πελειῶν Λοξίου γὰρ ἐν δόμοις
ἄτρεστα ναίουσ᾽ ὡς δ᾽ ἀπέσπεισαν μέθυ,
ἐς αὐτὸ χείλη πώματος κεχρημέναι
καθῆκαν, εἶλκον δ᾽ εὐπτέρους ἐς αὐχένας.

Καὶ ταῖς μὲν ἄλλαις ἄνοσος ἦν λοιβὴ θεοῦ·
ἣ δ᾽ ἕζετ᾽ ἔνθ᾽ ὁ καινὸς ἔσπεισεν γόνος,
ποτοῦ τ᾽ ἐγεύσατ᾽, εὐθὺς εὔπτερον δέμας
ἔσεισε κἀβάκχευσεν, ἐκ δ᾽ ἔκλαγξ᾽ ὅπα
ἀξύνετον αἰάζουσ᾽· ἐθάμβησεν δὲ πᾶς
θοινατόρων ὅμιλος ὄρνιθος πόνους.
Θνῄσκει δ᾽ ἀπασπαίρουσα, φοινικοσκελεῖς
χηλὰς παρεῖσα. Γυμνὰ δ᾽ ἐκ πέπλων μέλη
ὑπὲρ τραπέζης ἦχ᾽ ὁ μαντευτὸς γόνος,
βοᾷ δέ· Τίς μ᾽ ἔμελλεν ἀνθρώπων κτενεῖν;
Σήμαινε, πρέσβυ· σὴ γὰρ ἡ προθυμία,
καὶ πῶμα χειρὸς σῆς ἐδεξάμην πάρα.
Εὐθὺς δ᾽ ἐρευνᾷ γραῖαν ὠλένην λαβών,
ἐπ᾽ αὐτοφώρῳ πρέσβυν ὡς ἔχονθ᾽ ἕλοι.
ὤφθη δὲ καὶ κατεῖπ᾽ ἀναγκασθεὶς μόγις
τόλμας Κρεούσης πώματός τε μηχανάς.
Θεῖ δ᾽ εὐθὺς ἔξω συλλαβὼν θοινάτορας
ὁ πυθόχρηστος Λοξίου νεανίας,
κἀν κοιράνοισι Πυθικοῖς σταθεὶς λέγει·

[1220] Ὦ Γαῖα σεμνή, τῆς Ἐρεχθέως ὕπο,
ξένης γυναικός, φαρμάκοισι θνῄσκομεν.
Δελφῶν δ᾽ ἄνακτες ὥρισαν πετρορριφῆ
θανεῖν ἐμὴν δέσποιναν οὐ ψήφῳ μιᾷ,
τὸν ἱερὸν ὡς κτείνουσαν ἔν τ᾽ ἀνακτόροις
[1225] φόνον τιθεῖσαν. Πᾶσα δὲ ζητεῖ πόλις
τὴν ἀθλίως σπεύσασαν ἀθλίαν ὁδόν·
παίδων γὰρ ἐλθοῦσ᾽ εἰς ἔρον Φοίβου πάρα,
τὸ σῶμα κοινῇ τοῖς τέκνοις ἀπώλεσεν.

Χορός

[1229] Οὐκ ἔστ᾽ οὐκ ἔστιν θανάτου
[1230] παρατροπὰ μελέᾳ μοι·
φανερὰ γὰρ φανερὰ τάδ᾽ ἤδη,
σπονδᾶς ἐκ Διονύσου,
βοτρύων θοᾶς ἐχίδνας
σταγόσι μειγνυμένας φόνῳ
[1235] φανερὰ θύματα νερτέρων,
συμφοραὶ μὲν ἐμῷ βίῳ,
λεύσιμοι δὲ καταφθοραὶ δεσποίνᾳ.
τίνα φυγὰν πτερόεσσαν ἢ
χθονὸς ὑπὸ σκοτίων μυχῶν πορευθῶ,
[1240] θανάτου λεύσιμον ἄταν
ἀποφεύγουσα, τεθρίππων
ὠκιστᾶν χαλᾶν ἐπιβᾶσ᾽,
ἢ πρύμνας ἐπὶ ναῶν;

Οὐκ ἔστι λαθεῖν, ὅτε μὴ χρῄζων
[1245] θεὸς ἐκκλέπτει.
τί ποτ᾽, ὦ μελέα δέσποινα, μένει
ψυχῇ σε παθεῖν; Ἆρα θέλουσαι
δρᾶσαί τι κακὸν τοὺς πέλας αὐταὶ
πεισόμεθ᾽, ὥσπερ τὸ δίκαιον;

Κρέουσα

[1250] Πρόσπολοι, διωκόμεσθα θανασίμους ἐπὶ σφαγάς,
Πυθίᾳ ψήφῳ κρατηθεῖσ', ἔκδοτος δὲ γίγνομαι.

Χορός

Ἴσμεν, ὦ τάλαινα, τὰς σὰς συμφοράς, ἵν' εἶ τύχης.

Κρέουσα

Ποῖ φύγω δῆτ'; Ἐκ γὰρ οἴκων προύλαβον μόγις πόδα
μὴ θανεῖν, κλοπῇ δ' ἀφῖγμαι διαφυγοῦσα πολεμίους.

Χορός

[1255] Ποῖ δ' ἂν ἄλλοσ' ἢ 'πὶ βωμόν;

Κρέουσα

Καὶ τί μοι πλέον τόδε;

Χορός

Ἱκέτιν οὐ θέμις φονεύειν.

Κρέουσα

Τῷ νόμῳ δέ γ' ὄλλυμαι.

Χορός

Χειρία γ' ἁλοῦσα.

Κρέουσα

Καὶ μὴν οἶδ' ἀγωνισταὶ πικροὶ
δεῦρ' ἐπείγονται ξιφήρεις.

Χορός

Ἴζε νυν πυρᾶς ἔπι.
κἂν θάνῃς γὰρ ἐνθάδ᾽ οὖσα, τοῖς ἀποκτείνασί σε
προστρόπαιον αἷμα θήσεις· οἰστέον δὲ τὴν τύχην.

Ἴων

Ὦ ταυρόμορφον ὄμμα Κηφισοῦ πατρός,
οἵαν ἔχιδναν τήνδ᾽ ἔφυσας ἢ πυρὸς
δράκοντ᾽ ἀναβλέποντα φοινίαν φλόγα,
ᾗ τόλμα πᾶσ᾽ ἔνεστιν, οὐδ᾽ ἥσσων ἔφυ
Γοργοῦς σταλαγμῶν, οἷς ἔμελλέ με κτενεῖν.
Λάζυσθ᾽, ἵν᾽ αὐτῆς τοὺς ἀκηράτους πλόκους
κόμης καταξήνωσι Παρνασοῦ πλάκες,
ὅθεν πετραῖον ἅλμα δισκηθήσεται.
Ἐσθλοῦ δ᾽ ἔκυρσα δαίμονος, πρὶν ἐς πόλιν
μολεῖν Ἀθηνῶν χὑπὸ μητρυιὰν πεσεῖν.
Ἐν συμμάχοις γὰρ ἀνεμετρησάμην φρένας
τὰς σάς, ὅσον μοι πῆμα δυσμενής τ᾽ ἔφυς·
ἔσω γὰρ ἄν με περιβαλοῦσα δωμάτων
ἄρδην ἂν ἐξέπεμψας εἰς Ἅιδου δόμους.
Ἀλλ᾽ οὔτε βωμὸς οὔτ᾽ Ἀπόλλωνος δόμος
σώσει σ᾽· ὁ δ᾽ οἶκτος ὁ σὸς ἐμοὶ κρείσσων πάρα
καὶ μητρὶ τἠμῇ· καὶ γὰρ εἰ τὸ σῶμά μοι
ἄπεστιν αὐτῆς, τοὔνομ᾽ οὐκ ἄπεστί πω.
Ἴδεσθε τὴν πανοῦργον, ἐκ τέχνης τέχνην
οἵαν ἔπλεξε· βωμὸν ἔπτηξεν θεοῦ,
ὡς οὐ δίκην δώσουσα τῶν εἰργασμένων.

Κρέουσα

Ἀπεννέπω σε μὴ κατακτείνειν ἐμὲ
ὑπέρ τ᾽ ἐμαυτῆς τοῦ θεοῦ θ᾽ ἵν᾽ ἔσταμεν.

Ἴων

Τί δ᾽ ἐστὶ Φοίβῳ σοί τε κοινὸν ἐν μέσῳ;

Κρέουσα

[1285] Ἱερὸν τὸ σῶμα τῷ θεῷ δίδωμ᾽ ἔχειν.

Ἴων

Κἄπειτ᾽ ἔκαινες φαρμάκοις τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ;

Κρέουσα

Ἀλλ᾽ οὐκέτ᾽ ἦσθα Λοξίου, πατρὸς δὲ σοῦ.

Ἴων

Ἀλλ᾽ ἐγενόμεσθα πατρός· οὐσίαν λέγω.

Κρέουσα

Οὐκοῦν τότ᾽ ἦσθα· νῦν δ᾽ ἐγώ, σὺ δ᾽ οὐκέτι.

Ἴων

[1290] Οὐκ εὐσεβεῖς γε· τἀμὰ δ᾽ εὐσεβῆ τότ᾽ ἦν.

Κρέουσα

Ἔκτεινά σ᾽ ὄντα πολέμιον δόμοις ἐμοῖς.

Ἴων

Οὗτοι σὺν ὅπλοις ἦλθον ἐς τὴν σὴν χθόνα.

Κρέουσα

Μάλιστα· κἀπίμπρης γ᾽ Ἐρεχθέως δόμους.

Ἴων

Ποίοισι πανοῖς ἢ πυρὸς ποίᾳ φλογί;

Κρέουσα

[1295] Ἔμελλες οἰκεῖν τἄμ', ἐμοῦ βίᾳ λαβών.

Ἴων

Πατρός γε γῆν διδόντος ἣν ἐκτήσατο.

Κρέουσα

Τοῖς Αἰόλου δὲ πῶς μετῆν τῶν Παλλάδος;

Ἴων

Ὅπλοισιν αὐτήν, οὐ λόγοις ἐρρύσατο.

Κρέουσα

Ἐπίκουρος οἰκήτωρ γ' ἂν οὐκ εἴη χθονός.

Ἴων

[1300] Κἄπειτα τοῦ μέλλειν μ' ἀπέκτεινες φόβῳ;

Κρέουσα

Ὡς μὴ θάνοιμί γ', εἰ σὺ μὴ μέλλων τύχοις.

Ἴων

Φθονεῖς ἄπαις οὖσ', εἰ πατὴρ ἐξηῦρέ με.

Κρέουσα

Σὺ τῶν ἀτέκνων δῆτ' ἀναρπάσεις δόμους;

Ἴων

Ἡμῖν δέ γ' ἀλλὰ πατρικῆς οὐκ ἦν μέρος;

Κρέουσα

[1305] Ὅσ᾽ ἀσπὶς ἔγχος θ᾽· ἥδε σοι παμπησία.

Ἴων

Ἔκλειπε βωμὸν καὶ θεηλάτους ἕδρας.

Κρέουσα

Τὴν σὴν ὅπου σοι μητέρ᾽ ἐστὶ νουθέτει.

Ἴων

Σὺ δ᾽ οὐχ ὑφέξεις ζημίαν, κτείνουσ᾽ ἐμέ;

Κρέουσα

Ἥν γ᾽ ἐντὸς ἀδύτων τῶνδέ με σφάξαι θέλῃς.

Ἴων

[1310] Τίς ἡδονή σοι θεοῦ θανεῖν ἐν στέμμασι;

Κρέουσα

Λυπήσομέν τιν᾽, ὧν λελυπήμεσθ᾽ ὕπο.

Ἴων

Φεῦ.
Δεινόν γε, θνητοῖς τοὺς νόμους ὡς οὐ καλῶς
ἔθηκεν ὁ θεὸς οὐδ᾽ ἀπὸ γνώμης σοφῆς·
τοὺς μὲν γὰρ ἀδίκους βωμὸν οὐχ ἵζειν ἐχρῆν,
[1315] ἀλλ᾽ ἐξελαύνειν· οὐδὲ γὰρ ψαύειν καλὸν
θεῶν πονηρὰν χεῖρα· τοῖσι δ᾽ ἐνδίκοις
ἱερὰ καθίζειν, ὅστις ἠδικεῖτ᾽, ἐχρῆν·
καὶ μὴ ‘πὶ ταὐτὸ τοῦτ᾽ ἰόντ᾽ ἔχειν ἴσον
τόν τ᾽ ἐσθλὸν ὄντα τόν τε μὴ θεῶν πάρα.

Προφῆτις

[1320] Ἐπίσχες, ὦ παῖ· τρίποδα γὰρ χρηστήριον
λιποῦσα θριγκοῦ τοῦδ’ ὑπερβάλλω πόδα
Φοίβου προφῆτις, τρίποδος ἀρχαῖον νόμον
σῴζουσα, πασῶν Δελφίδων ἐξαίρετος.

Ἴων

Χαῖρ’, ὦ φίλη μοι μῆτερ, οὐ τεκοῦσά περ.

Προφῆτις

[1325] Ἀλλ’ οὖν λεγώμεθ’· ἡ φάτις δ’ οὔ μοι πικρά.

Ἴων

Ἤκουσας ὅς μ’ ἔκτεινεν ἥδε μηχαναῖς;

Προφῆτις

Ἤκουσα· καὶ σὺ δ’ ὡμὸς ὢν ἁμαρτάνεις.

Ἴων

Οὐ χρή με τοὺς κτείνοντας ἀνταπολλύναι;

Προφῆτις

Προγονοῖς δάμαρτες δυσμενεῖς ἀεί ποτε.

Ἴων

[1330] Ἡμεῖς δὲ μητρυιαῖς γε πάσχοντες κακῶς.

Προφῆτις

Μὴ ταῦτα· λείπων ἱερὰ καὶ στείχων πάτραν

Ἴων

Τί δή με δρᾶσαι νουθετούμενον χρεών;

Προφῆτις

Καθαρὸς Ἀθήνας ἔλθ’ ὑπ’ οἰωνῶν καλῶν.

Ἴων

Καθαρὸς ἅπας τοι πολεμίους ὃς ἂν κτάνῃ.

Προφῆτις

[1335] Μὴ σύ γε· παρ’ ἡμῶν δ’ ἔκλαβ’ οὓς ἔχω λόγους.

Ἴων

Λέγοις ἄν· εὔνους δ’ οὖσ’ ἐρεῖς ὅσ’ ἂν λέγῃς.

Προφῆτις

Ὁρᾷς τόδ’ ἄγγος χερὸς ὑπ’ ἀγκάλαις ἐμαῖς;

Ἴων

Ὁρῶ παλαιὰν ἀντίπηγ’ ἐν στέμμασιν.

Προφῆτις

Ἐν τῇδέ σ’ ἔλαβον νεόγονον βρέφος ποτέ.

Ἴων

[1340] Τί φῄς; Ὁ μῦθος εἰσενήνεκται νέος.

Προφῆτις

Σιγῇ γὰρ εἶχον αὐτά· νῦν δὲ δείκνυμεν.

Ἴων

Πῶς οὖν ἔκρυπτες τόδε λαβοῦσ’ ἡμᾶς πάλαι;

Προφῆτις

Ὁ θεός σ’ ἐβούλετ’ ἐν δόμοις ἔχειν λάτριν.

Ἴων

Νῦν δ’ οὐχὶ χρῄζει; Τῷ τόδε γνῶναί με χρή;

Προφῆτις

[1345] Πατέρα κατειπὼν τῆσδέ σ’ ἐκπέμπει χθονός.

Ἴων

Σὺ δ’ ἐκ κελευσμῶν ἢ πόθεν σῴζεις τάδε;

Προφῆτις

ἐνθύμιόν μοι τότε τίθησι Λοξίας

Ἴων

Τί χρῆμα δρᾶσαι; Λέγε, πέραινε σοὺς λόγους.

Προφῆτις

Σῶσαι τόδ’ εὕρημ’ ἐς τὸν ὄντα νῦν χρόνον.

Ἴων

[1350] Ἔχει δέ μοι τί κέρδος ἢ τίνα βλάβην;

Προφῆτις

Ἐνθάδε κέκρυπται σπάργαν’ οἷς ἐνῆσθα σύ.

Ἴων

Μητρὸς τάδ’ ἡμῖν ἐκφέρεις ζητήματα;

Προφῆτις

Ἐπεί γ’ ὁ δαίμων βούλεται· πάροιθε δ’ οὔ.

Ἴων

Ὦ μακαρίων μοι φασμάτων ἥδ’ ἡμέρα.

Προφῆτις

Λαβών νυν αὐτὰ τὴν τεκοῦσαν ἐκπόνει.

Ἴων

Πᾶσάν γ’ ἐπελθὼν Ἀσιάδ’ Εὐρώπης θ’ ὅρους.

Προφῆτις

Γνώσῃ τάδ’ αὐτός. Τοῦ θεοῦ δ’ ἕκατί σε
ἔθρεψά τ’, ὦ παῖ, καὶ τάδ’ ἀποδίδωμί σοι,
ἃ κεῖνος ἀκέλευστόν μ’ ἐβουλήθη λαβεῖν
σῶσαί θ’· ὅτου δ’ ἐβούλεθ’ οὕνεκ’, οὐκ ἔχω λέγειν.
Ἦδει δὲ θνητῶν οὔτις ἀνθρώπων τάδε
ἔχοντας ἡμᾶς, οὐδ’ ἵν’ ἦν κεκρυμμένα.
Καὶ χαῖρ’· ἴσον γάρ σ’ ὡς τεκοῦσ’ ἀσπάζομαι.
Ἄρξαι δ’ ὅθεν σὴν μητέρα ζητεῖν σε χρή·
πρῶτον μὲν εἴ τις Δελφίδων τεκοῦσά σε
ἐς τούσδε ναοὺς ἐξέθηκε παρθένος,
ἔπειτα δ’ εἴ τις Ἑλλάς. Ἐξ ἡμῶν δ’ ἔχεις
ἅπαντα Φοίβου θ’, ὃς μετέσχε τῆς τύχης.

Ἴων

Φεῦ φεῦ· κατ’ ὄσσων ὡς ὑγρὸν βάλλω δάκρυ,
ἐκεῖσε τὸν νοῦν δούς, ὅθ’ ἡ τεκοῦσά με
κρυφαῖα νυμφευθεῖσ’ ἀπημπόλα λάθρα
καὶ μαστὸν οὐκ ὑπέσχεν· ἀλλ’ ἀνώνυμος

ἐν θεοῦ μελάθροις εἶχον οἰκέτην βίον.
Τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ μὲν χρηστά, τοῦ δὲ δαίμονος
βαρέα· χρόνον γὰρ ὅν με χρῆν ἐν ἀγκάλαις
μητρὸς τρυφῆσαι καί τι τερφθῆναι βίου,
ἀπεστερήθην φιλτάτης μητρὸς τροφῆς.
Τλήμων δὲ χἡ τεκοῦσά μ'· ὡς ταὐτὸν πάθος
πέπονθε, παιδὸς ἀπολέσασα χαρμονάς.
Καὶ νῦν λαβὼν τήνδ' ἀντίπηγ' οἴσω θεῷ
ἀνάθημ', ἵν' εὕρω μηδὲν ὧν οὐ βούλομαι.
Εἰ γάρ με δούλη τυγχάνει τεκοῦσά τις,
εὑρεῖν κάκιον μητέρ' ἢ σιγῶντ' ἐᾶν.
Ὦ Φοῖβε, ναοῖς ἀνατίθημι τήνδε σοῖς
καίτοι τί πάσχω; Τοῦ θεοῦ προθυμίᾳ
πολεμῶ, τὰ μητρὸς σύμβολ' ὃς σέσωκέ μοι.
Ἀνοικτέον τάδ' ἐστὶ καὶ τολμητέον·
τὰ γὰρ πεπρωμέν' οὐχ ὑπερβαίην ποτ' ἄν.

Ὦ στέμματ' ἱερά, τί ποτέ μοι κεκεύθατε,
καὶ σύνδεθ', οἷσι τἄμ' ἐφρουρήθη φίλα;
ἰδοὺ περίπτυγμ' ἀντίπηγος εὐκύκλου
ὡς οὐ γεγήρακ' ἔκ τινος θεηλάτου,
εὐρώς τ' ἄπεστι πλεγμάτων· ὁ δ' ἐν μέσῳ
χρόνος πολὺς δὴ τοῖσδε θησαυρίσμασιν.

Κρέουσα

Τί δῆτα φάσμα τῶν ἀνελπίστων ὁρῶ;

Ἴων

σίγα σύ· πολλὰ καὶ πάροιθεν οἶσθά μοι

Κρέουσα

Οὐκ ἐν σιωπῇ τἀμά· μή με νουθέτει.
Ὁρῶ γὰρ ἄγγος οὗ 'ξέθηκ' ἐγώ ποτε
σέ γ', ὦ τέκνον μοι, βρέφος ἔτ' ὄντα νήπιον,

Κέκροπος ἐς ἄντρα καὶ Μακρὰς πετρηρεφεῖς.
Λείψω δὲ βωμὸν τόνδε, κεἰ θανεῖν με χρή.

Ἴων

Λάζυσθε τήνδε· θεομανὴς γὰρ ἥλατο
βωμοῦ λιποῦσα ξόανα· δεῖτε δ' ὠλένας.

Κρέουσα

Σφάζοντες οὐ λήγοιτ' ἄν· ὡς ἀνθέξομαι
καὶ τῆσδε καὶ σοῦ τῶν τε σῶν κεκρυμμένων.

Ἴων

Τάδ' οὐχὶ δεινά; Ῥυσιάζομαι λόγῳ.

Κρέουσα

Οὔκ, ἀλλὰ σοῖς φίλοισιν εὑρίσκῃ φίλος.

Ἴων

Ἐγὼ φίλος σός; Κᾆτά μ' ἔκτεινες λάθρα;

Κρέουσα

Παῖς γ', εἰ τόδ' ἐστὶ τοῖς τεκοῦσι φίλτατον.

Ἴων

Παῦσαι πλέκουσα. Λήψομαί σ' ἐγὼ καλῶς.

Κρέουσα

Ἐς τοῦθ' ἱκοίμην, τοῦδε τοξεύω, τέκνον.

Ἴων

Κενὸν τόδ’ ἄγγος ἢ στέγει πλήρωμά τι;

Κρέουσα

Σά γ’ ἔνδυθ’, οἷσί σ’ ἐξέθηκ’ ἐγώ ποτε.

Ἴων

Καὶ τοὔνομ’ αὐτῶν ἐξερεῖς πρὶν εἰσιδεῖν;

Κρέουσα

Κὰν μὴ φράσω γε, κατθανεῖν ὑφίσταμαι.

Ἴων

Λέγ’· ὡς ἔχει τι δεινὸν ἥ γε τόλμα σου.

Κρέουσα

Σκέψασθ’· ὃ παῖς ποτ’ οὖσ’ ὕφασμ’ ὕφην’ ἐγὼ

Ἴων

Ποῖόν τι; Πολλὰ παρθένων ὑφάσματα.

Κρέουσα

Οὐ τέλεον, οἷον δ’ ἐκδίδαγμα κερκίδος.

Ἴων

Μορφὴν ἔχον τίν’; Ὡς με μὴ ταύτῃ λάβῃς.

Κρέουσα

Γοργὼ μὲν ἐν μέσοισιν ἠτρίοις πέπλων.

Ἴων

Ὦ Ζεῦ, τίς ἡμᾶς ἐκκυνηγετεῖ πότμος;

Κρέουσα

Κεκρασπέδωται δ’ ὄφεσιν αἰγίδος τρόπον.

Ἴων

Ἰδού·
τόδ’ ἔσθ’ ὕφασμα, θέσφαθ’ ὡς εὑρίσκομεν.

Κρέουσα

Ὦ χρόνιον ἱστῶν παρθένευμα τῶν ἐμῶν.

Ἴων

Ἔστιν τι πρὸς τῷδ’, ἢ μόνῳ τῷδ’ εὐτυχεῖς;

Κρέουσα

Δράκοντες· ἀρχαῖόν τι παγχρύσῳ γένει
δώρημ’ Ἀθάνας, ἢ τέκν’ ἐντρέφειν λέγει
Ἐριχθονίου γε τοῦ πάλαι μιμήματα.

Ἴων

Τί δρᾶν, τί χρῆσθαι, φράζε μοι, χρυσώματι;

Κρέουσα

Δέραια παιδὶ νεογόνῳ φέρειν, τέκνον.

Ἴων

Ἔνεισιν οἵδε· τὸ δὲ τρίτον ποθῶ μαθεῖν.

Κρέουσα

Στέφανον ἐλαίας ἀμφέθηκά σοι τότε,
ἣν πρῶτ᾽ Ἀθάνα σκόπελον εἰσηνέγκατο,
[1435] ὅς, εἴπερ ἔστιν, οὔποτ᾽ ἐκλείπει χλόην,
θάλλει δ᾽, ἐλαίας ἐξ ἀκηράτου γεγώς.

Ἴων

Ὦ φιλτάτη μοι μῆτερ, ἄσμενός σ᾽ ἰδὼν
πρὸς ἀσμένας πέπτωκα σὰς παρηίδας.

Κρέουσα

Ὦ τέκνον, ὦ φῶς μητρὶ κρεῖσσον ἡλίου
[1440] συγγνώσεται γὰρ ὁ θεός ἐν χεροῖν σ᾽ ἔχω,
ἄελπτον εὕρημ᾽, ὃν κατὰ γᾶς ἐνέρων
χθόνιον μετὰ Περσεφόνας τ᾽ ἐδόκουν ναίειν.

Ἴων

Ἀλλ᾽, ὦ φίλη μοι μῆτερ, ἐν χεροῖν σέθεν
ὁ κατθανών τε κοὐ θανὼν φαντάζομαι.

Κρέουσα

[1445] Ἰὼ ἰώ, λαμπρᾶς αἰθέρος ἀμπτυχαί,
τίν᾽ αὐδὰν ἀύσω,
βοάσω; Πόθεν μοι
συνέκυρσ᾽ ἀδόκητος ἡδονά; Πόθεν
ἐλάβομεν χαράν;

Ἴων

[1450] ἐμοὶ γενέσθαι πάντα μᾶλλον ἄν ποτε,
μῆτερ, παρέστη τῶνδ᾽, ὅπως σός εἰμ᾽ ἐγώ.

Κρέουσα

Ἔτι φόβῳ τρέμω.

Ἴων

Μῶν οὐκ ἔχειν μ᾽ ἔχουσα;

Κρέουσα

Τὰς γὰρ ἐλπίδας
ἀπέβαλον πρόσω.
Ἰὼ γύναι, πόθεν πόθεν ἔλαβες ἐμὸν
βρέφος ἐς ἀγκάλας;
[1455] Τίν᾽ ἀνὰ χεῖρα δόμον ἔβα Λοξίου;

Ἴων

Θεῖον τόδ᾽· ἀλλὰ τἀπίλοιπα τῆς τύχης
εὐδαιμονοῖμεν, ὡς τὰ πρόσθε δυστυχῆ.

Κρέουσα

Τέκνον, οὐκ ἀδάκρυτος ἐκλοχεύῃ,
γόοις δὲ ματρὸς ἐκ χερῶν ὁρίζῃ·
[1460] νῦν δὲ γενειάσιν παρὰ σέθεν πνέω
μακαριωτάτας τυχοῦσ᾽ ἡδονᾶς.

Ἴων

Τοὐμὸν λέγουσα καὶ τὸ σὸν κοινῶς λέγεις.

Κρέουσα

[1463] Ἄπαιδες οὐκέτ᾽ ἐσμὲν οὐδ᾽ ἄτεκνοι·
δῶμ᾽ ἑστιοῦται, γᾶ δ᾽ ἔχει τυράννους·
[1465] ἀνηβᾷ δ᾽ Ἐρεχθεύς,
ὅ τε γηγενέτας δόμος οὐκέτι νύκτα δέρκεται,
ἀελίου δ᾽ ἀναβλέπει λαμπάσιν.

Ἴων

Μῆτερ, παρών μοι καὶ πατὴρ μετασχέτω
τῆς ἡδονῆς τῆσδ’ ἧς ἔδωχ’ ὑμῖν ἐγώ.

Κρέουσα

[1470] Ὦ τέκνον,
τί φῄς; Οἷον οἷον ἀνελέγχομαι.

Ἴων

Πῶς εἶπας;

Κρέουσα

Ἄλλοθεν γέγονας, ἄλλοθεν.

Ἴων

Ὤμοι· νόθον με παρθένευμ’ ἔτικτε σόν;

Κρέουσα

Οὐχ ὑπὸ λαμπάδων οὐδὲ χορευμάτων
[1475] ὑμέναιος ἐμός,
τέκνον, ἔτικτε σὸν κάρα.

Ἴων

Αἰαῖ· πέφυκα δυσγενής. μῆτερ, πόθεν;

Κρέουσα

Ἵστω Γοργοφόνα

Ἴων

Τί τοῦτ’ ἔλεξας;

Κρέουσα

Ἃ σκοπέλοις ἐπ᾽ ἐμοῖς
[1480] τὸν ἐλαιοφυῆ πάγον
θάσσει

Ἴων

Λέγεις μοι δόλια κοὐ σαφῆ τάδε.

Κρέουσα

Παρ᾽ ἀηδόνιον πέτραν
Φοίβῳ

Ἴων

Τί Φοῖβον αὐδᾷς;

Κρέουσα

Κρυπτόμενον λέχος ηὐνάσθην . . .

Ἴων

[1485] Λέγ᾽· ὡς ἐρεῖς τι κεδνὸν εὐτυχές τέ μοι.

Κρέουσα

Δεκάτῳ δέ σε μηνὸς ἐν
κύκλῳ κρύφιον ὠδῖν᾽ ἔτεκον Φοίβῳ.

Ἴων

Ὦ φίλτατ᾽ εἰποῦσ᾽, εἰ λέγεις ἐτήτυμα.

Κρέουσα

[1489] Παρθένια δ᾽ ἐμᾶς <λάθρα> ματέρος
[1490] σπάργαν᾽ ἀμφίβολά σοι τάδ᾽ ἐνῆψα, κερ-
κίδος ἐμᾶς πλάνους.

Γάλακτι δ’ οὐκ ἐπέσχον, οὐδὲ μαστῷ
τροφεῖα ματρὸς οὐδὲ λουτρὰ χειροῖν,
ἀνὰ δ’ ἄντρον ἔρημον οἰωνῶν
γαμφηλαῖς φόνευμα θοίναμά τ’ εἰς
Ἅιδαν ἐκβάλλῃ.

Ἴων

Ὦ δεινὰ τλᾶσα μῆτερ.

Κρέουσα

Ἐν φόβῳ, τέκνον,
καταδεθεῖσα σὰν
ἀπέβαλον ψυχάν·
ἔκτεινά σ’ ἄκουσ’.

Ἴων

Ἐξ ἐμοῦ τ’ οὐχ ὅσι’ ἔθνῃσκες.

Κρέουσα

Ἰώ· δειναὶ μὲν τότε τύχαι,
δεινὰ δὲ καὶ τάδ’· ἐλισσόμεσθ’ ἐκεῖθεν
ἐνθάδε δυστυχίαισιν εὐτυχίαις τε πάλιν,
μεθίσταται δὲ πνεύματα.
μενέτω· τὰ πάροιθεν ἄλις κακά·

Χορός

Μηδεὶς δοκείτω μηδὲν ἀνθρώπων ποτὲ
ἄελπτον εἶναι πρὸς τὰ τυγχάνοντα νῦν.

Ἴων

Ὦ μεταβαλοῦσα μυρίους ἤδη βροτῶν
καὶ δυστυχῆσαι καὖθις αὖ πρᾶξαι καλῶς,
Τύχη, παρ’ οἵαν ἤλθομεν στάθμην βίου

μητέρα φονεῦσαι καὶ παθεῖν ἀνάξια.
Φεῦ·
ἆρ᾽ ἐν φαενναῖς ἡλίου περιπτυχαῖς
ἔνεστι πάντα τάδε καθ᾽ ἡμέραν μαθεῖν;
Φίλον μὲν οὖν σ᾽ εὕρημα, μῆτερ, ηὕρομεν,
καὶ τὸ γένος οὐδὲν μεμπτόν, ὡς ἡμῖν, τόδε·
τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλα πρὸς σὲ βούλομαι μόνην φράσαι.
Δεῦρ᾽ ἔλθ᾽· ἐς οὖς γὰρ τοὺς λόγους εἰπεῖν θέλω
καὶ περικαλύψαι τοῖσι πράγμασι σκότον.
Ὅρα σύ, μῆτερ· μὴ σφαλεῖσ᾽ ἃ παρθένοις
ἐγγίγνεται νοσήματ᾽ ἐς κρυπτοὺς γάμους,
ἔπειτα τῷ θεῷ προστίθης τὴν αἰτίαν,
καὶ τοὐμὸν αἰσχρὸν ἀποφυγεῖν πειρωμένη,
Φοίβῳ τεκεῖν με φῄς, τεκοῦσ᾽ οὐκ ἐκ θεοῦ;

Κρέουσα

Μὰ τὴν παρασπίζουσαν ἅρμασίν ποτε
Νίκην Ἀθηνᾶν Ζηνὶ γηγενεῖς ἔπι,
οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις σοι πατὴρ θνητῶν, τέκνον,
ἀλλ᾽ ὅσπερ ἐξέθρεψε, Λοξίας ἄναξ.

Ἴων

Πῶς οὖν τὸν αὑτοῦ παῖδ᾽ ἔδωκ᾽ ἄλλῳ πατρὶ
Ξούθου τέ φησι παῖδά μ᾽ ἐκπεφυκέναι;

Κρέουσα

Πεφυκέναι μὲν οὐχί, δωρεῖται δέ σε
αὑτοῦ γεγῶτα· καὶ γὰρ ἂν φίλος φίλῳ
δοίη τὸν αὑτοῦ παῖδα δεσπότην δόμων.

Ἴων

Ὁ θεὸς ἀληθὴς ἢ μάτην μαντεύεται,
ἐμοῦ ταράσσει, μῆτερ, εἰκότως φρένα.

Κρέουσα

Ἄκουε δή νυν ἅμ᾽ ἐσῆλθεν, ὦ τέκνον·
εὐεργετῶν σε Λοξίας ἐς εὐγενῆ
δόμον καθίζει· τοῦ θεοῦ δὲ λεγόμενος,
οὐκ ἔσχες ἄν ποτ᾽ οὔτε παγκλήρους δόμους
οὔτ᾽ ὄνομα πατρός. Πῶς γάρ, οὗ γ᾽ ἐγὼ γάμους
ἔκρυπτον αὐτὴ καί σ᾽ ἀπέκτεινον λάθρα;
Ὃ δ᾽ ὠφελῶν σε προστίθησ᾽ ἄλλῳ πατρί.

Ἴων

Οὐχ ὧδε φαύλως αὔτ᾽ ἐγὼ μετέρχομαι,
ἀλλ᾽ ἱστορήσω Φοῖβον εἰσελθὼν δόμους,
εἴτ᾽ εἰμὶ θνητοῦ πατρὸς εἴτε Λοξίου.
Ἔα· τίς οἴκων θυοδόκων ὑπερτελὴς
ἀντήλιον πρόσωπον ἐκφαίνει θεῶν;
Φεύγωμεν, ὦ τεκοῦσα, μὴ τὰ δαιμόνων
ὁρῶμεν εἰ μὴ καιρός ἐσθ᾽ ἡμᾶς ὁρᾶν.

Ἀθήνα

Μὴ φεύγετ᾽· οὐ γὰρ πολεμίαν με φεύγετε,
ἀλλ᾽ ἔν τ᾽ Ἀθήναις κἀνθάδ᾽ οὖσαν εὐμενῆ.
Ἐπώνυμος δὲ σῆς ἀφικόμην χθονὸς
Παλλάς, δρόμῳ σπεύσασ᾽ Ἀπόλλωνος πάρα,
ὃς ἐς μὲν ὄψιν σφῷν μολεῖν οὐκ ἠξίου,
μὴ τῶν πάροιθε μέμψις ἐς μέσον μόλῃ,
ἡμᾶς δὲ πέμπει τοὺς λόγους ὑμῖν φράσαι·
ὡς ἥδε τίκτει σ᾽ ἐξ Ἀπόλλωνος πατρός,
δίδωσι δ᾽ οἷς ἔδωκεν, οὐ φύσασί σε,
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς νομίζῃ ‘ς οἶκον εὐγενέστατον.
Ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἀνεῴχθη πρᾶγμα μηνυθὲν τόδε,
θανεῖν σε δείσας μητρὸς ἐκ βουλευμάτων
καὶ τήνδε πρὸς σοῦ, μηχαναῖς ἐρρύσατο.
Ἔμελλε δ᾽ αὐτὰ διασιωπήσας ἄναξ
ἐν ταῖς Ἀθήναις γνωριεῖν ταύτην τε σήν,
σέ θ᾽ ὡς πέφυκας τῆσδε καὶ Φοίβου πατρός.

Ἀλλ᾽ ὡς περαίνω πρᾶγμα, καὶ χρησμοὺς θεοῦ,
ἐφ᾽ οἷσιν ἔζευξ᾽ ἅρματ᾽, εἰσακούσατον.

Λαβοῦσα τόνδε παῖδα Κεκροπίαν χθόνα
χώρει, Κρέουσα, κὰς θρόνους τυραννικοὺς
ἵδρυσον. Ἐκ γὰρ τῶν Ἐρεχθέως γεγὼς
δίκαιος ἄρχειν τῆς γ᾽ ἐμῆς ὅδε χθονός,
ἔσται τ᾽ ἀν᾽ Ἑλλάδ᾽ εὐκλεής. Οἱ τοῦδε γὰρ
παῖδες γενόμενοι τέσσαρες ῥίζης μιᾶς
ἐπώνυμοι γῆς κἀπιφυλίου χθονὸς
λαῶν ἔσονται, σκόπελον οἳ ναίουσ᾽ ἐμόν.
Γελέων μὲν ἔσται πρῶτος· εἶτα δεύτερος
Ὅπλητες Ἀργαδῆς τ᾽, ἐμῆς τ᾽ ἀπ᾽ αἰγίδος
ἔμφυλον ἔξουσ᾽ Αἰγικορῆς. Οἱ τῶνδε δ᾽ αὖ
παῖδες γενόμενοι σὺν χρόνῳ πεπρωμένῳ
Κυκλάδας ἐποικήσουσι νησαίας πόλεις
χέρσους τε παράλους, ὃ σθένος τἠμῇ χθονὶ
δίδωσιν· ἀντίπορθμα δ᾽ ἠπείροιν δυοῖν
πεδία κατοικήσουσιν, Ἀσιάδος τε γῆς
Εὐρωπίας τε· τοῦδε δ᾽ ὀνόματος χάριν
Ἴωνες ὀνομασθέντες ἕξουσιν κλέος.
Ξούθῳ δὲ καὶ σοὶ γίγνεται κοινὸν γένος,
Δῶρος μέν, ἔνθεν Δωρὶς ὑμνηθήσεται
πόλις κατ᾽ αἶαν Πελοπίαν· ὁ δεύτερος
Ἀχαιός, ὃς γῆς παραλίας Ῥίου πέλας
τύραννος ἔσται, κἀπισημανθήσεται
κείνου κεκλῆσθαι λαὸς ὄνομ᾽ ἐπώνυμος.
Καλῶς δ᾽ Ἀπόλλων πάντ᾽ ἔπραξε· πρῶτα μὲν
ἄνοσον λοχεύει σ᾽, ὥστε μὴ γνῶναι φίλους·
ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἔτικτες τόνδε παῖδα κἀπέθου
ἐν σπαργάνοισιν, ἁρπάσαντ᾽ ἐς ἀγκάλας
Ἑρμῆν κελεύει δεῦρο πορθμεῦσαι βρέφος,
ἔθρεψέ τ᾽ οὐδ᾽ εἴασεν ἐκπνεῦσαι βίον.
Νῦν οὖν σιώπα, παῖς ὅδ᾽ ὡς πέφυκε σός,
ἵν᾽ ἡ δόκησις Ξοῦθον ἡδέως ἔχῃ,
σύ τ᾽ αὖ τὰ σαυτῆς ἀγάθ᾽ ἔχουσ᾽ ἴῃς, γύναι.

Καὶ χαίρετ’· ἐκ γὰρ τῆσδ’ ἀναψυχῆς πόνων
[1605] εὐδαίμον’ ὑμῖν πότμον ἐξαγγέλλομαι.

Ἴων

[1606] Ὦ Διὸς Παλλὰς μεγίστου θύγατερ, οὐκ ἀπιστίᾳ
σοὺς λόγους ἐδεξάμεσθα· πείθομαι δ’ εἶναι πατρὸς
Λοξίου καὶ τῆσδε. Καὶ πρὶν τοῦτο δ’ οὐκ ἄπιστον ἦν.

Κρέουσα

Τἀμὰ νῦν ἄκουσον· αἰνῶ Φοῖβον οὐκ αἰνοῦσα πρίν,
[1610] οὕνεχ’ οὗ ποτ’ ἠμέλησε παιδὸς ἀποδίδωσί μοι.
Αἵδε δ’ εὐωποὶ πύλαι μοι καὶ θεοῦ χρηστήρια,
δυσμενῆ πάροιθεν ὄντα. Νῦν δὲ καὶ ῥόπτρων χέρας
ἡδέως ἐκκρημνάμεσθα καὶ προσεννέπω πύλας.

Ἀθήνα

[1614] Ἦνεσ’ οὕνεκ’ εὐλογεῖς θεὸν μεταβαλοῦσ’· ἀεὶ γὰρ οὗν
[1615] χρόνια μὲν τὰ τῶν θεῶν πως, ἐς τέλος δ’ οὐκ ἀσθενῆ.

Κρέουσα

Ὦ τέκνον, στείχωμεν οἴκους.

Ἀθήνα

Στείχεθ’, ἕψομαι δ’ ἐγώ.

Κρέουσα

Ἀξία γ’ ἡμῶν ὁδουρός.

Ἀθήνα

Καὶ φιλοῦσά γε πτόλιν.

Κρέουσα

Ἐς θρόνους δ’ ἵζου παλαιούς.

Ἴων

Ἄξιον τὸ κτῆμά μοι.

Χορός

Ὦ Διὸς Λητοῦς τ’ Ἄπολλον, χαῖρ’· ὅτῳ δ’ ἐλαύνεται
[1620] συμφοραῖς οἶκος, σέβοντα δαίμονας θαρσεῖν χρεών·
ἐς τέλος γὰρ οἱ μὲν ἐσθλοὶ τυγχάνουσιν ἀξίων,
οἱ κακοὶ δ’, ὥσπερ πεφύκασ’, οὔποτ’ εὖ πράξειαν ἄν.

HELEN

Ἑλένη

Νείλου μὲν αἵδε καλλιπάρθενοι ῥοαί,
ὃς ἀντὶ δίας ψακάδος Αἰγύπτου πέδον
λευκῆς τακείσης χιόνος ὑγραίνει γύας.
Πρωτεὺς δ’ ὅτ’ ἔζη τῆσδε γῆς τύραννος ἦν,
Φάρον μὲν οἰκῶν νῆσον, Αἰγύπτου δ’ ἄναξ,
ὃς τῶν κατ’ οἶδμα παρθένων μίαν γαμεῖ,
Ψαμάθην, ἐπειδὴ λέκτρ’ ἀφῆκεν Αἰακοῦ.
Τίκτει δὲ τέκνα δισσὰ τοῖσδε δώμασι,
Θεοκλύμενον ἄρσεν’ ὅτι δὴ θεοὺς σέβων
βίον διήνεγκ’ εὐγενῆ τε παρθένον
Εἰδώ, τὸ μητρὸς ἀγλάισμ’, ὅτ’ ἦν βρέφος·
ἐπεὶ δ’ ἐς ἥβην ἦλθεν ὡραίαν γάμων,
καλοῦσιν αὐτὴν Θεονόην· τὰ θεῖα γὰρ
τά τ’ ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα πάντ’ ἠπίστατο,
προγόνου λαβοῦσα Νηρέως τιμὰς πάρα.
Ἡμῖν δὲ γῆ μὲν πατρὶς οὐκ ἀνώνυμος
Σπάρτη, πατὴρ δὲ Τυνδάρεως· ἔστιν δὲ δὴ
λόγος τις ὡς Ζεὺς μητέρ’ ἔπτατ’ εἰς ἐμὴν
Λήδαν κύκνου μορφώματ’ ὄρνιθος λαβών,
ὃς δόλιον εὐνὴν ἐξέπραξ’ ὑπ’ αἰετοῦ
δίωγμα φεύγων, εἰ σαφὴς οὗτος λόγος·
Ἑλένη δ’ ἐκλήθην. Ἃ δὲ πεπόνθαμεν κακὰ
λέγοιμ’ ἄν. Ἦλθον τρεῖς θεαὶ κάλλους πέρι
Ἰδαῖον ἐς κευθμῶν’ Ἀλέξανδρον πάρα,
Ἥρα Κύπρις τε διογενής τε παρθένος,
μορφῆς θέλουσαι διαπεράνασθαι κρίσιν.
Τοὐμὸν δὲ κάλλος, εἰ καλὸν τὸ δυστυχές,
Κύπρις προτείνασ’ ὡς Ἀλέξανδρος γαμεῖ,
νικᾷ. Λιπὼν δὲ βούσταθμ’ Ἰδαῖος Πάρις
Σπάρτην ἀφίκεθ’ ὡς ἐμὸν σχήσων λέχος.
Ἥρα δὲ μεμφθεῖσ’ οὕνεκ’ οὐ νικᾷ θεάς,
ἐξηνέμωσε τἄμ’ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ λέχη,

δίδωσι δ’ οὐκ ἔμ’, ἀλλ’ ὁμοιώσασ’ ἐμοὶ
εἴδωλον ἔμπνουν οὐρανοῦ ξυνθεῖσ’ ἄπο,
Πριάμου τυράννου παιδί· καὶ δοκεῖ μ’ ἔχειν
κενὴν δόκησιν, οὐκ ἔχων. Τὰ δ’ αὖ Διὸς
βουλεύματ’ ἄλλα τοῖσδε συμβαίνει κακοῖς·
πόλεμον γὰρ εἰσήνεγκεν Ἑλλήνων χθονὶ
καὶ Φρυξὶ δυστήνοισιν, ὡς ὄχλου βροτῶν
πλήθους τε κουφίσειε μητέρα χθόνα
γνωτόν τε θείη τὸν κράτιστον Ἑλλάδος.
Φρυγῶν δ’ ἐς ἀλκὴν προυτέθην ἐγὼ μὲν οὔ,
τὸ δ’ ὄνομα τοὐμόν, ἆθλον Ἕλλησιν δορός.
Λαβὼν δέ μ’ Ἑρμῆς ἐν πτυχαῖσιν αἰθέρος
νεφέλῃ καλύψας οὐ γὰρ ἠμέλησέ μου
Ζεύς τόνδ’ ἐς οἶκον Πρωτέως ἱδρύσατο,
πάντων προκρίνας σωφρονέστατον βροτῶν,
ἀκέραιον ὡς σῴσαιμι Μενέλεῳ λέχος.
Κἀγὼ μὲν ἐνθάδ’ εἶμ’, ὁ δ’ ἄθλιος πόσις
στράτευμ’ ἀθροίσας τὰς ἐμὰς ἀναρπαγὰς
θηρᾷ πορευθεὶς Ἰλίου πυργώματα.
Ψυχαὶ δὲ πολλαὶ δι’ ἔμ’ ἐπὶ Σκαμανδρίοις
ῥοαῖσιν ἔθανον· ἡ δὲ πάντα τλᾶσ’ ἐγὼ
κατάρατός εἰμι καὶ δοκῶ προδοῦσ’ ἐμὸν
πόσιν συνάψαι πόλεμον Ἕλλησιν μέγαν.
Τί δῆτ’ ἔτι ζῶ; Θεοῦ τόδ’ εἰσήκουσ’ ἔπος
Ἑρμοῦ, τὸ κλεινὸν ἔτι κατοικήσειν πέδον
Σπάρτης σὺν ἀνδρί, γνόντος ὡς ἐς Ἴλιον
οὐκ ἦλθον, ἵνα μὴ λέκτρ’ ὑποστρώσω τινί.
Ἕως μὲν οὖν φῶς ἡλίου τόδ’ ἔβλεπεν
Πρωτεύς, ἄσυλος ἦ γάμων· ἐπεὶ δὲ γῆς
σκότῳ κέκρυπται, παῖς ὁ τοῦ τεθνηκότος
θηρᾷ γαμεῖν με. Τὸν πάλαι δ’ ἐγὼ πόσιν
τιμῶσα Πρωτέως μνῆμα προσπίτνω τόδε
ἱκέτις, ἵν’ ἀνδρὶ τἀμὰ διασῴσῃ λέχη,
ὡς, εἰ καθ’ Ἑλλάδ’ ὄνομα δυσκλεὲς φέρω,
μή μοι τὸ σῶμά γ’ ἐνθάδ’ αἰσχύνην ὄφλῃ.

Τεῦκρος

Τίς τῶνδ’ ἐρυμνῶν δωμάτων ἔχει κράτος;
Πλούτου γὰρ οἶκος ἄξιος προσεικάσαι,
βασίλειά τ’ ἀμφιβλήματ’ εὔθριγκοί θ’ ἕδραι.
Ἔα·
ὦ θεοί, τίν’ εἶδον ὄψιν; Ἐχθίστην ὁρῶ
γυναικὸς εἰκὼ φόνιον, ἥ μ’ ἀπώλεσεν
πάντας τ’ Ἀχαιούς. Θεοί σ’, ὅσον μίμημ’ ἔχεις
Ἑλένης, ἀποπτύσειαν. Εἰ δὲ μὴ ‘ν ξένῃ
γαίᾳ πόδ’ εἶχον, τῷδ’ ἂν εὐστόχῳ πτερῷ
ἀπόλαυσιν εἰκοῦς ἔθανες ἂν Διὸς κόρης.

Ἑλένη

Τί δ’, ὦ ταλαίπωρ’ ὅστις ὢν μ’ ἀπεστράφης
καὶ ταῖς ἐκείνης συμφοραῖς ἐμὲ στυγεῖς;

Τεῦκρος

Ἥμαρτον· ὀργῇ δ’ εἶξα μᾶλλον ἢ με χρῆν·
μισεῖ γὰρ Ἑλλὰς πᾶσα τὴν Διὸς κόρην.
Σύγγνωθι δ’ ἡμῖν τοῖς λελεγμένοις, γύναι.

Ἑλένη

Τίς δ’ εἶ; Πόθεν γῆς τῆσδ’ ἐπεστράφης πέδον;

Τεῦκρος

Εἷς τῶν Ἀχαιῶν, ὦ γύναι, τῶν ἀθλίων.

Ἑλένη

Οὐ τἄρα σ’ Ἑλένην εἰ στυγεῖς θαυμαστέον.
Ἀτὰρ τίς εἶ πόθεν; Τίνος δ’ αὐδᾶν σε χρή;

Τεῦκρος

Ὄνομα μὲν ἡμῖν Τεῦκρος, ὁ δὲ φύσας πατὴρ
Τελαμών, Σαλαμὶς δὲ πατρὶς ἡ θρέψασά με.

Ἑλένη

Τί δῆτα Νείλου τούσδ’ ἐπιστρέφῃ γύας;

Τεῦκρος

[90] Φυγὰς πατρῴας ἐξελήλαμαι χθονός.

Ἑλένη

Τλήμων ἂν εἴης· Τίς δέ σ’ ἐκβάλλει πάτρας;

Τεῦκρος

Τελαμὼν ὁ φύσας. Τίν’ ἂν ἔχοις μᾶλλον φίλον;

Ἑλένη

Ἐκ τοῦ; Τὸ γάρ τοι πρᾶγμα συμφορὰν ἔχει.

Τεῦκρος

Αἴας μ’ ἀδελφὸς ὤλεσ’ ἐν Τροίᾳ θανών.

Ἑλένη

[95] Πῶς; Οὔ τί που σῷ φασγάνῳ βίον στερείς;

Τεῦκρος

Οἰκεῖον αὐτὸν ὤλεσ’ ἅλμ’ ἐπὶ ξίφος.

Ἑλένη

Μανέντ’; Ἐπεὶ τίς σωφρονῶν τλαίη τάδ’ ἄν;

Τεῦκρος

Τὸν Πηλέως τιν’ οἶσθ’ Ἀχιλλέα γόνον;

Ἑλένη

Ναί·
μνηστήρ ποθ’ Ἑλένης ἦλθεν, ὡς ἀκούομεν.

Τεῦκρος

Θανὼν ὅδ’ ὅπλων ἔριν ἔθηκε συμμάχοις.

Ἑλένη

Καὶ δὴ τί τοῦτ’ Αἴαντι γίγνεται κακόν;

Τεῦκρος

Ἄλλου λαβόντος ὅπλ’ ἀπηλλάχθη βίου.

Ἑλένη

Σὺ τοῖς ἐκείνου δῆτα πήμασιν νοσεῖς;

Τεῦκρος

Ὀθούνεκ’ αὐτῷ γ’ οὐ ξυνωλόμην ὁμοῦ.

Ἑλένη

Ἦλθες γάρ, ὦ ξέν’, Ἰλίου κλεινὴν πόλιν;

Τεῦκρος

Καὶ ξύν γε πέρσας αὐτὸς ἀνταπωλόμην.

Ἑλένη

Ἤδη γὰρ ἦπται καὶ κατείργασται πυρί;

Τεῦκρος

Ὥστ’ οὐδ’ ἴχνος γε τειχέων εἶναι σαφές.

Ἑλένη

Ὦ τλῆμον Ἑλένη, διὰ σ᾽ ἀπόλλυνται Φρύγες.

Τεῦκρος

Καὶ πρός γ᾽ Ἀχαιοί· μεγάλα δ᾽ εἴργασται κακά.

Ἑλένη

Πόσον χρόνον γὰρ διαπεπόρθηται πόλις;

Τεῦκρος

Ἑπτὰ σχεδόν τι καρπίμους ἐτῶν κύκλους.

Ἑλένη

Χρόνον δ᾽ ἐμείνατ᾽ ἄλλον ἐν Τροίᾳ πόσον;

Τεῦκρος

Πολλὰς σελήνας, δέκα διελθούσας ἔτη.

Ἑλένη

Ἦ καὶ γυναῖκα Σπαρτιᾶτιν εἵλετε;

Τεῦκρος

Μενέλαος αὐτὴν ἦγ᾽ ἐπισπάσας κόμης.

Ἑλένη

Εἶδες σὺ τὴν δύστηνον; Ἢ κλύων λέγεις;

Τεῦκρος

Ὥσπερ γε σέ, οὐδὲν ἧσσον, ὀφθαλμοῖς ὁρῶ.

Ἑλένη

Σσκοπεῖτε μὴ δόκησιν εἴχετ᾽ ἐκ θεῶν.

Τεῦκρος

Ἄλλου λόγου μέμνησο, μὴ κείνης ἔτι.

Ἑλένη

Οὕτω δοκεῖτε τὴν δόκησιν ἀσφαλῆ;

Τεῦκρος

Οὐτὸς γὰρ ὅσσοις εἰδόμην· καὶ νοῦς ὁρᾷ.

Ἑλένη

Ἤδη δ᾽ ἐν οἴκοις σὺν δάμαρτι Μενέλεως;

Τεῦκρος

Οὔκουν ἐν Ἄργει <γ'> οὐδ᾽ ἐπ᾽ Εὐρώτα ῥοαῖς.

Ἑλένη

Αἰαῖ· κακὸν τόδ᾽ εἶπας οἷς κακὸν λέγεις.

Τεῦκρος

Ὡς κεῖνος ἀφανὴς σὺν δάμαρτι κλῄζεται.

Ἑλένη

Οὐ πᾶσι πορθμὸς αὐτὸς Ἀργείοισιν ἦν;

Τεῦκρος

Ἦν, ἀλλὰ χειμὼν ἄλλοσ᾽ ἄλλον ὥρισεν.

Ἑλένη

Ποίοισιν ἐν νώτοισι ποντίας ἁλός;

Τεῦκρος

[130] Μέσον περῶσι πέλαγος Αἰγαίου πόρου.

Ἑλένη

Κἀκ τοῦδε Μενέλαν οὔτις εἶδ’ ἀφιγμένον;

Τεῦκρος

Οὐδείς· θανὼν δὲ κλῄζεται καθ’ Ἑλλάδα.

Ἑλένη

Ἀπωλόμεσθα· Θεστιὰς δ’ ἔστιν κόρη;

Τεῦκρος

Λήδαν ἔλεξας; Οἴχεται θανοῦσα δή.

Ἑλένη

[135] Οὔ πού νιν Ἑλένης αἰσχρὸν ὤλεσεν κλέος;

Τεῦκρος

Φασίν, βρόχῳ γ’ ἄψασαν εὐγενῆ δέρην.

Ἑλένη

Οἱ Τυνδάρειοι δ’ εἰσὶν ἢ οὐκ εἰσὶν κόροι;

Τεῦκρος

Τεθνᾶσι καὶ οὐ τεθνᾶσι· δύο δ’ ἐστὸν λόγω.

Ἑλένη

Πότερος ὁ κρείσσων; Ὦ τάλαιν' ἐγὼ κακῶν.

Τεῦκρος

[140] Ἄστροις σφ' ὁμοιωθέντε φάσ' εἶναι θεώ.

Ἑλένη

Καλῶς ἔλεξας τοῦτο· θάτερον δὲ τί;

Τεῦκρος

[141] Σφαγαῖς ἀδελφῆς οὕνεκ' ἐκπνεῦσαι βίον.
Ἅλις δὲ μύθων· οὐ διπλᾶ χρῄζω στένειν.
Ἦν δ' οὕνεκ' ἦλθον τούσδε βασιλείους δόμους,
[145] τὴν θεσπιῳδὸν Θεονόην χρῄζων ἰδεῖν,
σὺ προξένησον, ὡς τύχω μαντευμάτων
ὅπῃ νεὼς στείλαιμ' ἂν οὔριον πτερὸν
ἐς γῆν ἐναλίαν Κύπρον, οὗ μ' ἐθέσπισεν
οἰκεῖν Ἀπόλλων, ὄνομα νησιωτικὸν
[150] Σαλαμῖνα θέμενον τῆς ἐκεῖ χάριν πάτρας.

Ἑλένη

Πλοῦς, ὦ ξέν', αὐτὸς σημανεῖ· σὺ δ' ἐκλιπὼν
γῆν τήνδε φεῦγε πρίν σε παῖδα Πρωτέως
ἰδεῖν, ὃς ἄρχει τῆσδε γῆς· ἄπεστι δὲ
κυσὶν πεποιθὼς ἐν φοναῖς θηροκτόνοις·
[155] κτείνει γὰρ Ἕλλην' ὄντιν' ἂν λάβῃ ξένον.
Ὅτου δ' ἔκατι, μήτε σὺ ζήτει μαθεῖν
ἐγώ τε σιγῶ· τί γὰρ ἂν ὠφελοῖμί σε;

Τεῦκρος

[158] Καλῶς ἔλεξας, ὦ γύναι· θεοὶ δέ σοι
ἐσθλῶν ἀμοιβὰς ἀντιδωρησαίατο.
[160] Ἑλένῃ δ' ὅμοιον σῶμ' ἔχουσ' οὐ τὰς φρένας

ἔχεις ὁμοίας, ἀλλὰ διαφόρους πολύ.
Κακῶς δ’ ὄλοιτο μηδ’ ἐπ’ Εὐρώτα ῥοὰς
ἔλθοι· σὺ δ’ εἴης εὐτυχὴς ἀεί, γύναι.

Ἑλένη

[164] Ὤ, μεγάλων ἀχέων καταβαλλομένα μέγαν οἶκτον
[165] ποῖον ἁμιλλαθῶ γόον; Ἢ τίνα μοῦσαν ἐπέλθω
δάκρυσιν ἢ θρήνοις ἢ πένθεσιν; Αἰαῖ.

Πτεροφόροι νεάνιδες,
παρθένοι Χθονὸς κόραι
Σειρῆνες, εἴθ’ ἐμοῖς γόοις
[170] μόλοιτ’ ἔχουσαι Λίβυν
λωτὸν ἢ σύριγγας ἢ
φόρμιγγας, αἰλίνοις κακοῖς
τοῖς ἐμοῖσι σύνοχα δάκρυα·
πάθεσι πάθεα, μέλεσι μέλεα,
μουσεῖα θρηνήμα-
σι ξυνῳδὰ πέμψειε
[175] Φερσέφασσα
φόνια, χάριτας ἵν’ ἐπὶ δάκρυσι
παρ’ ἐμέθεν ὑπὸ μέλαθρα νύχια
[177β] παιᾶνα
νέκυσιν ὀλομένοις λάβῃ.

Χορός

[179] Κυανοειδὲς ἀμφ’ ὕδωρ
[180] ἔτυχον ἕλικά τ’ ἀνὰ χλόαν
φοίνικας ἁλίου πέπλους
αὐγαῖσιν ἐν χρυσέαις
ἀμφὶ δόνακος ἔρνεσιν
θάλπουσα· <ποτνίας δ’ ἐμᾶς,>
ἔνθεν οἰκτρὸν ἀνεβόασεν,
[185] ὅμαδον ἔκλυον, ἄλυρον ἔλεγον,
ὅτι ποτ’ ἔλακεν αἰάγμα
σι στένουσα, Νύμφα τις

[187β] οἷα Ναϊ¨ς
ὄρεσι φυγάδα νόμον ἰεῖσα
γοερόν, ὑπὸ δὲ πέτρινα γύαλα
[189β] κλαγγαῖσι
[190] Πανὸς ἀναβοᾷ γάμους.

Ἑλένη

[191] Ἰὼ ἰώ·
θήραμα βαρβάρου πλάτας,
Ἑλλανίδες κόραι,
ναύτας Ἀχαιῶν
[195] τις ἔμολεν ἔμολε δάκρυα δάκρυσί μοι φέρων.
Ἰλίου κατασκαφαὶ
πυρὶ μέλουσι δαί¨ῳ
δι᾽ ἐμὲ τὰν πολυκτόνον,
δι᾽ ἐμὸν ὄνομα πολύπονον.
[200] Λήδα δ᾽ ἐν ἀγχόναις
θάνατον ἔλαβεν αἰσχύ-
νας ἐμᾶς ὑπ᾽ ἀλγέων.
Ὁ δ᾽ ἐμὸς ἐν ἁλὶ πολυπλανὴς
πόσις ὀλόμενος οἴχεται,
[205] Κάστορός τε συγγόνου τε
διδυμογενὲς ἄγαλμα πατρίδος
ἀφανὲς ἀφανὲς ἱππόκροτα λέ-
λοιπε δάπεδα γυμνάσιά τε
[210] δονακόεντος Εὐρώ-
[210β] τα, νεανιᾶν πόνον.

Χορός

[211] Οἰαῖ αἰαῖ·
ὦ δαίμονος πολυστόνου
μοίρας τε σᾶς, γύναι.
Αἰὼν δυσαίων
τις ἔλαχεν ἔλαχεν, ὅτε σ᾽ ἐτέκετο ματρόθεν
[215] χιονόχρως κύκνου πτερῷ
Ζεὺς πρέπων δι᾽ αἰθέρος·

τί γὰρ ἄπεστί σοι κακῶν;
Τίνα δὲ βίοτον οὐκ ἔτλας;
Μάτηρ μὲν οἴχεται,
[220] δίδυμά τε Διὸς οὐκ εὐ-
δαιμονεῖ τέκεα φίλα,
χθόνα δὲ πάτριον οὐχ ὁρᾷς,
διὰ δὲ πόλεας ἔρχεται
βάξις, ἅ σε βαρβάροισι,
[225] πότνια, παραδίδωσι λέχεσιν,
ὁ δὲ σὸς ἐν ἁλὶ κύμασί τε λέ-
λοιπε βίοτον, οὐδέ ποτ᾽ ἔτι
πάτρια μέλαθρα καὶ τὰν
[228β] Χαλκίοικον ὀλβιεῖς.

Ἑλένη

[229] Φεῦ φεῦ, τίς ἢ Φρυγῶν
[230] ἢ τίς Ἑλλανίας ἀπὸ χθονὸς
ἔτεμε τὰν δακρυόεσσαν
Ἰλίῳ πεύκαν;
Ἔνθεν ὀλόμενον σκάφος
συναρμόσας ὁ Πριαμίδας
ἔπλευσε βαρβάρῳ πλάτᾳ
[235] τὰν ἐμὰν ἐφ᾽ ἑστίαν,
ἐπὶ τὸ δυστυχέστατον
κάλλος, ὡς ἕλοι, γάμων
ἀμῶν· ἅ τε δόλιος
ἁ πολυκτόνος Κύπρις
Δαναΐ¨δαις ἄγουσα θάνατον Πριαμίδαις,
[240] ὦ τάλαινα συμφορᾶς.
Ἃ δὲ χρυσέοις θρόνοις
Διὸς ὑπαγκάλισμα σεμνὸν
Ἥρα τὸν ὠκύπουν
ἔπεμψε Μαιάδος γόνον·
ὅς με χλοερὰ δρεπομέναν
[245] ἔσω πέπλων ῥόδεα πέταλα,
Χαλκίοικον ὡς Ἀθάναν μόλοιμ᾽,

ἀναρπάσας δι᾽ αἰθέρος
τάνδε γαῖαν εἰς ἄνολβον
ἔριν ἔριν τάλαιναν ἔθετο
Πριαμίδαισιν Ἑλλάδος.
Τὸ δ᾽ ἐμὸν ὄνομα
παρὰ Σιμουντίοις ῥοαῖσι
μαψίδιον ἔχει φάτιν.

Χορός

Ἔχεις μὲν ἀλγείν᾽, οἶδα· σύμφορον δέ τοι
ὡς ῥᾷστα τἀναγκαῖα τοῦ βίου φέρειν.

Ἑλένη

Φίλαι γυναῖκες, τίνι πότμῳ συνεζύγην;
Ἆρ᾽ ἡ τεκοῦσά μ᾽ ἔτεκεν ἀνθρώποις τέρας;
Γυνὴ γὰρ οὔθ᾽ Ἑλληνὶς οὔτε βάρβαρος
τεῦχος νεοσσῶν λευκὸν ἐκλοχεύεται,
ἐν ᾧ με Λήδαν φασὶν ἐκ Διὸς τεκεῖν.
Τέρας γὰρ ὁ βίος καὶ τὰ πράγματ᾽ ἐστί μου,
τὰ μὲν δι᾽ Ἥραν, τὰ δὲ τὸ κάλλος αἴτιον.
Εἴθ᾽ ἐξαλειφθεῖσ᾽ ὡς ἄγαλμ᾽ αὖθις πάλιν
αἴσχιον εἶδος ἔλαβον ἀντὶ τοῦ καλοῦ,
καὶ τὰς τύχας μὲν τὰς κακὰς ἃς νῦν ἔχω
Ἕλληνες ἐπελάθοντο, τὰς δὲ μὴ κακὰς
ἔσῳζον ὥσπερ τὰς κακὰς σῴζουσί μου.
Ὅστις μὲν οὖν ἐς μίαν ἀποβλέπων τύχην
πρὸς θεῶν κακοῦται, βαρὺ μέν, οἰστέον δ᾽ ὅμως·
ἡμεῖς δὲ πολλαῖς συμφοραῖς ἐγκείμεθα.
Πρῶτον μὲν οὐκ οὖσ᾽ ἄδικος, εἰμὶ δυσκλεής·
καὶ τοῦτο μεῖζον τῆς ἀληθείας κακόν,
ὅστις τὰ μὴ προσόντα κέκτηται κακά.
Ἔπειτα πατρίδος θεοί μ᾽ ἀφιδρύσαντο γῆς
ἐς βάρβαρ᾽ ἦθη, καὶ φίλων τητωμένη
δούλη καθέστηκ᾽ οὖσ᾽ ἐλευθέρων ἄπο·
τὰ βαρβάρων γὰρ δοῦλα πάντα πλὴν ἑνός.
Ἄγκυρα δ᾽ ἥ μου τὰς τύχας ὄχει μόνη,

πόσιν ποθ’ ἥξειν καί μ’ ἀπαλλάξειν κακῶν
οὗτος τέθνηκεν, οὗτος οὐκέτ’ ἔστι δή.
Μήτηρ δ’ ὄλωλε, καὶ φονεὺς αὐτῆς ἐγώ,
ἀδίκως μέν, ἀλλὰ τἄδικον τοῦτ’ ἔστ’ ἐμόν·
ὃ δ’ ἀγλάισμα δωμάτων ἐμοῦ τ’ ἔφυ,
θυγάτηρ ἄνανδρος πολιὰ παρθενεύεται·
τὼ τοῦ Διὸς δὲ λεγομένω Διοσκόρω
οὐκ ἐστόν. Ἀλλὰ πάντ’ ἔχουσα δυστυχῆ
τοῖς πράγμασιν τέθνηκα, τοῖς δ’ ἔργοισιν οὔ.
Τὸ δ’ ἔσχατον τοῦτ’, εἰ μόλοιμεν ἐς πάτραν,
κλῄθροις ἂν εἰργοίμεσθα τὴν ὑπ’ Ἰλίῳ
δοκοῦντες Ἑλένην Μενέλεώ μ’ ἐλθεῖν μέτα.
Εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἔζη πόσις, ἀνεγνώσθημεν ἂν
ἐλθόντες, ἃ φανέρ’ ἦν μόνοις, ἐς ξύμβολα.
Νῦν δ’ οὔτε τοῦτ’ ἔστ’ οὔτε μὴ σωθῇ ποτε.
Τί δῆτ’ ἔτι ζῶ; Τίν’ ὑπολείπομαι τύχην;
Γάμους ἑλομένη τῶν κακῶν ὑπαλλαγάς,
μετ’ ἀνδρὸς οἰκεῖν βαρβάρου πρὸς πλουσίαν
τράπεζαν ἵζουσ’; Ἀλλ’ ὅταν πόσις πικρὸς
ξυνῇ γυναικί, καὶ τὸ σῶμ’ ἐστιν πικρόν.
Θανεῖν κράτιστον· πῶς θάνοιμ’ ἂν οὐ καλῶς;
Ἀσχήμονες μὲν ἀγχόναι μετάρσιοι,
κἀν τοῖσι δούλοις δυσπρεπὲς νομίζεται·
σφαγαὶ δ’ ἔχουσιν εὐγενές τι καὶ καλόν,
σμικρὸν δ’ ὁ καιρὸς σάρκ’ ἀπαλλάξαι βίου.
Ἐς γὰρ τοσοῦτον ἤλθομεν βάθος κακῶν·
αἱ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλαι διὰ τὸ κάλλος εὐτυχεῖς
γυναῖκες, ἡμᾶς δ’ αὐτὸ τοῦτ’ ἀπώλεσεν.

Χορός

Ἑλένη, τὸν ἐλθόνθ’, ὅστις ἐστὶν ὁ ξένος,
μὴ πάντ’ ἀληθῆ δοξάσῃς εἰρηκέναι.

Ἑλένη

Καὶ μὴν σαφῶς γ’ ἔλεξ’ ὀλωλέναι πόσιν.

Χορός

Πόλλ’ ἂν γένοιτο καὶ διὰ ψευδῶν ἔπη.

Ἑλένη

Καὶ τἄμπαλίν γε τῶνδ’ ἀληθείᾳ σαφῆ.

Χορός

Ἐς ξυμφορὰν γὰρ ἀντὶ τἀγαθοῦ φέρῃ.

Ἑλένη

Φόβος γὰρ ἐς τὸ δεῖμα περιβαλών μ’ ἄγει.

Χορός

Πῶς δ’ εὐμενείας τοισίδ’ ἐν δόμοις ἔχεις;

Ἑλένη

Πάντες φίλοι μοι πλὴν ὁ θηρεύων γάμους.

Χορός

Οἶσθ’ οὖν ὃ δρᾶσον; Μνήματος λιποῦσ’ ἕδραν

Ἑλένη

Ἐς ποῖον ἔρπεις μῦθον ἢ παραίνεσιν;

Χορός

Ἐλθοῦσ’ ἐς οἴκους, ἢ τὰ πάντ’ ἐπίσταται,
τῆς ποντίας Νηρῇδος ἐκγόνου κόρης,
πυθοῦ πόσιν σὸν Θεονόης, εἴτ’ ἔστ’ ἔτι
εἴτ’ ἐκλέλοιπε φέγγος· ἐκμαθοῦσα δ’ εὖ
πρὸς τὰς τύχας τὸ χάρμα τοὺς γόους τ’ ἔχε.

Πρὶν δ’ οὐδὲν ὀρθῶς εἰδέναι, τί σοι πλέον
λυπουμένῃ γένοιτ’ ἄν; Ἀλλ’ ἐμοὶ πιθοῦ·
τάφον λιποῦσα τόνδε σύμμειξον κόρῃ·
[325] ὅθενπερ εἶσῃ πάντα τἀληθῆ μαθεῖν
ἔχουσ’ ἐν οἴκοις τοῖσδε, τί βλέπεις πρόσω;
Θέλω δὲ κἀγὼ σοὶ συνεισελθεῖν δόμους
καὶ συμπυθέσθαι παρθένου θεσπίσματα·
γυναῖκα γὰρ δὴ συμπονεῖν γυναικὶ χρή.

Ἑλένη

[330] Φίλαι, λόγους ἐδεξάμαν·
βᾶτε βᾶτε δ’ ἐς δόμους,
ἀγῶνας ἐντὸς οἴκων
ὡς πύθησθε τοὺς ἐμούς.

Χορός

Θέλουσαν οὐ μόλις καλεῖς.

Ἑλένη

[335] Ἰὼ μέλεος ἀμέρα.
Τίν’ ἄρα τάλαινα τίνα δακρυό-
εντα λόγον ἀκούσομαι;

Χορός

Μὴ πρόμαντις ἀλγέων
προλάμβαν’, ὦ φίλα, γόους.

Ἑλένη

[340] Τί μοι πόσις μέλεος ἔτλα;
Πότερα δέρκεται φάος
τέθριππά θ’ ἁλίου κέλευθά τ’ ἀστέρων,
[344] ἢ ‘ν νέκυσι κατὰ χθονὸς
[345] τὰν χρόνιον ἔχει τύχαν;

Χορός

Ἐς τὸ φέρτερον τίθει
τὸ μέλλον, ὅ τι γενήσεται.

Ἑλένη

Σὲ γὰρ ἐκάλεσα, σὲ δὲ κατόμοσα,
τὸν ὑδρόεντι δόνακι χλωρὸν
[350] Εὐρώταν, θανόντος
εἰ βάξις ἔτυμος ἀνδρὸς
ἄδε μοι τί τάδ' ἀσύνετα;
Φόνιον αἰώρημα
διὰ δέρης ὀρέξομαι,
ἢ ξιφοκτόνον δίωγμα
[355] λαιμορρύτου σφαγᾶς
αὐτοσίδαρον ἔσω πελάσω διὰ σαρκὸς ἄμιλλαν,
θῦμα τριζύγοις θεαῖσι
τῷ τε σήραγγας Ἰδαί
ας ἐνίζοντι Πριαμί
δᾳ ποτ' ἀμφὶ βουστάθμους.

Χορός

[360] Ἄλλοσ' ἀποτροπὰ κακῶν
γένοιτο, τὸ δὲ σὸν εὐτυχές.

Ἑλένη

[362] Ἰὼ Τροία τάλαινα,
[362β] δι' ἔργ' ἄνεργ' ὄλλυσαι
μέλεά τ' ἔτλας· τὰ δ' ἐμὰ δῶρα
Κύπριδος ἔτεκε πολὺ μὲν αἷμα,
[365] πολὺ δὲ δάκρυον· ἄχεά τ' ἄχεσι,
δάκρυα δάκρυσιν ἔλαβε, πάθεα. . . .
Ματέρες τε παῖδας ὄλεσαν,
ἀπὸ δὲ παρθένοι κόμας
ἔθεντο σύγγονοι νεκρῶν Σκαμάνδριον

ἀμφὶ Φρύγιον οἶδμα.
Βοὰν βοὰν δ’ Ἑλλὰς
κελάδησε κἀνοτότυξεν,
ἐπὶ δὲ κρατὶ χέρας ἔθηκεν,
ὄνυχι δ’ ἀπαλόχροα γένυν
δεῦσε φονίαισι πλαγαῖς.

Ὦ μάκαρ Ἀρκαδίᾳ ποτὲ παρθένε Καλλιστοῖ, Διὸς
ἃ λεχέων ἐπέβας τετραβάμοσι γυίοις,
ὡς πολὺ ματρὸς ἐμᾶς ἔλαχες πλέον,
ἁ μορφᾷ θηρῶν λαχνογυίων
ὄμματι λάβρῳ σχῆμα λεαίνης
ἐξαλλάξασ’ ἄχθεα λύπης·
ἄν τέ ποτ’ Ἄρτεμις ἐξεχορεύσατο
χρυσοκέρατ’ ἔλαφον Μέροπος Τιτανίδα κούραν
καλλοσύνας ἕνεκεν· τὸ δ’ ἐμὸν δέμας
ὤλεσεν ὤλεσε πέργαμα Δαρδανίας
ὀλομένους τ’ Ἀχαιούς.

Μενελέως

Ὦ τὰς τεθρίππους Οἰνομάῳ Πῖσαν κάτα
Πέλοψ ἀμίλλας ἐξαμιλληθείς ποτε,
εἶθ’ ὤφελες τόθ’, ἡνίκ’ ἔρανον εἰς θεοὺς
πεισθεὶς ἐποίεις, ἐν θεοῖς λιπεῖν βίον,
πρὶν τὸν ἐμὸν Ἀτρέα πατέρα γεννῆσαί ποτε,
ὃς ἐξέφυσεν Ἀερόπης λέκτρων ἄπο
Ἀγαμέμνον’ ἐμέ τε Μενέλεων, κλεινὸν ζυγόν·
πλεῖστον γὰρ οἶμαι καὶ τόδ’ οὐ κόμπῳ λέγω
στράτευμα κώπῃ διορίσαι Τροίαν ἔπι,
τύραννος οὐδὲν πρὸς βίαν στρατηλατῶν,
ἑκοῦσι δ’ ἄρξας Ἑλλάδος νεανίαις.
Καὶ τοὺς μὲν οὐκέτ’ ὄντας ἀριθμῆσαι πάρα,
τοὺς δ’ ἐκ θαλάσσης ἀσμένους πεφευγότας,
νεκρῶν φέροντας ὀνόματ’ εἰς οἴκους πάλιν.
Ἐγὼ δ’ ἐπ’ οἶδμα πόντιον γλαυκῆς ἁλὸς
τλήμων ἀλῶμαι χρόνον ὅσονπερ Ἰλίου

πύργους ἔπερσα, κἀς πάτραν χρῄζων μολεῖν
οὐκ ἀξιοῦμαι τοῦδε πρὸς θεῶν τυχεῖν.
Λιβύης τ᾽ ἐρήμους ἀξένους τ᾽ ἐπιδρομὰς
πέπλευκα πάσας· χὥταν ἐγγὺς ᾖ πάτρας,
πάλιν μ᾽ ἀπωθεῖ πνεῦμα, κοὔποτ᾽ οὔριον
ἐσῆλθε λαῖφος ὥστε μ᾽ ἐς πάτραν μολεῖν.
Καὶ νῦν τάλας ναυαγὸς ἀπολέσας φίλους
ἐξέπεσον ἐς γῆν τήνδε· ναῦς δὲ πρὸς πέτρας
πολλοὺς ἀριθμοὺς ἄγνυται ναυαγίων.
Τρόπις δ᾽ ἐλείφθη ποικίλων ἁρμοσμάτων,
ἐφ᾽ ἧς ἐσώθην μόλις ἀνελπίστῳ τύχῃ
Ἑλένη τε, Τροίας ἣν ἀποσπάσας ἔχω.
Ὄνομα δὲ χώρας ἥτις ἥδε καὶ λεὼς
οὐκ οἶδα· ὄχλον γὰρ ἐσπεσεῖν ᾐσχυνόμην
ὥσθ᾽ ἱστορῆσαι, τὰς ἐμὰς δυσχλαινίας
κρύπτων ὑπ᾽ αἰδοῦς τῆς τύχης. Ὅταν δ᾽ ἀνὴρ
πράξῃ κακῶς ὑψηλός, εἰς ἀηθίαν
πίπτει κακίω τοῦ πάλαι δυσδαίμονος.
Χρεία δὲ τείρει μ᾽· οὔτε γὰρ σῖτος πάρα
οὔτ᾽ ἀμφὶ χρῶτ᾽ ἐσθῆτες· αὐτὰ δ᾽ εἰκάσαι
πάρεστι ναὸς ἐκβόλοις ἃ ἀμπίσχομαι.
Πέπλους δὲ τοὺς πρὶν λαμπρά τ᾽ ἀμφιβλήματα
χλιδάς τε πόντος ἥρπασ᾽· ἐν δ᾽ ἄντρου μυχοῖς
κρύψας γυναῖκα τὴν κακῶν πάντων ἐμοὶ
ἄρξασαν ἥκω τούς τε περιλελειμμένους
φίλων φυλάσσειν τἄμ᾽ ἀναγκάσας λέχη.
Μόνος δὲ νοστῶ, τοῖς ἐκεῖ ζητῶν φίλοις
τὰ πρόσφορ᾽ ἤν πως ἐξερευνήσας λάβω.
Ἰδὼν δὲ δῶμα περιφερὲς θριγκοῖς τόδε
πύλας τε σεμνὰς ἀνδρὸς ὀλβίου τινός,
προσῆλθον· ἐλπὶς δ᾽ ἔκ γε πλουσίων δόμων
λαβεῖν τι ναύταις· ἐκ δὲ μὴ ἐχόντων βίον
οὐδ᾽ εἰ θέλοιεν, ὠφελεῖν ἔχοιεν ἄν.
Ὢή· τίς ἂν πυλωρὸς ἐκ δόμων μόλοι,
ὅστις διαγγείλειε τἄμ᾽ ἔσω κακά;

Γραῦς

[437] Τίς πρὸς πύλαισιν; Οὐκ ἀπαλλάξῃ δόμων
καὶ μὴ πρὸς αὐλείοισιν ἑστηκὼς πύλαις
ὄχλον παρέξεις δεσπόταις; Ἢ κατθανῇ
[440] Ἕλλην πεφυκώς, οἷσιν οὐκ ἐπιστροφαί.

Μενελέως

Ὦ γραῖα, ταὐτὰ ταῦτ’ ἔπη κἄλλως λέγειν
ἔξεστι, πείσομαι γάρ· ἀλλ’ ἄνες λόγον.

Γραῦς

Ἄπελθ’· ἐμοὶ γὰρ τοῦτο πρόσκειται, ξένε,
μηδένα πελάζειν τοισίδ’ Ἑλλήνων δόμοις.

Μενελέως

[445] Ὦ· μὴ προσείλει χεῖρα μηδ’ ὤθει βίᾳ.

Γραῦς

Πείθῃ γὰρ οὐδὲν ὧν λέγω, σὺ δ’ αἴτιος.

Μενελέως

Ἄγγειλον εἴσω δεσπόταισι τοῖσι σοῖς. . . .

Γραῦς

Πικρῶς ἄρ’ οἶμαί γ’ ἀγγελεῖν τοὺς σοὺς λόγους.

Μενελέως

Ναυαγὸς ἥκω ξένος, ἀσύλητον γένος.

Γραῦς

[450] Οἶκον πρὸς ἄλλον νύν τιν’ ἀντὶ τοῦδ’ ἴθι.

Μενελέως

Οὔκ, ἀλλ’ ἔσω πάρειμι· καὶ σύ μοι πιθοῦ.

Γραῦς

Ὀχληρὸς ἴσθ’ ὤν· καὶ τάχ’ ὠσθήσῃ βίᾳ.

Μενελέως

Αἰαῖ· τὰ κλεινὰ ποῦ ‘στί μοι στρατεύματα;

Γραῦς

Οὐκοῦν ἐκεῖ που σεμνὸς ἦσθ’, οὐκ ἐνθάδε.

Μενελέως

[455] Ὦ δαῖμον, ὡς ἀνάξι’ ἠτιμώμεθα.

Γραῦς

Τί βλέφαρα τέγγεις δάκρυσι; Πρὸς τίν’ οἰκτρὸς εἶ;

Μενελέως

Πρὸς τὰς πάροιθεν συμφορὰς εὐδαίμονας.

Γραῦς

Οὔκουν ἀπελθὼν δάκρυα σοῖς δώσεις φίλοις;

Μενελέως

Τίς δ’ ἥδε χώρα; Τοῦ δὲ βασίλειοι δόμοι;

Γραῦς

[460] Πρωτεὺς τάδ’ οἰκεῖ δώματ’, Αἴγυπτος δὲ γῆ.

Μενελέως

Αἴγυπτος; Ὦ δύστηνος, οἷ πέπλευκ’ ἄρα.

Γραῦς

Τί δὴ τὸ Νείλου μεμπτόν ἐστί σοι γάνος;

Μενελέως

Οὐ τοῦτ’ ἐμέμφθην· τὰς ἐμὰς στένω τύχας.

Γραῦς

Πολλοὶ κακῶς πράσσουσιν, οὐ σὺ δὴ μόνος.

Μενελέως

[465] Ἔστ’ οὖν ἐν οἴκοις ὄντιν’ ὀνομάζεις ἄναξ;

Γραῦς

Τόδ’ ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ μνῆμα, παῖς δ’ ἄρχει χθονός.

Μενελέως

Ποῦ δῆτ’ ἂν εἴη; Πότερον ἐκτὸς ἢ ‘ν δόμοις;

Γραῦς

Οὐκ ἔνδον· Ἕλλησιν δὲ πολεμιώτατος.

Μενελέως

Τίν’ αἰτίαν σχὼν ἧς ἐπηυρόμην ἐγώ;

Γραῦς

[470] Ἑλένη κατ’ οἴκους ἐστὶ τούσδ’ ἡ τοῦ Διός.

Μενελέως

Πῶς φῄς; Τίν’ εἶπας μῦθον; Αὖθίς μοι φράσον.

Γραῦς

Ἡ Τυνδαρὶς παῖς, ἣ κατὰ Σπάρτην ποτ’ ἦν.

Μενελέως

Πόθεν μολοῦσα; Τίνα τὸ πρᾶγμ’ ἔχει λόγον;

Γραῦς

Λακεδαίμονος γῆς δεῦρο νοστήσασ’ ἄπο.

Μενελέως

[475] Πότε; Οὔ τί που λελῄσμεθ’ ἐξ ἄντρων λέχος;

Γραῦς

[476] Πρὶν τοὺς Ἀχαιούς, ὦ ξέν’, ἐς Τροίαν μολεῖν.
Ἀλλ’ ἔρπ’ ἀπ’ οἴκων· ἔστι γάρ τις ἐν δόμοις
τύχη, τύραννος ᾗ ταράσσεται δόμος.
Καιρὸν γὰρ οὐδέν’ ἦλθες· ἢν δὲ δεσπότης
[480] λάβῃ σε, θάνατος ξένιά σοι γενήσεται.
Εὔνους γάρ εἰμ’ Ἕλλησιν, οὐχ ὅσον πικροὺς
λόγους ἔδωκα δεσπότην φοβουμένη.

Μενελέως

[483] Τί φῶ; Τί λέξω; Συμφορὰς γὰρ ἀθλίας
ἐκ τῶν πάροιθεν τὰς παρεστώσας κλύω,
[485] εἰ τὴν μὲν αἱρεθεῖσαν ἐκ Τροίας ἄγων
ἥκω δάμαρτα καὶ κατ’ ἄντρα σῴζεται,
ὄνομα δὲ ταὐτὸν τῆς ἐμῆς ἔχουσά τις
δάμαρτος ἄλλη τοισίδ’ ἐνναίει δόμοις.
Διὸς δ’ ἔλεξε παῖδά νιν πεφυκέναι.

Ἀλλ᾽ ἦ τις ἔστι Ζηνὸς ὄνομ᾽ ἔχων ἀνὴρ
Νείλου παρ᾽ ὄχθας; Εἷς γὰρ ὅ γε κατ᾽ οὐρανόν.
Σπάρτη δὲ ποῦ γῆς ἐστι πλὴν ἵνα ῥοαὶ
τοῦ καλλιδόνακός εἰσιν Εὐρώτα μόνον;
Ἁπλοῦν δὲ Τυνδάρειον ὄνομα κλῄζεται.
Λακεδαίμονος δὲ γαῖα τίς ξυνώνυμος
Τροίας τε; Ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἔχω τί χρὴ λέγειν.
Πολλοὶ γάρ, ὡς εἴξασιν, ἐν πολλῇ χθονὶ
ὀνόματα ταὔτ᾽ ἔχουσι καὶ πόλις πόλει
γυνὴ γυναικί τ᾽· οὐδὲν οὖν θαυμαστέον.
Οὐδ᾽ αὖ τὸ δεινὸν προσπόλου φευξούμεθα·
ἀνὴρ γὰρ οὐδεὶς ὧδε βάρβαρος φρένας,
ὃς ὄνομ᾽ ἀκούσας τοὐμὸν οὐ δώσει βοράν.
Κλεινὸν τὸ Τροίας πῦρ ἐγώ θ᾽ ὃς ἧψά νιν,
Μενέλαος, οὐκ ἄγνωστος ἐν πάσῃ χθονί.
Δόμων ἄνακτα προσμενῶ· δισσὰς δέ μοι
ἔχει φυλάξεις· ἢν μὲν ὠμόφρων τις ᾖ,
κρύψας ἐμαυτὸν εἶμι πρὸς ναυάγια·
ἢν δ᾽ ἐνδιδῷ τι μαλθακόν, τὰ πρόσφορα
τῆς νῦν παρούσης συμφορᾶς αἰτήσομαι.
Κακῶν μὲν ἡμῖν ἔσχατον τοῖς ἀθλίοις,
ἄλλους τυράννους αὐτὸν ὄντα βασιλέα
βίον προσαιτεῖν· ἀλλ᾽ ἀναγκαίως ἔχει.
Λόγος γάρ ἐστιν οὐκ ἐμός, σοφὸν δ᾽ ἔπος,
δεινῆς ἀνάγκης οὐδὲν ἰσχύειν πλέον.

Χορός

Ἧκουσα τᾶς θεσπιῳδοῦ κόρας,
ἃ χρῄζουσ᾽ ἐφάνη τυράννοις
δόμοις, ὡς Μενέλαος οὔ
πω μελαμφαὲς οἴχεται
δι᾽ ἔρεβος χθονὶ κρυφθείς,
ἀλλ᾽ ἔτι κατ᾽ οἶδμ᾽ ἅλιον
τρυχόμενος οὔπω λιμένων
ψαύσειεν πατρίας γᾶς,
ἀλατείᾳ βιότου

ταλαίφρων, ἄφιλος φίλων,
παντοδαπᾶς ἐπὶ γᾶς πόδα
χριμπτόμενος εἰναλίῳ
κώπᾳ Τρῳάδος ἐκ γᾶς.

Ἑλένη

Ἦδ' αὖ τάφου τοῦδ' εἰς ἕδρας ἐγὼ πάλιν
στείχω, μαθοῦσα Θεονόης φίλους λόγους,
ἢ πάντ' ἀληθῶς οἶδε· φησὶ δ' ἐν φάει
πόσιν τὸν ἀμὸν ζῶντα φέγγος εἰσορᾶν,
πορθμοὺς δ' ἀλᾶσθαι μυρίους πεπλωκότα
ἐκεῖσε κἀκεῖσ' οὐδ' ἀγύμναστον πλάνοις,
ἥξειν <δ'> ὅταν δὴ πημάτων λάβῃ τέλος.
Ἓν δ' οὐκ ἔλεξεν, εἰ μολὼν σωθήσεται.
Ἐγὼ δ' ἀπέστην τοῦτ' ἐρωτῆσαι σαφῶς,
ἡσθεῖσ' ἐπεί νιν εἶπέ μοι σεσῳσμένον.
Ἐγγὺς δέ νίν που τῆσδ' ἔφασκ' εἶναι χθονός,
ναυαγὸν ἐκπεσόντα σὺν παύροις φίλοις.
Ὤμοι, πόθ' ἥξεις; Ὡς ποθεινὸς ἂν μόλοις.
Ἔα, τίς οὗτος; Οὔ τί που κρυπτεύομαι
Πρωτέως ἀσέπτου παιδὸς ἐκ βουλευμάτων;
Οὐχ ὡς δρομαία πῶλος ἢ Βάκχη θεοῦ
τάφῳ ξυνάψω κῶλον; Ἄγριος δέ τις
μορφὴν ὅδ' ἐστίν, ὅς με θηρᾶται λαβεῖν.

Μενελέως

Σὲ τὴν ὄρεγμα δεινὸν ἡμιλλημένην
τύμβου 'πὶ κρηπῖδ' ἐμπύρους τ' ὀρθοστάτας,
μεῖνον· τί φεύγεις; Ὡς δέμας δείξασα σὸν
ἔκπληξιν ἡμῖν ἀφασίαν τε προστίθης.

Ἑλένη

Ἀδικούμεθ', ὦ γυναῖκες· εἰργόμεσθα γὰρ
τάφου πρὸς ἀνδρὸς τοῦδε, καί μ' ἑλὼν θέλει
δοῦναι τυράννοις ὧν ἐφεύγομεν γάμους.

Μενελέως

Οὐ κλῶπές ἐσμεν, οὐχ ὑπηρέται κακῶν.

Ἑλένη

Καὶ μὴν στολήν γ’ ἄμορφον ἀμφὶ σῶμ’ ἔχεις.

Μενελέως

[555] Στῆσον, φόβου μεθεῖσα, λαιψηρὸν πόδα.

Ἑλένη

Ἵστημ’, ἐπεί γε τοῦδ’ ἐφάπτομαι τόπου.

Μενελέως

Τίς εἶ; Τίν’ ὄψιν σήν, γύναι, προσδέρκομαι;

Ἑλένη

Σὺ δ’ εἶ τίς; Αὐτὸς γὰρ σὲ κἄμ’ ἔχει λόγος.

Μενελέως

Οὐπώποτ’ εἶδον προσφερέστερον δέμας.

Ἑλένη

[560] Ὦ θεοί· θεὸς γὰρ καὶ τὸ γιγνώσκειν φίλους.

<Μενελέως

Ἑλληνὶς εἶ τις ἢ ἐπιχωρία γυνή;>

Ἑλένη

Ἑλληνίς· ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ σὸν θέλω μαθεῖν.

Μενελέως

Ἑλένῃ σ᾽ ὁμοίαν δὴ μάλιστ᾽ εἶδον, γύναι.

Ἑλένη

Ἐγὼ δὲ Μενέλεῴ γε σέ· οὐδ᾽ ἔχω τί φῶ.

Μενελέως

[565] Ἔγνως γὰρ ὀρθῶς ἄνδρα δυστυχέστατον.

Ἑλένη

Ὦ χρόνιος ἐλθὼν σῆς δάμαρτος ἐς χέρας.

Μενελέως

Ποίας δάμαρτος; Μὴ θίγῃς ἐμῶν πέπλων.

Ἑλένη

Ἣν σοι δίδωσι Τυνδάρεως, ἐμὸς πατήρ.

Μενελέως

Ὦ φωσφόρ᾽ Ἑκάτη, πέμπε φάσματ᾽ εὐμενῆ.

Ἑλένη

[570] Οὐ νυκτίφαντον πρόπολον Ἐνοδίας μ᾽ ὁρᾷς.

Μενελέως

Οὐ μὴν γυναικῶν γ᾽ εἷς δυοῖν ἔφυν πόσις.

Ἑλένη

Ποίων δὲ λέκτρων δεσπότης ἄλλων ἔφυς;

Μενελέως

Ἢν ἄντρα κεύθει κἀκ Φρυγῶν κομίζομαι.

Ἑλένη

Οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλη σή τις ἀντ᾽ ἐμοῦ γυνή.

Μενελέως

Οὔ που φρονῶ μὲν εὖ, τὸ δ᾽ ὄμμα μου νοσεῖ;

Ἑλένη

Οὐ γάρ με λεύσσων σὴν δάμαρθ᾽ ὁρᾶν δοκεῖς;

Μενελέως

Τὸ σῶμ᾽ ὅμοιον, τὸ δὲ σαφές μ᾽ ἀποστερεῖ.

Ἑλένη

Σκέψαι· τί σοὐνδεῖ; Τίς δὲ σοῦ σοφώτερος;

Μενελέως

Ἔοικας· οὗτοι τοῦτό γ᾽ ἐξαρνήσομαι.

Ἑλένη

Τίς οὖν διδάξει σ᾽ ἄλλος ἢ τὰ σ᾽ ὄμματα;

Μενελέως

Ἐκεῖ νοσοῦμεν, ὅτι δάμαρτ᾽ ἄλλην ἔχω.

Ἑλένη

Οὐκ ἦλθον ἐς γῆν Τρῳάδ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ εἴδωλον ἦν.

Μενελέως

Καὶ τίς βλέποντα σώματ’ ἐξεργάζεται;

Ἑλένη

Αἰθήρ, ὅθεν σὺ θεοπόνητ’ ἔχεις λέχη.

Μενελέως

[585] Τίνος πλάσαντος θεῶν; Ἄελπτα γὰρ λέγεις.

Ἑλένη

Ἥρας, διάλλαγμ’, ὡς Πάρις με μὴ λάβοι.

Μενελέως

Πῶς οὖν ἂν ἐνθάδ’ ἦσθά <τ’> ἐν Τροίᾳ θ’ ἅμα;

Ἑλένη

Τοὔνομα γένοιτ’ ἂν πολλαχοῦ, τὸ σῶμα δ’ οὔ.

Μενελέως

Μέθες με, λύπης ἄλις ἔχων ἐλήλυθα.

Ἑλένη

[590] Λείψεις γὰρ ἡμᾶς, τὰ δὲ κέν’ ἐξάξεις λέχη;

Μενελέως

Καὶ χαῖρέ γ’, Ἑλένῃ προσφερὴς ὀθούνεκ’ εἶ.

Ἑλένη

Ἀπωλόμην· λαβοῦσά σ’ οὐχ ἕξω πόσιν.

Μενελέως

Τοὐκεῖ με μέγεθος τῶν πόνων πείθει, σὺ δ’ οὔ.

Ἑλένη

Οἴ ἐγώ· τίς ἡμῶν ἐγένετ’ ἀθλιωτέρα;
[595] Οἱ φίλτατοι λείπουσί μ’ οὐδ’ ἀφίξομαι
Ἕλληνας οὐδὲ πατρίδα τὴν ἐμήν ποτε.

Ἄγγελος

[597] Μενέλαε, μαστεύων σε κιγχάνω μόλις
πᾶσαν πλανηθεὶς τήνδε βάρβαρον χθόνα,
πεμφθεὶς ἑταίρων τῶν λελειμμένων ὕπο.

Μενελέως

[600] Τί δ’ ἔστιν; Οὔ που βαρβάρων συλᾶσθ’ ὕπο;

Ἄγγελος

Θαῦμ’ ἔστ’, ἔλασσον τοὔνομ’ ἢ τὸ πρᾶγμ’ ἔχον.

Μενελέως

Λέγ’· ὡς φέρεις τι τῇδε τῇ σπουδῇ νέον.

Ἄγγελος

Λέγω πόνους σε μυρίους τλῆναι μάτην.

Μενελέως

Παλαιὰ θρηνεῖς πήματ’· ἀγγέλλεις δὲ τί;

Ἄγγελος

Βέβηκεν ἄλοχος σὴ πρὸς αἰθέρος πτυχὰς
ἀρθεῖσ᾽ ἄφαντος· οὐρανῷ δὲ κρύπτεται
λιποῦσα σεμνὸν ἄντρον οὗ σφ᾽ ἐσῴζομεν,
τοσόνδε λέξασ᾽· Ὦ ταλαίπωροι Φρύγες
πάντες τ᾽ Ἀχαιοί, δι᾽ ἔμ᾽ ἐπὶ Σκαμανδρίοις
ἀκταῖσιν Ἥρας μηχαναῖς ἐθνήσκετε,
δοκοῦντες Ἑλένην οὐκ ἔχοντ᾽ ἔχειν Πάριν.
Ἐγὼ δ᾽, ἐπειδὴ χρόνον ἔμειν᾽ ὅσον με χρῆν,
τὸ μόρσιμον σῴσασα, πατέρ᾽ ἐς οὐρανὸν
ἄπειμι· φήμας δ᾽ ἡ τάλαινα Τυνδαρὶς
ἄλλως κακὰς ἤκουσεν οὐδὲν αἰτία.
Ὦ χαῖρε, Λήδας θύγατερ, ἐνθάδ᾽ ἦσθ᾽ ἄρα;
Ἐγὼ δέ σ᾽ ἄστρων ὡς βεβηκυῖαν μυχοὺς
ἤγγελλον εἰδὼς οὐδὲν ὡς ὑπόπτερον
δέμας φοροίης. Οὐκ ἐῶ σε κερτομεῖν
ἡμᾶς τόδ᾽ αὖθις, ὡς ἄδην ἐν Ἰλίῳ
πόνους παρεῖχες σῷ πόσει καὶ συμμάχοις.

Μενελέως

Τοῦτ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐκεῖνο· ξυμβεβᾶσιν οἱ λόγοι
οἱ τῆσδ᾽ ἀληθεῖς. Ὦ ποθεινὸς ἡμέρα,
ἥ σ᾽ εἰς ἐμὰς ἔδωκεν ὠλένας λαβεῖν.

Ἑλένη

Ὦ φίλτατ᾽ ἀνδρῶν Μενέλεως, ὁ μὲν χρόνος
παλαιός, ἡ δὲ τέρψις ἀρτίως πάρα.
Ἔλαβον ἀσμένα πόσιν ἐμόν, φίλαι,
περί τ᾽ ἐπέτασα χέρα
φίλιον ἐν μακρᾷ φλογὶ φαεσφόρῳ.

Μενελέως

Κἀγὼ σέ· πολλοὺς δ᾽ ἐν μέσῳ λόγους ἔχων
οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ὁποίου πρῶτον ἄρξωμαι τὰ νῦν.

Ἑλένη

Γέγηθα, κρατὶ δ’ ὀρθίους ἐθείρας
ἀνεπτέρωκα καὶ δάκρυ σταλάσσω,
περὶ δὲ γυῖα χέρας ἔβαλον, ἡδονάν,
[635] ὦ πόσις, ὡς λάβω.

Μενελέως

[636] Ὦ φιλτάτη πρόσοψις, οὐκ ἐμέμφθην·
ἔχω τὰ τῆς Διός τε λέκτρα Λήδας θ’,
ἂν ὑπὸ λαμπάδων κόροι λεύκιπποι
[640] ξυνομαίμονες ὤλβισαν ὤλβισαν
τὸ πρόσθεν, ἐκ δόμων δὲ νοσφίσας σ’ ἐμοῦ
πρὸς ἄλλαν ἐλαύνει
θεὸς συμφορὰν τᾶσδε κρείσσω.
Τὸ κακὸν δ’ ἀγαθὸν σέ τε κἀμὲ συνάγαγε, πόσιν
[645] χρόνιον, ἀλλ’ ὅμως ὀναίμαν τύχας.

Χορός

Ὄναιο δῆτα. Ταὐτὰ δὴ ξυνεύχομαι·
δυοῖν γὰρ ὄντοιν οὐχ ὃ μὲν τλήμων, ὃ δ’ οὔ.

Ἑλένη

Φίλαι φίλαι, τὰ πάρος οὐκέτι
στένομεν οὐδ’ ἀλγῶ.
[650] Πόσιν ἐμὸν ἔχομεν ἔχομεν, ὃν ἔμενον
ἔμενον ἐκ Τροίας πολυετῆ μολεῖν.

Μενελέως

Ἔχεις, ἐγώ τε σέ· ἡλίους δὲ μυρίους
μόλις διελθὼν ᾐσθόμην τὰ τῆς θεοῦ.
Ἐμὰ δὲ χαρμονὰ δάκρυα· πλέον ἔχει
[655] χάριτος ἢ λύπας.

Ἑλένη

Τί φῶ; Τίς ἂν τάδ’ ἤλπισεν βροτῶν ποτε;
Ἀδόκητον ἔχω σε πρὸς στέρνοις.

Μενελέως

Κἀγὼ σὲ τὴν δοκοῦσαν Ἰδαίαν πόλιν
μολεῖν Ἰλίου τε μελέους πύργους.
[660] Πρὸς θεῶν, δόμων πῶς τῶν ἐμῶν ἀπεστάλης;

Ἑλένη

Ἔ ἔ· πικρὰς ἐς ἀρχὰς βαίνεις,
ἓ ἔ· πικρὰν δ’ ἐρευνᾷς φάτιν.

Μενελέως

Λέγ’· ὡς ἀκουστὰ πάντα δῶρα δαιμόνων.

Ἑλένη

Ἀπέπτυσα μὲν λόγον, οἷον οἷον ἐσοίσομαι.

Μενελέως

[665] Ὅμως δὲ λέξον· ἡδύ τοι μόχθων κλύειν.

Ἑλένη

Οὐκ ἐπὶ βαρβάρου λέκτρα νεανία
πετομένας κώπας,
πετομένου δ’ ἔρωτος ἀδίκων γάμων . .

Μενελέως

Τίς <γάρ> σε δαίμων ἢ πότμος συλᾷ πάτρας;

Ἑλένη

Ὁ Διὸς ὁ Διός, ἮΩ πόσι, παῖς μ’ . . .
ἐπέλασεν Νείλῳ.

Μενελέως

Θαυμαστά· τοῦ πέμψαντος; ὦ δεινοὶ λόγοι.

Ἑλένη

Κατεδάκρυσα καὶ βλέφαρον ὑγραίνω
δάκρυσιν· ἁ Διός μ’ ἄλοχος ὤλεσεν.

Μενελέως

Ἥρα; Τί νῷν χρήζουσα προσθεῖναι κακόν;

Ἑλένη

Ὤμοι ἐμῶν δεινῶν, λουτρῶν καὶ κρηνῶν,
ἵνα θεαὶ μορφὰν
ἐφαίδρυναν, ἔνθεν ἔμολεν κρίσις.

Μενελέως

Τὰ δ’ ἐς κρίσιν σοι τῶνδ’ ἔθηχ’ Ἥρα κακῶν ;

Ἑλένη

Πάριν ὡς ἀφέλοιτο

Μενελέως

Πῶς; Αὔδα.

Ἑλένη

Κύπρις ᾧ μ’ ἐπένευσεν

Μενελέως

Ὦ τλᾶμον.

Ἑλένη

Τλάμων, τλάμων· ὦδ’ ἐπέλασ’ Αἰγύπτῳ.

Μενελέως

Εἶτ’ ἀντέδωκ’ εἴδωλον, ὡς σέθεν κλύω.

Ἑλένη

τὰ δὲ <σὰ> κατὰ μέλαθρα πάθεα πάθεα, μᾶ-
[685] τερ, οἳ ‘γώ.

Μενελέως

Τί φῄς;

Ἑλένη

Οὐκ ἔστι μάτηρ· ἀγχόνιον δὲ βρόχον
δι’ ἐμὰν κατεδήσατο δυσγάμου αἰσχύναν.

Μενελέως

Ὤμοι· θυγατρὸς δ’ Ἑρμιόνης ἔστιν βίος;

Ἑλένη

Ἄγαμος ἄτεκνος, ὦ πόσι, καταστένει
[690] γάμον ἄγαμον <ἐμόν>.

Μενελέως

Ὦ πᾶν κατ’ ἄκρας δῶμ’ ἐμὸν πέρσας Πάρις,
τάδε καὶ σὲ διώλεσε μυριάδας τε
χαλκεόπλων Δαναῶν.

Ἑλένη

Ἐμὲ δὲ πατρίδος ἄπο κακόποτμον ἀραίαν
[695] ἔβαλε θεὸς ἀπό <τε> πόλεος ἀπό τε σέθεν,
ὅτε μέλαθρα λέχεά τ᾽ ἔλιπον οὐ λιποῦσ᾽
ἐπ᾽ αἰσχροῖς γάμοις.

Χορός

Εἰ καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῆς τύχης εὐδαίμονος
τύχοιτε, πρὸς τὰ πρόσθεν ἀρκέσειεν ἄν.

Ἄγγελος

[700] Μενέλαε, κἀμοὶ πρόσδοτον τῆς ἡδονῆς,
ἣν μανθάνω μὲν καὐτός, οὐ σαφῶς δ᾽ ἔχω.

Μενελέως

Ἀλλ᾽, ὦ γεραιέ, καὶ σὺ κοινώνει λόγων.

Ἄγγελος

Οὐχ ἥδε μόχθων τῶν ἐν Ἰλίῳ βραβεύς;

Μενελέως

Οὐχ ἥδε, πρὸς θεῶν δ᾽ ἦμεν ἠπατημένοι,
[705] νεφέλης ἄγαλμ᾽ ἔχοντες ἐν χεροῖν λυγρόν.

Ἄγγελος

Τί φῄς;
Νεφέλης ἄρ᾽ ἄλλως εἵχομεν πόνους πέρι;

Μενελέως

Ἥρας τάδ᾽ ἔργα καὶ θεῶν τρισσῶν ἔρις.

Ἄγγελος

ἡ δ’ οὖσ’ ἀληθῶς ἐστιν ἥδε σὴ δάμαρ;

Μενελέως

αὕτη· λόγοις δ’ ἐμοῖσι πίστευσον τάδε.

Ἄγγελος

Ὦ θύγατερ, ὁ θεὸς ὡς ἔφυ τι ποικίλον
καὶ δυστέκμαρτον. Εὖ δέ πως πάντα στρέφει
ἐκεῖσε κἀκεῖσ’ ἀναφέρων· ὃ μὲν πονεῖ,
ὃ δ’ οὐ πονήσας αὖθις ὄλλυται κακῶς,
βέβαιον οὐδὲν τῆς ἀεὶ τύχης ἔχων.
Σὺ γὰρ πόσις τε σὸς πόνων μετέσχετε,
σὺ μὲν λόγοισιν, ὃ δὲ δορὸς προθυμίᾳ.
Σπεύδων δ’ ὅτ’ ἔσπευδ’ οὐδὲν εἶχε· νῦν δ’ ἔχει
αὐτόματα πράξας τἀγάθ’ εὐτυχέστατα.
Οὐκ ἄρα γέροντα πατέρα καὶ Διοσκόρω
ἧσχυνας, οὐδ’ ἔδρασας οἷα κλῄζεται.
Νῦν ἀνανεοῦμαι τὸν σὸν ὑμέναιον πάλιν
καὶ λαμπάδων μεμνήμεθ’ ἃς τεταόροις
ἵπποις τροχάζων παρέφερον· σὺ δ’ ἐν δίφροις
ξὺν τῷδε νύμφη δῶμ’ ἔλειπες ὄλβιον.
Κακὸς γὰρ ὅστις μὴ σέβει τὰ δεσποτῶν
καὶ ξυγγέγηθε καὶ συνωδίνει κακοῖς.
Ἐγὼ μὲν εἴην, κεἰ πέφυχ’ ὅμως λάτρις,
ἐν τοῖσι γενναίοισιν ἠριθμημένος
δούλοισι, τοὔνομ’ οὐκ ἔχων ἐλεύθερον,
τὸν νοῦν δέ· κρεῖσσον γὰρ τόδ’ ἢ δυοῖν κακοῖν
ἔν’ ὄντα χρῆσθαι, τὰς φρένας τ’ ἔχειν κακὰς
ἄλλων τ’ ἀκούειν δοῦλον ὄντα τῶν πέλας.

Μενελέως

Ἄγ’, ὦ γεραιέ, πολλὰ μὲν παρ’ ἀσπίδα
μοχθήματ’ ἐξέπλησας ἐκπονῶν ἐμοί,

καὶ νῦν μετασχὼν τῆς ἐμῆς εὐπραξίας
ἄγγειλον ἐλθὼν τοῖς λελειμμένοις φίλοις
τάδ’ ὡς ἔχονθ’ ηὕρηκας οἷ τ’ ἐσμὲν τύχης,
μένειν τ’ ἐπ’ ἀκταῖς τούς τ’ ἐμοὺς καραδοκεῖν
ἀγῶνας οἳ μένουσί μ’, ὡς ἐλπίζομεν,
κεἰ τήνδε πως δυναίμεθ’ ἐκκλέψαι χθονός,
φρουρεῖν ὅπως ἂν εἰς ἓν ἐλθόντες τύχης
ἐκ βαρβάρων σωθῶμεν, ἢν δυνώμεθα.

Ἄγγελος

Ἔσται τάδ’, ὦναξ. Ἀλλά τοι τὰ μάντεων
ἐσεῖδον ὡς φαῦλ’ ἐστὶ καὶ ψευδῶν πλέα.
Οὐδ’ ἦν ἄρ’ ὑγιὲς οὐδὲν ἐμπύρου φλογὸς
οὐδὲ πτερωτῶν φθέγματ’· εὔηθες δέ τοι
τὸ καὶ δοκεῖν ὄρνιθας ὠφελεῖν βροτούς.
Κάλχας γὰρ οὐκ εἶπ’ οὐδ’ ἐσήμηνε στρατῷ
νεφέλης ὑπερθνῄσκοντας εἰσορῶν φίλους
οὐδ’ Ἕλενος, ἀλλὰ πόλις ἀνηρπάσθη μάτην.
Εἴποις ἄν· Οὕνεχ’ ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἠβούλετο;
Τί δῆτα μαντευόμεθα; Τοῖς θεοῖσι χρὴ
θύοντας αἰτεῖν ἀγαθά, μαντείας δ’ ἐᾶν·
βίου γὰρ ἄλλως δέλεαρ ηὑρέθη τόδε,
κοὐδεὶς ἐπλούτησ’ ἐμπύροισιν ἀργὸς ὤν·
γνώμη δ’ ἀρίστη μάντις ἥ τ’ εὐβουλία.

Χορός

Ἐς ταὐτὸ κἀμοὶ δόξα μαντειῶν πέρι
χωρεῖ γέροντι· τοὺς θεοὺς ἔχων τις ἂν
φίλους ἀρίστην μαντικὴν ἔχοι δόμοις.

Ἑλένη

Εἶέν· τὰ μὲν δὴ δεῦρ’ ἀεὶ καλῶς ἔχει.
Ὅπως δ’ ἐσώθης, ὦ τάλας, Τροίας ἄπο,
κέρδος μὲν οὐδὲν εἰδέναι, πόθος δέ τις
τὰ τῶν φίλων φίλοισιν αἰσθέσθαι κακά.

Μενελέως

[765] Ἦ πόλλ’ ἀνήρου μ’ ἑνὶ λόγῳ μιᾷ θ’ ὁδῷ.
Τί σοι λέγοιμ’ ἂν τὰς ἐν Αἰγαίῳ φθορὰς
τὰ Ναυπλίου τ’ Εὐβοικὰ πυρπολήματα
Κρήτην τε Λιβύης θ’ ἃς ἐπεστράφην πόλεις,
σκοπιάς τε Περσέως; Οὐ γὰρ ἐμπλήσαιμί σ’ <ἂν>
[770] μύθων, λέγων τ’ ἄν σοι κάκ’ ἀλγοίην ἔτι,
πάσχων τ’ ἔκαμνον· δὶς δὲ λυπηθεῖμεν ἄν.

Ἑλένη

[772] Κάλλιον εἶπας ἤ σ’ ἀνηρόμην ἐγώ.
Ἓν δ’ εἰπὲ πάντα παραλιπών, πόσον χρόνον
πόντου ‘πὶ νώτοις ἅλιον ἐφθείρου πλάνον;

Μενελέως

[775] Ἐν ναυσὶν ὢν πρὸς τοῖσιν ἐν Τροίᾳ δέκα
ἔτεσι διῆλθον ἑπτὰ περιδρομὰς ἐτῶν.

Ἑλένη

Φεῦ φεῦ· μακρόν γ’ ἔλεξας, ὦ τάλας, χρόνον
σωθεὶς δ’ ἐκεῖθεν ἐνθάδ’ ἦλθες ἐς σφαγάς.

Μενελέως

Πῶς φῄς; Τί λέξεις; Ὡς μ’ ἀπώλεσας, γύναι.

Ἑλένη

[780] Φεῦγ’ ὡς τάχιστα τῆσδ’ ἀπαλλαχθεὶς χθονός.
Θανῇ πρὸς ἀνδρὸς οὗ τάδ’ ἐστὶ δώματα.

Μενελέως

Τί χρῆμα δράσας ἄξιον τῆς συμφορᾶς;

Ἑλένη

Ἥκεις ἄελπτος ἐμποδὼν ἐμοῖς γάμοις.

Μενελέως

Ἦ γὰρ γαμεῖν τις τἄμ᾽ ἐβουλήθη λέχη;

Ἑλένη

Ὕβριν θ᾽ ὑβρίζειν εἰς ἔμ᾽, ἣν ἔτλην ἐγώ.

Μενελέως

Ἰδίᾳ σθένων τις ἢ τυραννεύων χθονός;

Ἑλένη

Ὃς γῆς ἀνάσσει τῆσδε Πρωτέως γόνος.

Μενελέως

Τόδ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽ αἴνιγμ᾽ ὃ προσπόλου κλύω.

Ἑλένη

Ποίοις ἐπιστὰς βαρβάροις πυλώμασιν;

Μενελέως

Τοῖσδ᾽, ἔνθεν ὥσπερ πτωχὸς ἐξηλαυνόμην.

Ἑλένη

Οὔ που προσήτεις βίοτον; Ὦ τάλαιν᾽ ἐγώ.

Μενελέως

Τοὔργον μὲν ἦν τοῦτ᾽, ὄνομα δ᾽ οὐκ εἶχεν τόδε.

Ἑλένη

Πάντ’ οἶσθ’ ἄρ’, ὡς ἔοικας, ἀμφ’ ἐμῶν γάμων.

Μενελέως

Οἶδ’· εἰ δὲ λέκτρα διέφυγες τάδ’ οὐκ ἔχω.

Ἑλένη

[795] Ἄθικτον εὐνὴν ἴσθι σοι σεσῳσμένην.

Μενελέως

Τίς τοῦδε πειθώ; Φίλα γάρ, εἰ σαφῆ λέγεις.

Ἑλένη

Ὁρᾷς τάφου τοῦδ’ ἀθλίους ἕδρας ἐμάς;

Μενελέως

Ὁρῶ ταλαίνας στιβάδας, ὧν τί σοὶ μέτα;

Ἑλένη

Ἐνταῦθα λέκτρων ἱκετεύομεν φυγάς.

Μενελέως

[800] Βωμοῦ σπανίζουσ’ ἢ νόμοισι βαρβάροις;

Ἑλένη

Ἐρρύεθ’ ἡμᾶς τοῦτ’ ἴσον ναοῖς θεῶν.

Μενελέως

Οὐδ’ ἄρα πρὸς οἴκους ναυστολεῖν <σ’> ἔξεστί μοι;

Ἑλένη

Ξίφος μένει σε μᾶλλον ἢ τοὐμὸν λέχος.

Μενελέως

Οὕτως ἂν εἴην ἀθλιώτατος βροτῶν.

Ἑλένη

[805] Μή νυν καταιδοῦ, φεῦγε δ’ ἐκ τῆσδε χθονός.

Μενελέως

Λιπών σε; Τροίαν ἐξέπερσα σὴν χάριν.

Ἑλένη

Κρεῖσσον γὰρ ἤ σε τἄμ’ ἀποκτεῖναι λέχη.

Μενελέως

Ἄνανδρά γ’ εἶπας Ἰλίου τ’ οὐκ ἄξια.

Ἑλένη

Οὐκ ἂν κτάνοις τύραννον, ὃ σπεύδεις ἴσως.

Μενελέως

[810] Οὕτω σιδήρῳ τρωτὸν οὐκ ἔχει δέμας;

Ἑλένη

Εἴσῃ. Τὸ τολμᾶν δ’ ἀδύνατ’ ἀνδρὸς οὐ σοφοῦ.

Μενελέως

Σιγῇ παράσχω δῆτ’ ἐμὰς δῆσαι χέρας;

Ἑλένη

Ἐς ἄπορον ἥκεις· δεῖ δὲ μηχανῆς τινος.

Μενελέως

Δρῶντας γὰρ ἢ μὴ δρῶντας ἥδιον θανεῖν.

Ἑλένη

Μί’ ἔστιν ἐλπίς, ᾗ μόνῃ σωθεῖμεν ἄν.

Μενελέως

Ὠνητὸς ἢ τολμητὸς ἢ λόγων ὕπο;

Ἑλένη

Εἰ μὴ τύραννός <σ’> ἐκπύθοιτ’ ἀφιγμένον.

Μενελέως

Ἐρεῖ δὲ τίς μ’; Οὐ γνώσεταί γ’ ὅς εἰμ’ ἐγώ.

Ἑλένη

Ἔστ’ ἔνδον αὐτῷ ξύμμαχος θεοῖς ἴση.

Μενελέως

Φήμη τις οἴκων ἐν μυχοῖς ἱδρυμένη;

Ἑλένη

Οὔκ, ἀλλ’ ἀδελφή· Θεονόην καλοῦσί νιν.

Μενελέως

Χρηστήριον μὲν τοὔνομ’· ὅ τι δὲ δρᾷ φράσον.

Ἑλένη

Πάντ’ οἶδ’, ἐρεῖ τε συγγόνῳ παρόντα σε.

Μενελέως

Θνῄσκοιμεν ἄν· λαθεῖν γὰρ οὐχ οἷόν τέ μοι.

Ἑλένη

[825] Ἴσως ἂν ἀναπείσαιμεν ἱκετεύοντέ νιν

Μενελέως

Τί χρῆμα δρᾶσαι; Τίν’ ὑπάγεις μ’ ἐς ἐλπίδα;

Ἑλένη

Παρόντα γαίᾳ μὴ φράσαι σε συγγόνῳ.

Μενελέως

Πείσαντε δ’ ἐκ γῆς διορίσαιμεν ἂν πόδα;

Ἑλένη

Κοινῇ γ’ ἐκείνῃ ῥᾳδίως, λάθρᾳ δ’ ἂν οὔ.

Μενελέως

[830] Σὸν ἔργον, ὡς γυναικὶ πρόσφορον γυνή.

Ἑλένη

Ὡς οὐκ ἄχρωστα γόνατ’ ἐμῶν ἕξει χερῶν.

Μενελέως

Φέρ’, ἢν δὲ δὴ νῷν μὴ ἀποδέξηται λόγους;

Ἑλένη

Θανῇ· γαμοῦμαι δ’ ἡ τάλαιν’ ἐγὼ βίᾳ.

Μενελέως

Προδότις ἂν εἴης· τὴν βίαν σκήψασ’ ἔχεις.

Ἑλένη

Ἀλλ’ ἁγνὸν ὅρκον σὸν κάρα κατώμοσα . . .

Μενελέως

Τί φῄς; Θανεῖσθαι; Κοὔποτ’ ἀλλάξεις λέχη;

Ἑλένη

Ταὐτῷ ξίφει γε· κείσομαι δὲ σοῦ πέλας.

Μενελέως

Ἐπὶ τοῖσδε τοίνυν δεξιᾶς ἐμῆς θίγε.

Ἑλένη

Ψαύω, θανόντος σοῦ τόδ’ ἐκλείψειν φάος.

Μενελέως

Κἀγὼ στερηθεὶς σοῦ τελευτήσειν βίον.

Ἑλένη

Πῶς οὖν θανούμεθ’ ὥστε καὶ δόξαν λαβεῖν;

Μενελέως

Τύμβου ‘πὶ νώτῳ σὲ κτανὼν ἐμὲ κτενῶ.
Πρῶτον δ’ ἀγῶνα μέγαν ἀγωνιούμεθα

λέκτρων ὑπὲρ σῶν. Ὁ δὲ θέλων ἴτω πέλας·
τὸ Τρωικὸν γὰρ οὐ καταισχυνῶ κλέος
οὐδ' Ἑλλάδ' ἐλθὼν λήψομαι πολὺν ψόγον,
ὅστις Θέτιν μὲν ἐστέρησ' Ἀχιλλέως,
Τελαμωνίου δ' Αἴαντος εἰσεῖδον σφαγάς,
τὸν Νηλέως τ' ἄπαιδα· διὰ δὲ τὴν ἐμὴν
οὐκ ἀξιώσω κατθανεῖν δάμαρτ' ἐγώ;
Μάλιστά γε· εἰ γάρ εἰσιν οἱ θεοὶ σοφοί,
εὔψυχον ἄνδρα πολεμίων θανόνθ' ὕπο
κούφῃ καταμπίσχουσιν ἐν τύμβῳ χθονί,
κακοὺς δ' ἐφ' ἕρμα στερεὸν ἐκβάλλουσι γῆς.

Χορός

Ὦ θεοί, γενέσθω δή ποτ' εὐτυχὲς γένος
τὸ Ταντάλειον καὶ μεταστήτω κακῶν.

Ἑλένη

Οἳ ἐγὼ τάλαινα· τῆς τύχης γὰρ ὧδ' ἔχω.
Μενέλαε, διαπεπράγμεθ'· ἐκβαίνει δόμων
ἡ θεσπιῳδὸς Θεονόη· κτυπεῖ δόμος
κλῄθρων λυθέντων. Φεῦγ'· ἀτὰρ τί φευκτέον;
Ἀποῦσα γάρ σε καὶ παροῦσ' ἀφιγμένον
δεῦρ' οἶδεν· ὦ δύστηνος, ὡς ἀπωλόμην.
Τροίας δὲ σωθεὶς κἀπὸ βαρβάρου χθονὸς
ἐς βάρβαρ' ἐλθὼν φάσγαν' αὖθις ἐμπεσῇ.

Θεονόη

Ἥγου σύ μοι φέρουσα λαμπτήρων σέλας
θείου δε σεμνὸν θεσμὸν αἰθέρος μυχούς,
ὡς πνεῦμα καθαρὸν οὐρανοῦ δεξώμεθα·
σὺ δ' αὖ κέλευθον εἴ τις ἔβλαψεν ποδὶ
στείβων ἀνοσίῳ, δὸς καθαρσίῳ φλογί,
κροῦσον δὲ πεύκην, ἵνα διεξέλθω, πυρός.
Νόμον δὲ τὸν ἐμὸν θεοῖσιν ἀποδοῦσαι πάρος
ἐφέστιον φλόγ' ἐς δόμους κομίζετε.

Ἑλένη, τί τἀμὰ πῶς ἔχει θεσπίσματα;
Ἥκει πόσις σοι Μενέλεως ὅδ’ ἐμφανής,
νεῶν στερηθεὶς τοῦ τε σοῦ μιμήματος.
Ὦ τλῆμον, οἵους διαφυγὼν ἦλθες πόνους,
οὐδ’ οἶσθα νόστον οἵκαδ’ εἴτ’ αὐτοῦ μενεῖς·
ἔρις γὰρ ἐν θεοῖς σύλλογός τε σοῦ πέρι
ἔσται πάρεδρος Ζηνὶ τῷδ’ ἐν ἤματι.
Ἥρα μέν, ἥ σοι δυσμενὴς πάροιθεν ἦν,
νῦν ἐστιν εὔνους κἀς πάτραν σῷσαι θέλει
ξὺν τῇδ’, ἵν’ Ἕλλὰς τοὺς Ἀλεξάνδρου γάμους,
δώρημα Κύπριδος, ψευδονυμφεύτους μάθῃ·
Κύπρις δὲ νόστον σὸν διαφθεῖραι θέλει,
ὡς μὴ ‘ξελεγχθῇ μηδὲ πριαμένη φανῇ
τὸ κάλλος, Ἑλένης οὕνεκ’, ἀνονήτοις γάμοις.
Τέλος δ’ ἐφ’ ἡμῖν, εἴθ’, ἃ βούλεται Κύπρις,
λέξασ’ ἀδελφῷ σ’ ἐνθάδ’ ὄντα διολέσω,
εἴτ’ αὖ μεθ’ Ἥρας στᾶσα σὸν σώσω βίον,
κρύψασ’ ὁμαίμον’, ὅς με προστάσσει τάδε
εἰπεῖν, ὅταν γῆν τήνδε νοστήσας τύχῃς. . . .
Τίς εἶσ’ ἀδελφῷ τόνδε σημανῶν ἐμῷ
παρόνθ’, ὅπως ἂν τοὐμὸν ἀσφαλῶς ἔχῃ;

Ἑλένη

Ὦ παρθέν’, ἱκέτις ἀμφὶ σὸν πίτνω γόνυ
καὶ προσκαθίζω θᾶκον οὐκ εὐδαίμονα
ὑπέρ τ’ ἐμαυτῆς τοῦδέ θ’, ὃν μόλις ποτὲ
λαβοῦσ’ ἐπ’ ἀκμῆς εἰμι κατθανόντ’ ἰδεῖν·
μή μοι κατείπῃς σῷ κασιγνήτῳ πόσιν
τόνδ’ εἰς ἐμὰς ἥκοντα φιλτάτας χέρας,
σῷσον δέ, λίσσομαί σε· συγγόνῳ δὲ σῷ
τὴν εὐσέβειαν μὴ προδῷς τὴν σήν ποτε,
χάριτας πονηρὰς κἀδίκους ὠνουμένη.
Μισεῖ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τὴν βίαν, τὰ κτητὰ δὲ
κτᾶσθαι κελεύει πάντας οὐκ ἐς ἁρπαγάς.
Ἐατέος δ’ ὁ πλοῦτος ἄδικός τις ὤν.
Κοινὸς γάρ ἐστιν οὐρανὸς πᾶσιν βροτοῖς

καὶ γαῖ', ἐν ᾗ χρὴ δώματ' ἀναπληρουμένους
τἀλλότρια μὴ σχεῖν μηδ' ἀφαιρεῖσθαι βίᾳ.
Ἡμᾶς δὲ καιρίως μέν, ἀθλίως δ' ἐμοί,
Ἑρμῆς ἔδωκε πατρὶ σῷ σῴζειν πόσει
τῷδ' ὃς πάρεστι κἀπολάζυσθαι θέλει.
Πῶς οὖν θανὼν ἂν ἀπολάβοι; Κεῖνος δὲ πῶς
τὰ ζῶντα τοῖς θανοῦσιν ἀποδοίη ποτ' ἄν;
Ἤδη τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὰ τοῦ πατρὸς σκόπει·
πότερον ὁ δαίμων χὠ θανὼν τὰ τῶν πέλας
βούλοιντ' ἂν ἢ οὐ βούλοιντ' ἂν ἀποδοῦναι πάλιν;
Δοκῶ μέν. Οὔκουν χρή σε συγγόνῳ πλέον
νέμειν ματαίῳ μᾶλλον ἢ χρηστῷ πατρί.
Εἰ δ' οὖσα μάντις καὶ τὰ θεῖ' ἡγουμένη
τὸ μὲν δίκαιον τοῦ πατρὸς διαφθερεῖς,
τῷ δ' οὐ δικαίῳ συγγόνῳ σώσεις χάριν,
αἰσχρὸν τὰ μέν σε θεῖα πάντ' ἐξειδέναι,
τά τ' ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα, τὰ δὲ δίκαια μή.
Τήν τ' ἀθλίαν ἔμ', οἷσιν ἔγκειμαι κακοῖς,
ῥῦσαι, πάρεργον δοῦσα τοῦτο τῆς τύχης·
Ἑλένην γὰρ οὐδεὶς ὅστις οὐ στυγεῖ βροτῶν·
ἣ κλήζομαι καθ' Ἑλλάδ' ὡς προδοῦσ' ἐμὸν
πόσιν Φρυγῶν ᾤκησα πολυχρύσους δόμους.
Ἦν δ' Ἑλλάδ' ἔλθω κἀπιβῶ Σπάρτης <πάλιν>,
κλύοντες εἰσιδόντες ὡς τέχναις θεῶν
ὤλοντ', ἐγὼ δὲ προδότις οὐκ ἄρ' ἦ φίλων,
πάλιν μ' ἀνάξουσ' ἐς τὸ σῶφρον αὖθις αὖ,
ἑδνώσομαί τε θυγατέρ', ἣν οὐδεὶς γαμεῖ,
τὴν δ' ἐνθάδ' ἐκλιποῦσ' ἀλητείαν πικρὰν
ὄντων ἐν οἴκοις χρημάτων ὀνήσομαι.
Κεἰ μὲν θανὼν ὅδ' ἐν πυρᾷ κατεσφάγη,
πρόσω σφ' ἀπόντα δακρύοις ἂν ἠγάπων·
νῦν δ' ὄντα καὶ σωθέντ' ἀφαιρεθήσομαι;
Μὴ δῆτα, παρθέν', ἀλλά σ' ἱκετεύω τόδε·
δὸς τὴν χάριν μοι τήνδε καὶ μιμοῦ τρόπους
πατρὸς δικαίου· παισὶ γὰρ κλέος τόδε
κάλλιστον, ὅστις ἐκ πατρὸς χρηστοῦ γεγὼς
ἐς ταὐτὸν ἦλθε τοῖς τεκοῦσι τοὺς τρόπους.

Χορός

Οἰκτρὸν μὲν οἱ παρόντες ἐν μέσῳ λόγοι,
οἰκτρὰ δὲ καὶ σύ. Τοὺς δὲ Μενέλεω ποθῶ
λόγους ἀκοῦσαι τίνας ἐρεῖ ψυχῆς πέρι.

Μενελέως

Ἐγὼ σὸν οὔτ' ἂν προσπεσεῖν τλαίην γόνυ
οὔτ' ἂν δακρῦσαι βλέφαρα· τὴν Τροίαν γὰρ ἂν
δειλοὶ γενόμενοι πλεῖστον αἰσχύνοιμεν ἄν.
Καίτοι λέγουσιν ὡς πρὸς ἀνδρὸς εὐγενοῦς
ἐν ξυμφοραῖσι δάκρυ' ἀπ' ὀφθαλμῶν βαλεῖν.
Ἀλλ' οὐχὶ τοῦτο τὸ καλόν, εἰ καλὸν τόδε,
αἰρήσομαι 'γὼ πρόσθε τῆς εὐψυχίας.
Ἀλλ', εἰ μὲν ἄνδρα σοι δοκεῖ σῷσαι ξένον
ζητοῦντά γ' ὀρθῶς ἀπολαβεῖν δάμαρτ' ἐμήν,
ἀπόδος τε καὶ πρὸς σῷσον· εἰ δὲ μὴ δοκεῖ,
ἐγὼ μὲν οὐ νῦν πρῶτον ἀλλὰ πολλάκις
ἄθλιος ἂν εἴην, σὺ δὲ γυνὴ κακὴ φανῇ.
Ἃ δ' ἄξι' ἡμῶν καὶ δίκαι' ἡγούμεθα
καὶ σῆς μάλιστα καρδίας ἀνθάψεται,
λέξω τάδ' ἀμφὶ μνῆμα σοῦ πατρὸς πόθῳ·

Ὦ γέρον, ὃς οἰκεῖς τόνδε λάινον τάφον,
ἀπόδος, ἀπαιτῶ τὴν ἐμὴν δάμαρτά σε,
ἣν Ζεὺς ἔπεμψε δεῦρό σοι σῴζειν ἐμοί.
Οἶδ' οὕνεκ' ἡμῖν οὔποτ' ἀποδώσεις θανών·
ἀλλ' ἥδε πατέρα νέρθεν ἀνακαλούμενον
οὐκ ἀξιώσει τὸν πρὶν εὐκλεέστατον
κακῶς ἀκοῦσαι· κυρία γάρ ἐστι νῦν.

Ὦ νέρτερ' Ἄιδη, καὶ σὲ σύμμαχον καλῶ,
ὃς πόλλ' ἐδέξω τῆσδ' ἔκατι σώματα
πεσόντα τῷμῷ φασγάνῳ, μισθὸν δ' ἔχεις·
ἢ νῦν ἐκείνους ἀπόδος ἐμψύχους πάλιν,
ἢ τήνδε πατρὸς εὐσεβοῦς ἀνάγκασον
κρείσσω φανεῖσαν τἀμά γ' ἀποδοῦναι λέχη.

Εἰ δ’ ἐμὲ γυναῖκα τὴν ἐμὴν συλήσετε,
ἅ σοι παρέλιπεν ἥδε τῶν λόγων, φράσω.
Ὅρκοις κεκλῄμεθ’, ὡς μάθῃς, ὦ παρθένε,
πρῶτον μὲν ἐλθεῖν διὰ μάχης σῷ συγγόνῳ
κἀκεῖνον ἢ ‘μὲ δεῖ θανεῖν· ἁπλοῦς λόγος.
Ἦν δ’ ἐς μὲν ἀλκὴν μὴ πόδ’ ἀντιθῇ ποδί,
λιμῷ δὲ θηρᾷ τύμβον ἱκετεύοντε νώ,
κτανεῖν δέδοκται τήνδε μοι κἄπειτ’ ἐμὸν
πρὸς ἧπαρ ὦσαι δίστομον ξίφος τόδε
τύμβου ‘πὶ νώτοις τοῦδ’, ἵν’ αἵματος ῥοαὶ
τάφου καταστάζωσι· κεισόμεσθα δὲ
νεκρὼ δύ’ ἑξῆς τῷδ’ ἐπὶ ξεστῷ τάφῳ,
ἀθάνατον ἄλγος σοί, ψόγος δὲ σῷ πατρί.
Οὐ γὰρ γαμεῖ τήνδ’ οὔτε σύγγονος σέθεν
οὔτ’ ἄλλος οὐδείς· ἀλλ’ ἐγώ σφ’ ἀπάξομαι,
εἰ μὴ πρὸς οἴκους δυνάμεθ’, ἀλλὰ πρὸς νεκρούς.

Τί ταῦτα; Δακρύοις ἐς τὸ θῆλυ τρεπόμενος
ἐλεινὸς ἦν ἂν μᾶλλον ἢ δραστήριος.
Κτεῖν’, εἰ δοκεῖ σοι· δυσκλεᾶς γὰρ οὐ κτενεῖς·
μᾶλλόν γε μέντοι τοῖς ἐμοῖς πείθου λόγοις,
ἵν’ ᾖς δικαία καὶ δάμαρτ’ ἐγὼ λάβω.

Χορός

Ἐν σοὶ βραβεύειν, ὦ νεᾶνι, τοὺς λόγους·
οὕτω δὲ κρῖνον, ὡς ἅπασιν ἀνδάνῃς.

Θεονόη

Ἐγὼ πέφυκά τ’ εὐσεβεῖν καὶ βούλομαι,
φιλῶ τ’ ἐμαυτήν, καὶ κλέος τοὐμοῦ πατρὸς
οὐκ ἂν μιάναιμ’, οὐδὲ συγγόνῳ χάριν
δοίην ἂν ἐξ ἧς δυσκλεὴς φανήσομαι.
Ἔνεστι δ’ ἱερὸν τῆς δίκης ἐμοὶ μέγα
ἐν τῇ φύσει· καὶ τοῦτο Νηρέως πάρα
ἔχουσα σῴζειν, Μενέλεως, πειράσομαι.
Ἥρᾳ δ’, ἐπείπερ βούλεταί σ’ εὐεργετεῖν,

ἐς ταὐτὸν οἴσω ψῆφον· ἡ Κύπρις δ’ ἐμοὶ
ἵλεως μὲν εἴη, ξυμβέβηκε δ’ οὐδαμοῦ·
πειράσομαι δὲ παρθένος μένειν ἀεί.
Ἃ δ’ ἀμφὶ τύμβῳ τῷδ’ ὀνειδίζεις πατρί,
ἡμῖν ὅδ’ αὐτὸς μῦθος. Ἀδικοίημεν ἄν,
εἰ μὴ ἀποδώσω· καὶ γὰρ ἂν κεῖνος βλέπων
ἀπέδωκεν ἂν σοὶ τήνδ’ ἔχειν, ταύτῃ δὲ σέ.

Καὶ γὰρ τίσις τῶνδ’ ἐστὶ τοῖς τε νερτέροις
καὶ τοῖς ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις· ὁ νοῦς
τῶν κατθανόντων ζῇ μὲν οὔ, γνώμην δ’ ἔχει
ἀθάνατον εἰς ἀθάνατον αἰθέρ’ ἐμπεσών.
Ὡς οὖν παραινῶ μὴ μακράν, σιγήσομαι
ἅ μου καθικετεύσατ’, οὐδὲ μωρίᾳ
ξύμβουλος ἔσομαι τῇ κασιγνήτου ποτέ.
Εὐεργετῶ γὰρ κεῖνον οὐ δοκοῦσ’ ὅμως,
ἐκ δυσσεβείας ὅσιον εἰ τίθημί νιν.
Αὐτοὶ μὲν οὖν ὁδόν τιν’ ἐξευρίσκετε,
ἐγὼ δ’ ἀποστᾶσ’ ἐκποδὼν σιγήσομαι.
Ἐκ τῶν θεῶν δ’ ἄρχεσθε χἰκετεύετε
τὴν μέν σ’ ἐᾶσαι πατρίδα νοστῆσαι Κύπριν,
Ἥρας δὲ τὴν ἔννοιαν ἐν ταὐτῷ μένειν
ἣν ἐς σὲ καὶ σὸν πόσιν ἔχει σωτηρίας.
Σὺ δ’, ὦ θανών μοι πάτερ, ὅσον γ’ ἐγὼ σθένω,
οὔποτε κεκλήσῃ δυσσεβὴς ἀντ’ εὐσεβοῦς.

Χορός

Οὐδείς ποτ’ εὐτύχησεν ἔκδικος γεγώς,
ἐν τῷ δικαίῳ δ’ ἐλπίδες σωτηρίας.

Ἑλένη

Μενέλαε, πρὸς μὲν παρθένου σεσῴσμεθα·
τοὐνθένδε δὴ σὲ τοὺς λόγους φέροντα χρὴ
κοινὴν ξυνάπτειν μηχανὴν σωτηρίας.

Μενελέως

Ἄκουε δή νυν· χρόνιος εἶ κατὰ στέγας
καὶ συντέθραψαι προσπόλοισι βασιλέως.

Ἑλένη

Τί τοῦτ’ ἔλεξας; Ἐσφέρεις γὰρ ἐλπίδας
ὡς δή τι δράσων χρηστὸν ἐς κοινόν γε νῷν.

Μενελέως

Πείσειας ἄν τιν’ οἵτινες τετραζύγων
ὄχων ἀνάσσουσ’, ὥστε νῷν δοῦναι δίφρους;

Ἑλένη

Πείσαιμ’ <ἄν>· ἀλλὰ τίνα φυγὴν φευξούμεθα
πεδίων ἄπειροι βαρβάρου τ’ ὄντες χθονός;

Μενελέως

Ἀδύνατον εἶπας. Φέρε, τί δ’, εἰ κρυφθεὶς δόμοις
κτάνοιμ’ ἄνακτα τῷδε διστόμῳ ξίφει;

Ἑλένη

Οὐκ ἄν σ’ ἀνάσχοιτ’ οὐδὲ σιγήσειεν ἂν
μέλλοντ’ ἀδελφὴ σύγγονον κατακτενεῖν.

Μενελέως

Ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ μὴν ναῦς ἔστιν ᾗ σωθεῖμεν ἂν
φεύγοντες· ἦν γὰρ εἴχομεν θάλασσ’ ἔχει.

Ἑλένη

Ἄκουσον, ἤν τι καὶ γυνὴ λέξῃ σοφόν.
Βούλῃ λέγεσθαι, μὴ θανών, λόγῳ θανεῖν;

Μενελέως

Κακὸς μὲν ὄρνις· εἰ δὲ κερδανῶ, λέγειν
ἕτοιμός εἰμι μὴ θανὼν λόγῳ θανεῖν.

Ἑλένη

Καὶ μὴν γυναικείοις σ’ ἂν οἰκτισαίμεθα
κουραῖσι καὶ θρήνοισι πρὸς τὸν ἀνόσιον.

Μενελέως

Σωτηρίας δὲ τοῦτ’ ἔχει τί νῷν ἄκος;
Παλαιότης γὰρ τῷ λόγῳ γ’ ἔνεστί τις.

Ἑλένη

Ὡς δὴ θανόντα σ’ ἐνάλιον κενῷ τάφῳ
θάψαι τύραννον τῆσδε γῆς αἰτήσομαι.

Μενελέως

Καὶ δὴ παρεῖκεν· εἶτα πῶς ἄνευ νεὼς
σωθησόμεσθα κενοταφοῦντ’ ἐμὸν δέμας;

Ἑλένη

Δοῦναι κελεύσω πορθμίδ’, ᾗ καθήσομαι
κόσμον τάφῳ σῷ πελαγίους ἐς ἀγκάλας.

Μενελέως

Ὡς εὖ τόδ’ εἶπας πλὴν ἕν· εἰ χέρσῳ ταφὰς
θεῖναι κελεύσει σ’, οὐδὲν ἡ σκῆψις φέρει.

Ἑλένη

Ἀλλ’ οὐ νομίζειν φήσομεν καθ’ Ἑλλάδα
χέρσῳ καλύπτειν τοὺς θανόντας ἐναλίους.

Μενελέως

Τοῦτ᾽ αὖ κατορθοῖς· εἶτ᾽ ἐγὼ συμπλεύσομαι
καὶ συγκαθήσω κόσμον ἐν ταὐτῷ σκάφει.

Ἑλένη

Σὲ καὶ παρεῖναι δεῖ μάλιστα τούς τε σοὺς
πλωτῆρας οἵπερ ἔφυγον ἐκ ναυαγίας.

Μενελέως

Καὶ μὴν ἐάνπερ ναῦν ἐπ᾽ ἀγκύρας λάβω,
ἀνὴρ παρ᾽ ἄνδρα στήσεται ξιφηφόρος.

Ἑλένη

Σὲ χρὴ βραβεύειν πάντα· πόμπιμοι μόνον
λαίφει πνοαὶ γένοιντο καὶ νεὼς δρόμος.

Μενελέως

Ἔσται· πόνους γὰρ δαίμονες παύσουσί μου.
Ἀτὰρ θανόντα τοῦ μ᾽ ἐρεῖς πεπυσμένη;

Ἑλένη

Σοῦ· καὶ μόνος γε φάσκε διαφυγεῖν μόρον
Ἀτρέως πλέων σὺν παιδὶ καὶ θανόνθ᾽ ὁρᾶν.

Μενελέως

Καὶ μὴν τάδ᾽ ἀμφίβληστρα σώματος ῥάκη
ξυμμαρτυρήσει ναυτικῶν ἐρειπίων.

Ἑλένη

Ἐς καιρὸν ἦλθε, τότε δ᾽ ἄκαιρ᾽ ἀπώλλυτο·
τὸ δ᾽ ἄθλιον κεῖν᾽ εὐτυχὲς τάχ᾽ ἂν πέσοι.

Μενελέως

Πότερα δ’ ἐς οἴκους σοὶ συνεισελθεῖν με χρὴ
ἢ πρὸς τάφῳ τῷδ’ ἥσυχοι καθώμεθα;

Ἑλένη

Αὐτοῦ μέν’· ἦν γὰρ καί τι πλημμελές σε δρᾷ,
τάφος σ’ ὅδ’ ἂν ῥύσαιτο φάσγανόν τε σόν.
Ἐγὼ δ’ ἐς οἴκους βᾶσα βοστρύχους τεμῶ
πέπλων τε λευκῶν μέλανας ἀνταλλάξομαι
παρῇδί τ’ ὄνυχα φόνιον ἐμβαλῶ χροός.
Μέγας γὰρ ἀγών, καὶ βλέπω δύο ῥοπάς·
ἢ γὰρ θανεῖν δεῖ μ’, ἦν ἁλῶ τεχνωμένη,
ἢ πατρίδα τ’ ἐλθεῖν καὶ σὸν ἐκσῷσαι δέμας.

Ὦ πότνι’ ἢ Δίοισιν ἐν λέκτροις πίτνεις
Ἥρα, δύ’ οἰκτρὼ φῶτ’ ἀνάψυξον πόνων,
αἰτούμεθ’ ὀρθὰς ὠλένας πρὸς οὐρανὸν
ῥίπτονθ’, ἵν’ οἰκεῖς ἀστέρων ποικίλματα.
Σύ θ’, ἢ ‘πὶ τῷμῷ κάλλος ἐκτήσω γάμῳ,
κόρη Διώνης Κύπρι, μή μ’ ἐξεργάσῃ.
Ἅλις δὲ λύμης ἦν μ’ ἐλυμήνω πάρος
τοὔνομα παρασχοῦσ’, οὐ τὸ σῶμ’, ἐν βαρβάροις.
Θανεῖν δ’ ἔασόν μ’, εἰ κατακτεῖναι θέλεις,
ἐν γῇ πατρῴᾳ. Τί ποτ’ ἄπληστος εἶ κακῶν,
ἔρωτας ἀπάτας δόλιά τ’ ἐξευρήματα
ἀσκοῦσα φίλτρα θ’ αἱματηρὰ δωμάτων;
Εἰ δ’ ἦσθα μετρία, τἄλλα γ’ ἡδίστη θεῶν
πέφυκας ἀνθρώποισιν· οὐκ ἄλλως λέγω.

Χορός

Σὲ τὰν ἐναύλοις ὑπὸ δενδροκόμοις
μουσεῖα καὶ θάκους ἐνί-
ζουσαν ἀναβοάσω,
σὲ τὰν ἀοιδοτάταν ὄρνιθα μελῳδὸν
ἀηδόνα δακρυόεσσαν,
ἔλθ’ ᾧ διὰ ξουθᾶν
γενύων ἐλελιζομένα

θρήνων ἐμοὶ ξυνεργός,
Ἑλένας μελέας πόνους
τὸν Ἰλιάδων τ’ ἀει
δούσᾳ δακρυόεντα πότμον
Ἀχαιῶν ὑπὸ λόγχαις·
ὅτ’ ἔδραμε ῥόθια πεδία βαρβάρῳ πλάτᾳ
ὅτ’ ἔμολεν ἔμολε, μέλεα Πριαμίδαις ἄγων
Λακεδαίμονος ἄπο λέχεα
σέθεν, ὦ Ἑλένα, Πάρις αἰνόγαμος
πομπαῖσιν Ἀφροδίτας.

Πολλοὶ δ’ Ἀχαιῶν δορὶ καὶ πετρίναις
ῥιπαῖσιν ἐκπνεύσαντες Ἄι-
δαν μέλεον ἔχουσιν,
ταλαινᾶν ἀλόχων κείραντες ἔθειραν·
ἄνυμφα δὲ μέλαθρα κεῖται·
πολλοὺς δὲ πυρσεύσας
φλογερὸν σέλας ἀμφιρύταν
Εὔβοιαν εἶλ’ Ἀχαιῶν
μονόκωπος ἀνήρ, πέτραις
Καφηρίσιν ἐμβαλὼν
Αἰγαίαις τ’ ἐνάλοις δόλιον
ἀκταῖς ἀστέρα λάμψας.
ἀλίμενα δ’ ὄρεα Μάλεα χειμάτων πνοᾷ,
ὅτ’ ἔσυτο πατρίδος ἀποπρό, βαρβάρου στολᾶς
γέρας, οὐ γέρας ἀλλ’ ἔριν,
Δαναῶν Μενέλας ἐπὶ ναυσὶν ἄγων,
εἴδωλον ἱερὸν Ἥρας.

Ὅ τι θεὸς ἢ μὴ θεὸς ἢ τὸ μέσον,
τίς φησ’ ἐρευνήσας βροτῶν
μακρότατον πέρας εὑρεῖν
ὃς τὰ θεῶν ἐσορᾷ
δεῦρο καὶ αὖθις ἐκεῖσε
καὶ πάλιν ἀντιλόγοις
πηδῶντ’ ἀνελπίστοις τύχαις;
Σὺ Διὸς ἔφυς, ὦ Ἑλένα, θυγάτηρ·

πτανὸς γὰρ ἐν κόλποις σε Λή-
δας ἐτέκνωσε πατήρ.
κᾆτ᾽ ἰαχήθης καθ᾽ Ἑλλανίαν
προδότις ἄπιστος ἄδικος ἄθεος· οὐδ᾽ ἔχω
τί τὸ σαφὲς ἔτι ποτ᾽ ἐν βροτοῖς·
τὸ τῶν θεῶν <δ᾽> ἔπος ἀλαθὲς ηὗρον.

Ἄφρονες ὅσοι τὰς ἀρετὰς πολέμῳ
λόγχαισί τ᾽ ἀλκαίου δορὸς
κτᾶσθε, πόνους ἀμαθῶς θνα-
τῶν καταπαυόμενοι·
εἰ γὰρ ἅμιλλα κρινεῖ νιν
αἵματος, οὔποτ᾽ ἔρις
λείψει κατ᾽ ἀνθρώπων πόλεις·
ᾗ Πριαμίδος γᾶς ἔλαχον θαλάμους,
ἐξὸν διορθῶσαι λόγοις
σὰν ἔριν, ὦ Ἑλένα.
νῦν δ᾽ οἳ μὲν Ἅιδᾳ μέλονται κάτω,
τείχεα δὲ φλογμὸς ὥστε Διός ἐπέσυτο φλόξ,
ἐπὶ δὲ πάθεα πάθεσι φέρεις
ἀθλίοις συμφοραῖς αἰλίνοις.

Θεοκλύμενος

Ὦ χαῖρε, πατρὸς μνῆμ᾽· ἐπ᾽ ἐξόδοισι γὰρ
ἔθαψα, Πρωτεῦ, σ᾽ ἕνεκ᾽ ἐμῆς προσρήσεως·
ἀεὶ δέ σ᾽ ἐξιών τε κἀσιὼν δόμους
Θεοκλύμενος παῖς ὅδε προσεννέπει, πάτερ.
ὑμεῖς μὲν οὖν κύνας τε καὶ θηρῶν βρόχους,
δμῶες, κομίζετ᾽ ἐς δόμους τυραννικούς·
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐμαυτὸν πόλλ᾽ ἐλοιδόρησα δή·
οὐ γάρ τι θανάτῳ τοὺς κακοὺς κολάζομεν;
Καὶ νῦν πέπυσμαι φανερὸν Ἑλλήνων τινὰ
ἐς γῆν ἀφῖχθαι καὶ λεληθέναι σκοπούς,
ἤτοι κατόπτην ἢ κλοπαῖς θηρώμενον
Ἑλένην· θανεῖται δ᾽, ἤν γε δὴ ληφθῇ μόνον.
Ἔα·

ἀλλ’, ὡς ἔοικε, πάντα διαπεπραγμένα
ηὕρηκα· τύμβου γὰρ κενὰς λιποῦσ’ ἕδρας
ἡ Τυνδαρὶς παῖς ἐκπεπόρθμευται χθονός.
Ὠή, χαλᾶτε κλῆθρα· λύεθ’ ἱππικὰ
φάτνης, ὀπαδοί, κἀκκομίζεθ’ ἅρματα,
ὡς ἂν πόνου γ’ ἕκατι μὴ λάθῃ με γῆς
τῆσδ’ ἐκκομισθεῖσ’ ἄλοχος, ἧς ἐφίεμαι.
Ἐπίσχετ’· εἰσορῶ γὰρ οὓς διώκομεν
παρόντας ἐν δόμοισι κοὐ πεφευγότας.
Αὔτη, τί πέπλους μέλανας ἐξήψω χροὸς
λευκῶν ἀμείψασ’ ἔκ τε κρατὸς εὐγενοῦς
κόμας σίδηρον ἐμβαλοῦσ’ ἀπέθρισας
χλωροῖς τε τέγγεις δάκρυσι σὴν παρηίδα
κλαίουσα; Πότερον ἐννύχοις πεπεισμένη
στένεις ὀνείροις, ἢ φάτιν τιν’ οἴκοθεν
κλύουσα λύπῃ σὰς διέφθαρσαι φρένας;

Ἑλένη

Ὦ δέσποτ’ ἤδη γὰρ τόδ’ ὀνομάζω σ’ ἔπος
ὄλωλα· φροῦδα τἀμὰ κοὐδέν εἰμ’ ἔτι.

Θεοκλύμενος

Ἐν τῷ δὲ κεῖσαι συμφορᾶς; Τίς ἡ τύχη;

Ἑλένη

Μενέλαος οἴμοι, πῶς φράσω; Τέθνηκέ μοι.

Θεοκλύμενος

Οὐδέν τι χαίρω σοῖς λόγοις, τὰ δ’ εὐτυχῶ.
Πῶς <δ’> οἶσθα; Μῶν σοι Θεονόη λέγει τάδε;

Ἑλένη

Κείνη τε φησὶν ὅ τε παρὼν ὅτ’ ὤλλυτο.

Θεοκλύμενος

[1200] Ἧκει γὰρ ὅστις καὶ τάδ’ ἀγγέλλει σαφῆ;

Ἑλένη

Ἧκει· μόλοι γὰρ οἷ σφ’ ἐγὼ χρῄζω μολεῖν.

Θεοκλύμενος

Τίς ἐστι; Ποῦ ‘στιν; Ἵνα σαφέστερον μάθω.

Ἑλένη

Ὅδ’ ὃς κάθηται τῷδ’ ὑποπτήξας τάφῳ.

Θεοκλύμενος

Ἄπολλον, ὡς ἐσθῆτι δυσμόρφῳ πρέπει.

Ἑλένη

[1205] Οἴμοι, δοκῶ μὲν κἀμὸν ὦδ’ ἔχειν πόσιν.

Θεοκλύμενος

ποδαπὸς δ’ ὅδ’ ἀνὴρ καὶ πόθεν κατέσχε γῆν;

Ἑλένη

Ἕλλην, Ἀχαιῶν εἷς ἐμῷ σύμπλους πόσει.

Θεοκλύμενος

Θανάτῳ δὲ ποίῳ φησὶ Μενέλεων θανεῖν;

Ἑλένη

Οἰκτρόταθ’, ὑγροῖσιν ἐν κλυδωνίοις ἁλός.

Θεοκλύμενος

[1210] Ποῦ βαρβάροισι πελάγεσιν ναυσθλούμενον;

Ἑλένη

Λιβύης ἀλιμένοις ἐκπεσόντα πρὸς πέτραις.

Θεοκλύμενος

Καὶ πῶς ὅδ᾽ οὐκ ὄλωλε κοινωνῶν πλάτης;

Ἑλένη

Ἐσθλῶν κακίους ἐνίοτ᾽ εὐτυχέστεροι.

Θεοκλύμενος

Λιπὼν δὲ ναὸς ποῦ πάρεστιν ἔκβολα;

Ἑλένη

[1215] Ὅπου κακῶς ὄλοιτο, Μενέλεως δὲ μή.

Θεοκλύμενος

Ὤλωλ᾽ ἐκεῖνος. Ἦλθε δ᾽ ἐν ποίῳ σκάφει;

Ἑλένη

ναῦταί σφ᾽ ἀνείλοντ᾽ ἐντυχόντες, ὡς λέγει.

Θεοκλύμενος

Ποῦ δὴ τὸ πεμφθὲν ἀντὶ σοῦ Τροίᾳ κακόν;

Ἑλένη

Νεφέλης λέγεις ἄγαλμα; Ἐς αἰθέρ᾽ οἴχεται.

Θεοκλύμενος

[1220] Ὦ Πρίαμε καὶ γῆ Τρῳάς, <ὡς> ἔρρεις μάτην.

Ἑλένη

Κἀγὼ μετέσχον Πριαμίδαις δυσπραξίας.

Θεοκλύμενος

Πόσιν δ’ ἄθαπτον ἔλιπεν ἢ κρύπτει χθονί;

Ἑλένη

Ἄθαπτον· οἳ ἐγὼ τῶν ἐμῶν τλήμων κακῶν.

Θεοκλύμενος

Τῶνδ’ οὕνεκ’ ἔταμες βοστρύχους ξανθῆς κόμης·

Ἑλένη

[1225] Φίλος γάρ ἐστιν, ὅς ποτ’ ἐστίν, ἐνθάδ’ ὤν.

Θεοκλύμενος

Ὀρθῶς μὲν ἥδε συμφορὰ δακρύεται

Ἑλένη

Ἐν εὐμαρεῖ γοῦν σὴν κασιγνήτην λαθεῖν.

Θεοκλύμενος

Οὐ δῆτα. Πῶς οὖν; Τόνδ’ ἔτ’ οἰκήσεις τάφον;

Ἑλένη

Τί κερτομεῖς με, τὸν θανόντα δ’ οὐκ ἐᾷς;

Θεοκλύμενος

Πιστὴ γὰρ εἶ σὺ σῷ πόσει φεύγουσά με.

Ἑλένη

Ἀλλ᾽ οὐκέτ᾽· ἤδη δ᾽ ἄρχε τῶν ἐμῶν γάμων.

Θεοκλύμενος

Χρόνια μὲν ἦλθεν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως αἰνῶ τάδε.

Ἑλένη

Οἶσθ᾽ οὖν ὃ δρᾶσον; Τῶν πάρος λαθώμεθα.

Θεοκλύμενος

Ἐπὶ τῷ; Χάρις γὰρ ἀντὶ χάριτος ἐλθέτω.

Ἑλένη

Σπονδὰς τέμωμεν καὶ διαλλάχθητί μοι.

Θεοκλύμενος

Μεθίημι νεῖκος τὸ σόν, ἴτω δ᾽ ὑπόπτερον.

Ἑλένη

Πρός νύν σε γονάτων τῶνδ᾽, ἐπείπερ εἶ φίλος

Θεοκλύμενος

Τί χρῆμα θηρῶσ᾽ ἱκέτις ὡρέχθης ἐμοῦ;

Ἑλένη

Τὸν κατθανόντα πόσιν ἐμὸν θάψαι θέλω.

Θεοκλύμενος

[1240] Τί δ’; Ἔστ’ ἀπόντων τύμβος; Ἢ θάψεις σκιάν;

Ἑλένη

Ἕλλησίν ἐστι νόμος, ὃς ἂν πόντῳ θάνῃ

Θεοκλύμενος

Τί δρᾶν; Σοφοί τοι Πελοπίδαι τὰ τοιάδε.

Ἑλένη

Κενοῖσι θάπτειν ἐν πέπλων ὑφάσμασιν.

Θεοκλύμενος

Κτέριζ’· ἀνίστη τύμβον οὗ χρῄζεις χθονός.

Ἑλένη

[1245] Οὐχ ὧδε ναύτας ὀλομένους τυμβεύομεν.

Θεοκλύμενος

Πῶς δαί; Λέλειμμαι τῶν ἐν Ἕλλησιν νόμων.

Ἑλένη

Ἐς πόντον ὅσα χρὴ νέκυσιν ἐξορμίζομεν.

Θεοκλύμενος

Τί σοι παράσχω δῆτα τῷ τεθνηκότι;

Ἑλένη

Ὅδ’ οἶδ’, ἐγὼ δ’ ἄπειρος, εὐτυχοῦσα πρίν.

Θεοκλύμενος

[1250] Ὦ ξένε, λόγων μὲν κληδόν’ ἤνεγκας φίλην.

Μενελέως

Οὔκουν ἐμαυτῷ γ’ οὐδὲ τῷ τεθνηκότι.

Θεοκλύμενος

Πῶς τοὺς θανόντας θάπτετ’ ἐν πόντῳ νεκρούς;

Μενελέως

Ὡς ἂν παρούσης οὐσίας ἕκαστος ᾖ.

Θεοκλύμενος

Πλούτου λέγ’ οὕνεχ’ ὅ τι θέλεις ταύτης χάριν.

Μενελέως

[1255] Προσφάζεται μὲν αἷμα πρῶτα νερτέροις.

Θεοκλύμενος

Τίνος; Σύ μοι σήμαινε, πείσομαι δ’ ἐγώ.

Μενελέως

Αὐτὸς σὺ γίγνωσκ’· ἀρκέσει γὰρ ἂν διδῷς.

Θεοκλύμενος

Ἐν βαρβάροις μὲν ἵππον ἢ ταῦρον νόμος.

Μενελέως

Διδούς γε μὲν δὴ δυσγενὲς μηδὲν δίδου.

Θεοκλύμενος

Οὐ τῶνδ’ ἐν ἀγέλαις ὀλβίαις σπανίζομεν.

Μενελέως

Καὶ στρωτὰ φέρεται λέκτρα σώματος κενά.

Θεοκλύμενος

Ἔσται· τί δ’ ἄλλο προσφέρειν νομίζεται;

Μενελέως

Χαλκήλαθ’ ὅπλα· καὶ γὰρ ἦν φίλος δορί.

Θεοκλύμενος

Ἄξια τάδ’ ἔσται Πελοπιδῶν ἃ δώσομεν.

Μενελέως

Καὶ τἄλλ’ ὅσα χθὼν καλὰ φέρει βλαστήματα.

Θεοκλύμενος

Πῶς οὖν; Ἐς οἶδμα τίνι τρόπῳ καθίετε;

Μενελέως

Ναῦν δεῖ παρεῖναι κἀρετμῶν ἐπιστάτας.

Θεοκλύμενος

Πόσον δ’ ἀπείργει μῆκος ἐκ γαίας δόρυ;

Μενελέως

Ὥστ’ ἐξορᾶσθαι ῥόθια χερσόθεν μόλις.

Θεοκλύμενος

Τί δή; Τόδ᾽ Ἑλλὰς νόμιμον ἐκ τίνος σέβει;

Μενελέως

Ὡς μὴ πάλιν γῇ λύματ᾽ ἐκβάλῃ κλύδων.

Θεοκλύμενος

Φοίνισσα κώπη ταχύπορος γενήσεται.

Μενελέως

Καλῶς ἂν εἴη Μενέλεῳ τε πρὸς χάριν.

Θεοκλύμενος

Οὔκουν σὺ χωρὶς τῆσδε δρῶν ἀρκεῖς τάδε;

Μενελέως

Μητρὸς τόδ᾽ ἔργον ἢ γυναικὸς ἢ τέκνων.

Θεοκλύμενος

Ταύτης ὁ μόχθος, ὡς λέγεις, θάπτειν πόσιν.

Μενελέως

Ἐν εὐσεβεῖ γοῦν νόμιμα μὴ κλέπτειν νεκρῶν.

Θεοκλύμενος

Ἴτω· πρὸς ἡμῶν ἄλοχον εὐσεβῆ τρέφειν.
Ἐλθὼν δ᾽ ἐς οἴκους ἐξελοῦ κόσμον νεκρῷ·
καὶ σὲ οὐ κεναῖσι χερσὶ γῆς ἀποστελῶ,
δράσαντα τῇδε πρὸς χάριν· φήμας δ᾽ ἐμοὶ
ἐσθλὰς ἐνεγκὼν ἀντὶ τῆς ἀχλαινίας

ἐσθῆτα λήψῃ σῖτά θ’, ὥστε σ’ ἐς πάτραν
ἐλθεῖν, ἐπεὶ νῦν γ’ ἀθλίως ἔχονθ’ ὁρῶ.
Σὺ δ’, ὦ τάλαινα, μὴ ‘πὶ τοῖς ἀνηνύτοις
τρύχουσα σαυτὴν Μενέλεως δ’ ἔχει πότμον,
κοὐκ ἂν δύναιτο ζῆν ὁ κατθανὼν πόσις.

Μενελέως

Σὸν ἔργον, ὦ νεᾶνι· τὸν παρόντα μὲν
στέργειν πόσιν χρή, τὸν δὲ μηκέτ’ ὄντ’ ἐᾶν·
ἄριστα γάρ σοι ταῦτα πρὸς τὸ τυγχάνον.
Ἧν δ’ Ἑλλάδ’ ἔλθω καὶ τύχω σωτηρίας,
παύσω ψόγου σε τοῦ πρίν, ἣν γυνὴ γένῃ
οἵαν γενέσθαι χρή σε σῷ ξυνευνέτῃ.

Ἑλένη

Ἔσται τάδ’· οὐδὲ μέμψεται πόσις ποτὲ
ἡμῖν· σὺ δ’ αὐτὸς ἐγγὺς ὢν εἴσῃ τάδε.
Ἀλλ’, ὦ τάλας, εἴσελθε καὶ λουτρῶν τύχε
ἐσθῆτά τ’ ἐξάλλαξον. Οὐκ ἐς ἀμβολὰς
εὐεργετήσω σ’· εὐμενέστερον γὰρ ἂν
τῷ φιλτάτῳ μοι Μενέλεῳ τὰ πρόσφορα
δρῴης ἄν, ἡμῶν τυγχάνων οἵων σε χρή.

Χορός

Ὀρεία ποτὲ δρομάδι κώ-
λῳ μάτηρ θεῶν ἐσύθη ἀν’
ὑλάεντα νάπη
ποτάμιόν τε χεῦμ’ ὑδάτων
βαρύβρομόν τε κῦμ’ ἅλιον
πόθῳ τᾶς ἀποιχομένας
ἀρρήτου κούρας.
Κρόταλα δὲ βρόμια διαπρύσιον
ἱέντα κέλαδον ἀνεβόα,
θηρῶν ὅτε ζυγίους
ζευξάσᾳ θεᾷ σατίνας

τὰν ἁρπασθεῖσαν κυκλίων
χορῶν ἔξω παρθενίων
μετὰ κούραν, ἀελλόποδες,
[1315] ἃ μὲν τόξοις Ἄρτεμις, ἃ δ’
ἔγχει Γοργῶπις πάνοπλος,
<συνείποντο. Ζεὺς δ’ ἑδράνων>
αὐγάζων ἐξ οὐρανίων
[1318β] ἄλλαν μοῖραν ἔκραινε.

Δρομαῖον δ’ ὅτε πολυπλάνη-
[1320] τον μάτηρ ἔπαυσε πόνον,
μαστεύουσα πόνους
θυγατρὸς ἁρπαγὰς δολίους,
χιονοθρέμμονάς γ’ ἐπέρασ’
Ἰδαιᾶν Νυμφᾶν σκοπιάς·
[1325] ῥίπτει δ’ ἐν πένθει
πέτρινα κατὰ δρία πολυνιφέα·
βροτοῖσι δ’ ἄχλοα πεδία γᾶς
οὐ καρπίζουσ’ ἀρότοις
λαῶν δὲ φθείρει γενεάν·
[1330] ποίμναις δ’ οὐχ ἵει θαλερὰς
βοσκὰς εὐφύλλων ἑλίκων,
πόλεων δ’ ἀπέλειπε βίος·
οὐδ’ ἦσαν θεῶν θυσίαι,
βωμοῖς δ’ ἄφλεκτοι πέλανοι·
[1335] πηγὰς δ’ ἀμπαύει δροσερὰς
λευκῶν ἐκβάλλειν ὑδάτων
πένθει παιδὸς ἀλάστωρ.

Ἐπεὶ δ’ ἔπαυσ’ εἰλαπίνας
θεοῖς βροτείῳ τε γένει,
Ζεὺς μειλίσσων στυγίους
[1340] Ματρὸς ὀργὰς ἐνέπει·
Βᾶτε, σεμναὶ Χάριτες,
ἴτε, τᾷ περὶ παρθένῳ
Δηοῖ θυμωσαμένᾳ
λύπαν ἐξαλλάξατ’ ἀλαλᾷ,

Μοῦσαί θ’ ὕμνοισι χορῶν.
Χαλκοῦ δ’ αὐδὰν χθονίαν
τύπανά τ’ ἔλαβε βυρσοτενῆ
καλλίστα τότε πρῶτα μακά
ρων Κύπρις· γέλασέν τε θεὰ
δέξατό τ’ ἐς χέρας
βαρύβρομον αὐλὸν
τερφθεῖσ’ ἀλαλαγμῷ.

Ὃν οὐ θέμις <σ’> οὔθ’ ὁσία
‘πύρωσας ἐν <θεῶν> θαλάμοις,
μῆνιν δ’ ἔσχες μεγάλας
ματρός, ὦ παῖ, θυσίας
οὐ σεβίζουσα θεᾶς.
Μέγα τοι δύναται νεβρῶν
παμποίκιλοι στολίδες
κισσοῦ τε στεφθεῖσα χλόα
νάρθηκας εἰς ἱερούς,
ῥόμβου θ’ εἱλισσομένα
κύκλιος ἔνοσις αἰθερία,
βακχεύουσά τ’ ἔθειρα Βρομί
ῳ καὶ παννυχίδες θεᾶς.
Εὖ δέ νιν ἄμασιν
ὑπέρβαλε σελάνα
μορφᾷ μόνον ηὔχεις.

Ἑλένη

Τὰ μὲν κατ’ οἴκους εὐτυχοῦμεν, ὦ φίλαι·
ἡ γὰρ συνεκκλέπτουσα Πρωτέως κόρη
πόσιν παρόντα τὸν ἐμὸν ἱστορουμένη
οὐκ εἶπ’ ἀδελφῷ· κατθανόντα δ’ ἐν χθονὶ
οὔ φησιν αὐγὰς εἰσορᾶν ἐμὴν χάριν.
< [γαπ ιν τεχτ·] >
Κάλλιστα δῆτ’ ἀνήρπασ’ ἐν τύχῃ πόσις·
ἃ γὰρ καθήσειν ὅπλ’ ἔμελλεν εἰς ἅλα,
ταῦτ’ ἐμβαλὼν πόρπακι γενναίαν χέρα

αὐτὸς κομίζει δόρυ τε δεξιᾷ λαβών,
ὡς τῷ θανόντι χάριτα δὴ συνεκπονῶν.
Προύργου δ’ ἐς ἀλκὴν σῶμ’ ὅπλοις ἠσκήσατο,
ὡς βαρβάρων τρόπαια μυρίων χερὶ
θήσων, ὅταν κωπῆρες ἐσβῶμεν σκάφος,
πέπλους δ’ ἀμείψασ’ ἀντὶ ναυφθόρου στολῆς
ἐγώ νιν ἐξήσκησα, καὶ λουτροῖς χρόα
ἔδωκα, χρόνια νίπτρα ποταμίας δρόσου.
Ἀλλ’, ἐκπερᾷ γὰρ δωμάτων ὁ τοὺς ἐμοὺς
γάμους ἑτοίμους ἐν χεροῖν ἔχειν δοκῶν,
σιγητέον μοι· καὶ σὲ προσποιούμεθα
εὔνουν κρατεῖν τε στόματος, ἢν δυνώμεθα
σωθέντες αὐτοὶ καὶ σὲ συνσῶσαί ποτε.

Θεοκλύμενος

Χωρεῖτ’ ἐφεξῆς, ὡς ἔταξεν ὁ ξένος,
δμῶες, φέροντες ἐνάλια κτερίσματα.
Ἑλένη, σὺ δ’, ἢν σοι μὴ κακῶς δόξω λέγειν,
πείθου, μέν’ αὐτοῦ· ταὐτὰ γὰρ παροῦσά τε
πράξεις τὸν ἄνδρα τὸν σὸν ἥν τε μὴ παρῇς.
Δέδοικα γάρ σε μή τις ἐμπεσὼν πόθος
πείσῃ μεθεῖναι σῶμ’ ἐς οἶδμα πόντιον
τοῦ πρόσθεν ἀνδρὸς χάρισιν ἐκπεπληγμένην·
ἄγαν γὰρ αὐτὸν οὐ παρόνθ’ ὅμως στένεις.

Ἑλένη

Ὦ καινὸς ἡμῖν πόσις, ἀναγκαίως ἔχει
τὰ πρῶτα λέκτρα νυμφικάς θ’ ὁμιλίας
τιμᾶν· ἐγὼ δὲ διὰ τὸ μὲν στέργειν πόσιν
καὶ ξυνθάνοιμ’ ἄν· ἀλλὰ τίς κείνῳ χάρις
ξὺν κατθανόντι κατθανεῖν; Ἔα δέ με
αὐτὴν μολοῦσαν ἐντάφια δοῦναι νεκρῷ.
Θεοὶ δὲ σοί τε δοῖεν οἵ’ ἐγὼ θέλω,
καὶ τῷ ξένῳ τῷδ’, ὅτι συνεκπονεῖ τάδε.
Ἔξεις δέ μ’ οἵαν χρή σ’ ἔχειν ἐν δώμασι
γυναῖκ’, ἐπειδὴ Μενέλεων εὐεργετεῖς

κἄμ'· ἔρχεται γὰρ δή τιν' ἐς τύχην τάδε.
Ὅστις δὲ δώσει ναῦν ἐν ᾗ τάδ' ἄξομεν,
πρόσταξον, ὡς ἂν τὴν χάριν πλήρη λάβω.

Θεοκλύμενος

Χώρει σὺ καὶ ναῦν τοῖσδε πεντηκόντορον
Σιδωνίαν δὸς κἀρετμῶν ἐπιστάτας.

Ἑλένη

Οὔκουν ὅδ' ἄρξει ναὸς ὃς κοσμεῖ τάφον;

Θεοκλύμενος

Μάλιστ'· ἀκούειν τοῦδε χρὴ ναύτας ἐμούς.

Ἑλένη

Αὖθις κέλευσον, ἵνα σαφῶς μάθωσί σου.

Θεοκλύμενος

Αὖθις κελεύω καὶ τρίτον γ', εἴ σοι φίλον.

Ἑλένη

Ὄναιο· κἀγὼ τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων.

Θεοκλύμενος

Μή νυν ἄγαν σὸν δάκρυσιν ἐκτήξῃς χρόα.

Ἑλένη

Ἥδ' ἡμέρα σοι τὴν ἐμὴν δείξει χάριν.

Θεοκλύμενος

Τὰ τῶν θανόντων οὐδέν, ἀλλ᾽ ἄλλως πόνος.

Ἑλένη

Ἔστιν τι κἀκεῖ κἀνθάδ᾽ ὧν ἐγὼ λέγω.

Θεοκλύμενος

Οὐδὲν κακίω Μενέλεώ μ᾽ ἕξεις πόσιν.

Ἑλένη

Οὐδὲν σὺ μεμπτός· τῆς τύχης με δεῖ μόνον.

Θεοκλύμενος

[1425] Ἐν σοὶ τόδ᾽, ἢν σὴν εἰς ἔμ᾽ εὔνοιαν διδῷς.

Ἑλένη

Οὐ νῦν διδαξόμεσθα τοὺς φίλους φιλεῖν.

Θεοκλύμενος

Βούλῃ ξυνεργῶν αὐτὸς ἐκπέμψω στόλον;

Ἑλένη

Ἥκιστα· μὴ δούλευε σοῖς δούλοις, ἄναξ.

Θεοκλύμενος

[1429] Ἀλλ᾽ εἶα· τοὺς μὲν Πελοπιδῶν ἐῶ νόμους·
[1430] καθαρὰ γὰρ ἡμῖν δώματ᾽· οὐ γὰρ ἐνθάδε
ψυχὴν ἀφῆκε Μενέλεως· ἴτω δέ τις
φράσων ὑπάρχοις τοῖς ἐμοῖς φέρειν γάμων
ἀγάλματ᾽ οἴκους εἰς ἐμούς· πᾶσαν δὲ χρὴ
γαῖαν βοᾶσθαι μακαρίαις ὑμνῳδίαις
[1435] ὑμέναιον Ἑλένης κἀμόν, ὡς ζηλωτὸς ᾖ.

Σὺ δ', ὦ ξέν', ἐλθών, πελαγίους ἐς ἀγκάλας
τῷ τῆσδε πρίν ποτ' ὄντι δοὺς πόσει τάδε,
πάλιν πρὸς οἴκους σπεῦδ' ἐμὴν δάμαρτ' ἔχων,
ὡς τοὺς γάμους τοὺς τῆσδε συνδαίσας ἐμοὶ
στέλλῃ πρὸς οἴκους ἢ μένων εὐδαιμονῇς.

Μενελέως

Ὦ Ζεῦ, πατήρ τε καὶ σοφὸς κλῄζῃ θεός,
βλέψον πρὸς ἡμᾶς καὶ μετάστησον κακῶν.
Ἔλκουσι δ' ἡμῖν πρὸς λέπας τὰς συμφορὰς
σπουδῇ σύναψαι· κἂν ἄκρᾳ θίγῃς χερί,
ἥξομεν ἵν' ἐλθεῖν βουλόμεσθα τῆς τύχης.
Ἅλις δὲ μόχθων οὓς ἐμοχθοῦμεν πάρος.
Κέκλησθέ μοι, θεοί, πολλά χρήσθ' ἐμοῦ κλύειν
καὶ λύπρ'· ὀφείλω δ' οὐκ ἀεὶ πράσσειν κακῶς,
ὀρθῷ δὲ βῆναι ποδί· μίαν δέ μοι χάριν
δόντες τὸ λοιπὸν εὐτυχῆ με θήσετε.

Χορός

Φοίνισσα Σιδωνιὰς ὦ
ταχεῖα κώπα, ῥοθίοισι μάτηρ
εἰρεσίας φίλα,
χοραγὲ τῶν καλλιχόρων
δελφίνων, ὅταν αὔραις
πέλαγος ἀνήνεμον ᾖ,
γλαυκὰ δὲ Πόντου θυγάτηρ
Γαλάνεια τάδ' εἴπῃ·
Κατὰ μὲν ἱστία πετάσατ' αὔ-
ραις λιπόντες εἰναλίαις,
λάβετε δ' εἰλατίνας πλάτας,
ὦ ναῦται, ναῦται,
πέμποντες εὐλιμένους
Περσείων οἴκων Ἑλέναν ἐπ' ἀκτάς.

Ἦ που κόρας ἂν ποταμοῦ
παρ' οἶδμα Λευκιππίδας ἢ πρὸ ναοῦ

Παλλάδος ἀν λάβοις
χρόνῳ ξυνελθοῦσα χοροῖς
ἢ κώμοις Ὑακίνθου
νύχιον ἐς εὐφροσύναν,
ὃν ἐξαμιλλησάμενος
τροχῷ τέρμονα δίσκου
ἔκανε Φοῖβος, τᾷ Λακαί-
να γᾷ βούθυτον ἀμέραν·
ὁ Διὸς δ’ εἶπε σέβειν γόνος·
μόσχον θ’, ἂν οἴκοις
<ἔλειπες, Ἑρμιόναν,>
ἅς οὔπω πεῦκαι πρὸ γάμων ἔλαμψαν.

Δι’ ἀέρος εἴθε ποτανοὶ
γενοίμεσθ’ ᾇ Λιβύας
οἰωνοὶ στοχάδες
ὄμβρον λιποῦσαι χειμέριον
νίσονται πρεσβυτάτᾳ
σύριγγι πειθόμεναι
ποιμένος, ὃς ἄβροχα πεδία καρποφόρα τε γᾶς
ἐπιπετόμενος ἰαχεῖ.
Ὦ πταναὶ δολιχαύχενες,
σύννομοι νεφέων δρόμου,
βᾶτε Πλειάδας ὑπὸ μέσας
Ὠρίωνά τ’ ἐννύχιον·
καρύξατ’ ἀγγελίαν,
Εὐρώταν ἐφεζόμεναι,
Μενέλεως ὅτι Δαρδάνου
πόλιν ἑλὼν δόμον ἥξει.

Μόλοιτέ ποθ’ ἵππιον οἶμον
δι’ αἰθέρος ἱέμενοι
παῖδες Τυνδαρίδαι,
λαμπρῶν ἄστρων ὑπ’ ἀέλλαισιν·
οἳ ναίετ’ οὐράνιοι,
σωτῆρες τᾶς Ἑλένας,
γλαυκὸν ἔπιτ’ οἶδμα κυανόχροά τε κυμάτων

ῥόθια πολιὰ θαλάσσας,
ναύταις εὐαεῖς ἀνέμων
πέμποντες Διόθεν πνοάς·
δύσκλειαν δ’ ἀπὸ συγγόνου
βάλετε βαρβάρων λεχέων,
ἂν Ἰδαίων ἐρίδων
ποιναθεῖσ’ ἐκτήσατο, γᾶν
οὐκ ἐλθοῦσά <ποτ’> Ἰλίου
Φοιβείους ἐπὶ πύργους.

Ἄγγελος

Ἄναξ, τὰ κάκιστ’ ἐν δόμοις εὑρήκαμεν·
ὡς καίν’ ἀκούσῃ πήματ’ ἐξ ἐμοῦ τάχα.

Θεοκλύμενος

Τί δ’ ἔστιν;

Ἄγγελος

Ἄλλης ἐκπόνει μνηστεύματα
γυναικός· Ἑλένη γὰρ βέβηκ’ ἔξω χθονός.

Θεοκλύμενος

Πτεροῖσιν ἀρθεῖσ’ ἢ πεδοστιβεῖ ποδί;

Ἄγγελος

Μενέλαος αὐτὴν ἐκπεπόρθμευται χθονός,
ὃς αὐτὸς αὑτὸν ἦλθεν ἀγγέλλων θανεῖν.

Θεοκλύμενος

Ὦ δεινὰ λέξας· τίς δέ νιν ναυκληρία
ἐκ τῆσδ’ ἀπῆρε χθονός; Ἄπιστα γὰρ λέγεις.

Ἄγγελος

Ἥν γε ξένῳ δίδως σύ· τούς τε σοὺς ἔχων
ναύτας βέβηκεν, ὡς ἂν ἐν βραχεῖ μάθῃς.

Θεοκλύμενος

Πῶς; Εἰδέναι πρόθυμος· οὐ γὰρ ἐλπίδων
ἔσω βέβηκα μίαν ὑπερδραμεῖν χέρα
τοσούσδε ναύτας, ὧν ἀπεστάλης μέτα.

Ἄγγελος

Ἐπεὶ λιποῦσα τούσδε βασιλείους δόμους
ἡ τοῦ Διὸς παῖς πρὸς θάλασσαν ἐστάλη
σοφώταθ' ἁβρὸν πόδα τιθεῖσ' ἀνέστενε
πόσιν πέλας παρόντα κοὐ τεθνηκότα.
Ὡς δ' ἤλθομεν σῶν περίβολον νεωρίων,
Σιδωνίαν ναῦν πρωτόπλουν καθείλκομεν
ζυγῶν τε πεντήκοντα κἀρετμῶν μέτρα
ἔχουσαν. Ἔργου δ' ἔργον ἐξημείβετο·
ὃ μὲν γὰρ ἱστόν, ὃ δὲ πλάτην καθίσατο
ταρσόν τε χειρί, λευκά θ' ἱστί' εἰς ἓν ἦν
πηδάλιά τε ζεύγλαισι παρακαθίετο.
Κἀν τῷδε μόχθῳ, τοῦτ' ἄρα σκοπούμενοι,
Ἕλληνες ἄνδρες Μενέλεῳ ξυνέμποροι
προσῆλθον ἀκταῖς ναυφθόροις ἠσθημένοι
πέπλοισιν, εὐειδεῖς μέν, αὐχμηροὶ δ' ὁρᾶν.
Ἰδὼν δέ νιν παρόντας Ἀτρέως γόνος
προσεῖπε δόλιον οἶκτον ἐς μέσον φέρων·
Ὦ τλήμονες, πῶς ἐκ τίνος νεώς ποτε
Ἀχαιίδος θραύσαντες ἥκετε σκάφος;
Ἆρ' Ἀτρέως παῖδ' ὀλόμενον συνθάπτετε,
ὃν Τυνδαρὶς παῖς ἥδ' ἀπόντα κενοταφεῖ;
Οἳ δ' ἐκβαλόντες δάκρυα ποιητῷ τρόπῳ,
ἐς ναῦν ἐχώρουν Μενέλεῳ ποντίσματα
φέροντες. Ἡμῖν δ' ἦν μὲν ἥδ' ὑποψία
λόγος τ' ἐν ἀλλήλοισι, τῶν ἐπεσβατῶν
ὡς πλῆθος εἴη· διεσιωπῶμεν δ' ὅμως

τοὺς σοὺς λόγους σῴζοντες· ἄρχειν γὰρ νεὼς
ξένον κελεύσας πάντα συνέχεας τάδε.

Καὶ τἄλλα μὲν δὴ ῥᾳδίως ἔσω νεὼς
ἐθέμεθα κουφίζοντα· ταύρειος δὲ ποὺς
οὐκ ἤθελ' ὀρθὸς σανίδα προσβῆναι κάτα,
ἀλλ' ἐξεβρυχᾶτ' ὄμμ' ἀναστρέφων κύκλῳ
κυρτῶν τε νῶτα κἀς κέρας παρεμβλέπων
μὴ θιγγάνειν ἀπεῖργεν. Ὁ δ' Ἑλένης πόσις
ἐκάλεσεν· Ὦ πέρσαντες Ἰλίου πόλιν,
οὐκ εἶ' ἀναρπάσαντες Ἑλλήνων νόμῳ
νεανίαις ὤμοισι ταύρειον δέμας
ἐς πρῷραν ἐμβαλεῖτε, φάσγανόν θ' ἅμα
πρόχειρον ὥσει σφάγια τῷ τεθνηκότι;
Οἳ δ' ἐς κέλευσμ' ἐλθόντες ἐξανήρπασαν
ταῦρον φέροντές τ' εἰσέθεντο σέλματα.
Μονάμπυκον δὲ Μενέλεως ψήχων δέρην
μέτωπά τ' ἐξέπεισεν ἐσβῆναι δόρυ.

Τέλος δ', ἐπειδὴ ναῦς τὰ πάντ' ἐδέξατο,
πλήσασα κλιμακτῆρας εὐσφύρῳ ποδί
Ἑλένη καθέζετ' ἐν μέσοις ἑδωλίοις,
ὅ τ' οὐκέτ' ὢν λόγοισι Μενέλεως πέλας·
ἄλλοι δὲ τοίχους δεξιοὺς λαιούς τ' ἴσοι
ἀνὴρ παρ' ἄνδρ' ἕζονθ', ὑφ' εἵμασι ξίφη
λαθραῖ' ἔχοντες, ῥόθιά τ' ἐξεπίμπλατο
βοῆς κελευστοῦ φθέγμαθ' ὡς ἠκούσαμεν.

Ἐπεὶ δὲ γαίας ἦμεν οὔτ' ἄγαν πρόσω
οὔτ' ἐγγύς, οὕτως ἦρετ' οἰάκων φύλαξ·
Ἔτ', ὦ ξέν', ἐς τὸ πρόσθεν ἢ καλῶς ἔχει
πλεύσωμεν; Ἀρχαὶ γὰρ νεὼς μέλουσι σοί.
Ὁ δ' εἶφ'· Ἅλις μοι. Δεξιᾷ δ' ἑλὼν ξίφος
ἐς πρῷραν εἶρπε κἀπὶ ταυρείῳ σφαγῇ
σταθεὶς νεκρῶν μὲν οὐδενὸς μνήμην ἔχων,
τέμνων δὲ λαιμὸν ηὔχετ'· Ὦ ναίων ἅλα
πόντιε Πόσειδον Νηρέως θ' ἁγναὶ κόραι,

σώσατέ μ’ ἐπ’ ἀκτὰς Ναυπλίας δάμαρτά τε
ἄσυλον ἐκ γῆς. Αἵματος δ’ ἀπορροαὶ
ἐς οἶδμ’ ἐσηκόντιζον οὔριοι ξένῳ.
Καί τις τόδ’ εἶπε· Δόλιος ἡ ναυκληρία.
Πάλιν πλέωμεν· δεξιὰν κέλευε σύ,
σὺ δὲ στρέφ’ οἴακ’. Ἐκ δὲ ταυρείου φόνου
Ἀτρέως σταθεὶς παῖς ἀνεβόησε συμμάχους·
Τί μέλλετ’, ὦ γῆς Ἑλλάδος λωτίσματα,
σφάζειν φονεύειν βαρβάρους νεώς τ’ ἄπο
ῥίπτειν ἐς οἶδμα; Ναυβάταις δὲ τοῖσι σοῖς
βοᾷ κελευστὴς τὴν ἐναντίαν ὅπα·
Οὐκ εἶ’ ὃ μέν τις λοῖσθον ἀρεῖται δόρυ,
ὃ δὲ ζύγ’ ἄξας, ὃ δ’ ἀφελὼν σκαλμοῦ πλάτην
καθαιματώσει κρᾶτα πολεμίων ξένων;
Ὀρθοὶ δ’ ἀνῇξαν πάντες, οἳ μὲν ἐν χεροῖν
κορμοὺς ἔχοντες ναυτικούς, οἳ δὲ ξίφη·
φόνῳ δὲ ναῦς ἐρρεῖτο. Παρακέλευσμα δ’ ἦν
πρύμνηθεν Ἑλένης· Ποῦ τὸ Τρωικὸν κλέος;
Δείξατε πρὸς ἄνδρας βαρβάρους· σπουδῆς δ’ ὕπο
ἔπιπτον, οἳ δ’ ὠρθοῦντο, τοὺς δὲ κειμένους
νεκροὺς ἂν εἶδες. Μενέλεως δ’ ἔχων ὅπλα,
ὅποι νοσοῖεν ξύμμαχοι κατασκοπῶν,
ταύτῃ προσῆγε χειρὶ δεξιᾷ ξίφος,
ὥστ’ ἐκκολυμβᾶν ναός, ἠρήμωσε δὲ
σῶν ναυβατῶν ἐρετμά. Ἐπ’ οἰάκων δὲ βὰς
ἄνακτ’ ἐς Ἑλλάδ’ εἶπεν εὐθύνειν δόρυ.
Οἳ δ’ ἱστὸν ᾖρον, οὔριαι δ’ ἦκον πνοαί.

Βεβᾶσι δ’ ἐκ γῆς. Διαφυγὼν δ’ ἐγὼ φόνον
καθῆκ’ ἐμαυτὸν εἰς ἅλ’ ἄγκυραν πάρα·
ἤδη δὲ κάμνονθ’ ὁρμιατόνων μέ τις
ἀνείλετ’, ἐς δὲ γαῖαν ἐξέβησέ σοι
τάδ’ ἀγγελοῦντα. Σώφρονος δ’ ἀπιστίας
οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν χρησιμώτερον βροτοῖς.

Χορός

[1619] Οὐκ ἄν ποτ’ ηὔχουν οὔτε σ’ οὔθ’ ἡμᾶς λαθεῖν
[1620] Μενέλαον, ὦναξ, ὡς ἐλάνθανεν παρών.

Θεοκλύμενος

Ὦ γυναικείαις τέχναισιν αἱρεθεὶς ἐγὼ τάλας·
ἐκπεφεύγασιν γάμοι με. Κεἰ μὲν ἦν ἁλώσιμος
ναῦς διώγμασιν, πονήσας εἶλον ἂν τάχα ξένους·
νῦν δὲ τὴν προδοῦσαν ἡμᾶς τεισόμεσθα σύγγονον,
[1625] ἥτις ἐν δόμοις ὁρῶσα Μενέλεων οὐκ εἶπέ μοι.
Τοιγὰρ οὔποτ’ ἄλλον ἄνδρα ψεύσεται μαντεύμασιν.

Θεράπων

Οὗτος ὦ, ποῖ σὸν πόδ’ αἴρεις, δέσποτ’, ἐς ποῖον φόνον;

Θεοκλύμενος

Οἷπερ ἡ δίκη κελεύει με· ἀλλ’ ἀφίστασ’ ἐκποδών.

Θεράπων

Οὐκ ἀφήσομαι πέπλων σῶν· μεγάλα <γὰρ> σπεύδεις κακά.

Θεοκλύμενος

[1630] Ἀλλὰ δεσποτῶν κρατήσεις δοῦλος ὤν;

Θεράπων

Φρονῶ γὰρ εὖ.

Θεοκλύμενος

Οὐκ ἔμοιγ’, εἰ μή μ’ ἐάσεις

Θεράπων

Οὐ μὲν οὖν σ’ ἐάσομεν.

Θεοκλύμενος

Σύγγονον κτανεῖν κακίστην

Θεράπων

Εὐσεβεστάτην μὲν οὖν.

Θεοκλύμενος

Ἥ με προύδωκεν

Θεράπων

Καλήν γε προδοσίαν, δίκαια δρᾶν.

Θεοκλύμενος

Τἀμὰ λέκτρ᾽ ἄλλῳ διδοῦσα.

Θεράπων

Τοῖς γε κυριωτέροις.

Θεοκλύμενος

[1635] Κύριος δὲ τῶν ἐμῶν τίς;

Θεράπων

Ὃς ἔλαβεν πατρὸς πάρα.

Θεοκλύμενος

Ἀλλ᾽ ἔδωκεν ἡ τύχη μοι.

Θεράπων

Τὸ δὲ χρεὼν ἀφείλετο.

Θεοκλύμενος

Οὐ σὲ τἀμὰ χρὴ δικάζειν.

Θεράπων

Ἥν γε βελτίω λέγω.

Θεοκλύμενος

Ἀρχόμεσθ’ ἄρ’, οὐ κρατοῦμεν.

Θεράπων

Ὅσια δρᾶν, τὰ δ’ ἔκδικ’ οὔ.

Θεοκλύμενος

Κατθανεῖν ἐρᾶν ἔοικας.

Θεράπων

Κτεῖνε· σύγγονον δὲ σὴν
οὐ κτενεῖς ἡμῶν ἑκόντων, ἀλλ’ ἔμε· <ὡς> πρὸ δεσποτῶν
τοῖσι γενναίοισι δούλοις εὐκλεέστατον θανεῖν.

Διόσκοροι

Ἐπίσχες ὀργὰς αἷσιν οὐκ ὀρθῶς φέρῃ,
Θεοκλύμενε, γαίας τῆσδ’ ἄναξ· δισσοὶ δέ σε
Διόσκοροι καλοῦμεν, οὓς Λήδα ποτὲ
ἔτικτεν Ἑλένην θ’, ἣ πέφευγε σοὺς δόμους·
οὐ γὰρ πεπρωμένοισιν ὀργίζῃ γάμοις,
οὐδ’ ἡ θεᾶς Νηρῇδος ἔκγονος κόρη
ἀδικεῖ σ’ ἀδελφὴ Θεονόη, τὰ τῶν θεῶν
τιμῶσα πατρός τ’ ἐνδίκους ἐπιστολάς.
Ἐς μὲν γὰρ αἰεὶ τὸν παρόντα νῦν χρόνον
κείνην κατοικεῖν σοῖσιν ἐν δόμοις ἐχρῆν·
ἐπεὶ δὲ Τροίας ἐξανεστάθη βάθρα,

καὶ τοῖς θεοῖς παρέσχε τοὔνομ’, οὐκέτι·
ἐν τοῖσι δ’ αὐτῆς δεῖ νιν ἐζεῦχθαι γάμοις
ἐλθεῖν τ’ ἐς οἴκους καὶ συνοικῆσαι πόσει.
Ἀλλ’ ἴσχε μὲν σῆς συγγόνου μέλαν ξίφος,
νόμιζε δ’ αὐτὴν σωφρόνως πράσσειν τάδε.
Πάλαι δ’ ἀδελφὴν κἂν πρὶν ἐξεσώσαμεν,
ἐπείπερ ἡμᾶς Ζεὺς ἐποίησεν θεούς·
ἀλλ’ ἥσσον’ ἦμεν τοῦ πεπρωμένου θ’ ἅμα
καὶ τῶν θεῶν, οἷς ταῦτ’ ἔδοξεν ὧδ’ ἔχειν.
Σοὶ μὲν τάδ’ αὐδῶ, συγγόνῳ δ’ ἐμῇ λέγω·
πλεῖ ξὺν πόσει σῷ· πνεῦμα δ’ ἔξετ’ οὔριον·
σωτῆρε δ’ ἡμεῖς σὼ κασιγνήτω διπλῶ
πόντον παριππεύοντε πέμψομεν πάτραν.
Ὅταν δὲ κάμψῃς καὶ τελευτήσῃς βίον,
θεὸς κεκλήσῃ καὶ Διοσκόρων μέτα
σπονδῶν μεθέξεις ξένιά τ’ ἀνθρώπων πάρα
ἕξεις μεθ’ ἡμῶν· Ζεὺς γὰρ ὧδε βούλεται.
Οὗ δ’ ὥρισέν σοι πρῶτα Μαιάδος τόκος,
Σπάρτης ἀπάρας, τὸν κατ’ οὐρανὸν δρόμον,
κλέψας δέμας σὸν μὴ Πάρις γήμειέ σε,
φρουρὸν παρ’ Ἀκτὴν τεταμένην νῆσον λέγω
Ἑλένη τὸ λοιπὸν ἐν βροτοῖς κεκλήσεται,
ἐπεὶ κλοπαίαν σ’ ἐκ δόμων ἐδέξατο.
Καὶ τῷ πλανήτῃ Μενέλεῳ θεῶν πάρα
μακάρων κατοικεῖν νῆσόν ἐστι μόρσιμον·
τοὺς εὐγενεῖς γὰρ οὐ στυγοῦσι δαίμονες,
τῶν δ’ ἀναριθμήτων μᾶλλόν εἰσιν οἱ πόνοι.

Θεοκλύμενος

Ὦ παῖδε Λήδας καὶ Διός, τὰ μὲν πάρος
νείκη μεθήσω σφῶν κασιγνήτης πέρι·
ἐγὼ δ’ ἀδελφὴν οὐκέτ’ ἂν κτάνοιμ’ ἐμήν.
Κείνη δ’ ἴτω πρὸς οἶκον, εἰ θεοῖς δοκεῖ.
Ἵστον δ’ ἀρίστης σωφρονεστάτης θ’ ἅμα
γεγῶτ’ ἀδελφῆς ὁμογενοῦς ἀφ’ αἵματος.

Καὶ χαίρεθ’ Ἑλένης οὕνεκ’ εὐγενεστάτης
γνώμης, ὃ πολλαῖς ἐν γυναιξὶν οὐκ ἔνι.

Χορός

Πολλαὶ μορφαὶ τῶν δαιμονίων,
πολλὰ δ’ ἀέλπτως κραίνουσι θεοί·
[1690] καὶ τὰ δοκηθέντ’ οὐκ ἐτελέσθη,
τῶν δ’ ἀδοκήτων πόρον ηὗρε θεός.
Τοιόνδ’ ἀπέβη τόδε πρᾶγμα.

PHOENICIAN WOMEN

Ἰοκάστη

ὦ τὴν ἐν ἄστροις οὐρανοῦ τέμνων ὁδὸν
καὶ χρυσοκολλήτοισιν ἐμβεβὼς δίφροις
Ἥλιε, θοαῖς ἵπποισιν εἰλίσσων φλόγα,
ὡς δυστυχῆ Θήβαισι τῇ τόθ᾽ ἡμέρᾳ
ἀκτῖν᾽ ἐφῆκας, Κάδμος ἡνίκ᾽ ἦλθε γῆν
τήνδ᾽, ἐκλιπὼν Φοίνισσαν ἐναλίαν χθόνα:
ὃς παῖδα γήμας Κύπριδος Ἁρμονίαν ποτὲ
Πολύδωρον ἐξέφυσε, τοῦ δὲ Λάβδακον
φῦναι λέγουσιν, ἐκ δὲ τοῦδε Λάιον.
ἐγὼ δὲ παῖς μὲν κλῄζομαι Μενοικέως,
— Κρέων τ᾽ ἀδελφὸς μητρὸς ἐκ μιᾶς ἔφυ —
καλοῦσι δ᾽ Ἰοκάστην με: τοῦτο γὰρ πατὴρ
ἔθετο. γαμεῖ δὲ Λάιός μ᾽: ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἄπαις
ἦν χρόνια λέκτρα τἄμ᾽ ἔχων ἐν δώμασιν,
ἐλθὼν ἐρωτᾷ Φοῖβον ἐξαιτεῖ θ᾽ ἅμα
παίδων ἐς οἴκους ἀρσένων κοινωνίαν.
ὃ δ᾽ εἶπεν: ὦ Θήβαισιν εὐίπποις ἄναξ,
μὴ σπεῖρε τέκνων ἄλοκα δαιμόνων βίᾳ:
εἰ γὰρ τεκνώσεις παῖδ᾽, ἀποκτενεῖ σ᾽ ὁ φύς,
καὶ πᾶς σὸς οἶκος βήσεται δι᾽ αἵματος.
ὃ δ᾽ ἡδονῇ δοὺς ἔς τε βακχείαν πεσὼν
ἔσπειρεν ἡμῖν παῖδα: καὶ σπείρας, † βρέφος †
γνοὺς τἀμπλάκημα τοῦ θεοῦ τε τὴν φάτιν,
λειμῶν᾽ ἐς Ἥρας καὶ Κιθαιρῶνος λέπας
δίδωσι βουκόλοισιν ἐκθεῖναι βρέφος,
σφυρῶν σιδηρᾶ κέντρα διαπείρας μέσον:
ὅθεν νιν Ἑλλὰς ὠνόμαζεν Οἰδίπουν.
Πολύβου δέ νιν λαβόντες ἱπποβουκόλοι
φέρουσ᾽ ἐς οἴκους ἔς τε δεσποίνης χέρας
ἔθηκαν. ἡ δὲ τὸν ἐμὸν ὠδίνων πόνον
μαστοῖς ὑφεῖτο καὶ πόσιν πείθει τεκεῖν.
ἤδη δὲ πυρσαῖς γένυσιν ἐξανδρούμενος
παῖς οὐμὸς ἦ γνοὺς ἤ τινος μαθὼν πάρα

ἔστειχε τοὺς φύσαντας ἐκμαθεῖν θέλων
πρὸς δῶμα Φοίβου, Λάιός θ᾽, οὑμὸς πόσις,
τὸν ἐκτεθέντα παῖδα μαστεύων μαθεῖν
εἰ μηκέτ᾽ εἴη. καὶ ξυνάπτετον πόδα
ἐς ταὐτὸν ἄμφω Φωκίδος σχιστῆς ὁδοῦ.
καί νιν κελεύει Λαΐου τροχηλάτης:
ὦ ξένε, τυράννοις ἐκποδὼν μεθίστασο.
ὃ δ᾽ εἶρπ᾽ ἄναυδος, μέγα φρονῶν. πῶλοι δέ νιν
χηλαῖς τένοντας ἐξεφοίνισσον ποδῶν.
ὅθεν — τί τἀκτὸς τῶν κακῶν με δεῖ λέγειν; —
παῖς πατέρα καίνει καὶ λαβὼν ὀχήματα
Πολύβῳ τροφεῖ δίδωσιν. ὡς δ᾽ ἐπεζάρει
Σφὶγξ ἁρπαγαῖσι πόλιν ἐμός τ᾽ οὐκ ἦν πόσις,
Κρέων ἀδελφὸς τἀμὰ κηρύσσει λέχη,
ὅστις σοφῆς αἴνιγμα παρθένου μάθοι,
τούτῳ ξυνάψειν λέκτρα. τυγχάνει δέ πως
μούσας ἐμὸς παῖς Οἰδίπους Σφιγγὸς μαθών:
[ὅθεν τύραννος τῆσδε γῆς καθίσταται]
καὶ σκῆπτρ᾽ ἔπαθλα τῆσδε λαμβάνει χθονός.
γαμεῖ δὲ τὴν τεκοῦσαν οὐκ εἰδὼς τάλας
οὐδ᾽ ἡ τεκοῦσα παιδὶ συγκοιμωμένη.
τίκτω δὲ παῖδας παιδὶ δύο μὲν ἄρσενας,
Ἐτεοκλέα κλεινήν τε Πολυνείκους βίαν,
κόρας τε δισσάς: τὴν μὲν Ἰσμήνην πατὴρ
ὠνόμασε, τὴν δὲ πρόσθεν Ἀντιγόνην ἐγώ.
μαθὼν δὲ τἀμὰ λέκτρα μητρῴων γάμων
ὁ πάντ᾽ ἀνατλὰς Οἰδίπους παθήματα
ἐς ὄμματθ᾽ αὑτοῦ δεινὸν ἐμβάλλει φόνον,
χρυσηλάτοις πόρπαισιν αἱμάξας κόρας.
ἐπεὶ δὲ τέκνων γένυς ἐμῶν σκιάζεται,
κλῄθροις ἔκρυψαν πατέρ᾽, ἵν᾽ ἀμνήμων τύχη
γένοιτο πολλῶν δεομένη σοφισμάτων:
ζῶν δ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐν οἴκοις. πρὸς δὲ τῆς τύχης νοσῶν
ἀρὰς ἀρᾶται παισὶν ἀνοσιωτάτας,
θηκτῷ σιδήρῳ δῶμα διαλαχεῖν τόδε.
τὼ δ᾽ ἐς φόβον πεσόντε, μὴ τελεσφόρους
εὐχὰς θεοὶ κραίνωσιν οἰκούντων ὁμοῦ,

ξυμβάντ᾽ ἔταξαν τὸν νεώτερον πάρος
φεύγειν ἑκόντα τήνδε Πολυνείκη χθόνα,
Ἐτεοκλέα δὲ σκῆπτρ᾽ ἔχειν μένοντα γῆς,
ἐνιαυτὸν ἀλλάσσοντε. ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἐπὶ ζυγοῖς
καθέζετ᾽ ἀρχῆς, οὐ μεθίσταται θρόνων,
φυγάδα δ᾽ ἀπωθεῖ τῆσδε Πολυνείκη χθονός.
ὃ δ᾽ Ἄργος ἐλθών, κῆδος Ἀδράστου λαβών,
πολλὴν ἀθροίσας ἀσπίδ᾽ Ἀργείων ἄγει:
ἐπ᾽ αὐτὰ δ᾽ ἐλθὼν ἑπτάπυλα τείχη τάδε,
πατρῷ᾽ ἀπαιτεῖ σκῆπτρα καὶ μέρη χθονός.
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἔριν λύουσ᾽ ὑπόσπονδον μολεῖν
ἔπεισα παιδὶ παῖδα πρὶν ψαῦσαι δορός.
ἥξειν δ᾽ ὁ πεμφθείς φησιν αὐτὸν ἄγγελος.
ἀλλ᾽, ὦ φαεννὰς οὐρανοῦ ναίων πτυχὰς
Ζεῦ, σῶσον ἡμᾶς, δὸς δὲ σύμβασιν τέκνοις.
χρὴ δ᾽, εἰ σοφὸς πέφυκας, οὐκ ἐᾶν βροτὸν
τὸν αὐτὸν αἰεὶ δυστυχῆ καθεστάναι.

Παιδαγωγός
ὦ κλεινὸν οἴκοις Ἀντιγόνη θάλος πατρί,
ἐπεί σε μήτηρ παρθενῶνας ἐκλιπεῖν
μεθῆκε μελάθρων ἐς διῆρες ἔσχατον
στράτευμ᾽ ἰδεῖν Ἀργεῖον ἱκεσίαισι σαῖς,
ἐπίσχες, ὡς ἂν προυξερευνήσω στίβον,
μή τις πολιτῶν ἐν τρίβῳ φαντάζεται,
κἀμοὶ μὲν ἔλθῃ φαῦλος ὡς δούλῳ ψόγος,
σοὶ δ᾽ ὡς ἀνάσσῃ: πάντα δ᾽ ἐξειδὼς φράσω
ἃ τ᾽ εἶδον εἰσήκουσά τ᾽ Ἀργείων πάρα,
σπονδὰς ὅτ᾽ ἦλθον σῷ κασιγνήτῳ φέρων
ἐνθένδ᾽ ἐκεῖσε, δεῦρό τ᾽ αὖ κείνων πάρα.
ἀλλ᾽ οὔτις ἀστῶν τοῖσδε χρίμπτεται δόμοις,
κέδρου παλαιὰν κλίμακ᾽ ἐκπέρα ποδί:
σκόπει δὲ πεδία καὶ παρ᾽ Ἰσμηνοῦ ῥοὰς
Δίρκης τε νᾶμα πολεμίων στράτευμ᾽ ὅσον.

Ἀντιγόνη
ὄρεγέ νυν ὄρεγε γεραιὰν νέᾳ

χεῖρ᾽ ἀπὸ κλιμάκων
ποδὸς ἴχνος ἐπαντέλλων.

Παιδαγωγός
ἰδοὺ ξύναψον, παρθέν᾽: ἐς καιρὸν δ᾽ ἔβης:
κινούμενον γὰρ τυγχάνει Πελασγικὸν
στράτευμα, χωρίζουσι δ᾽ ἀλλήλων λόχους.

Ἀντιγόνη
ἰὼ πότνια παῖ
Λατοῦς Ἑκάτα, κατάχαλκον ἅπαν
πεδίον ἀστράπτει.

Παιδαγωγός
οὐ γάρ τι φαύλως ἦλθε Πολυνείκης χθόνα,
πολλοῖς μὲν ἵπποις, μυρίοις δ᾽ ὅπλοις βρέμων.

Ἀντιγόνη
ἆρα πύλαι κλῄθροις — χαλκόδετ᾽ ἦρ᾽ ἔμβολα
λαϊνέοισιν Ἀμφίονος ὀργάνοις
τείχεος ἥρμοσται;

Παιδαγωγός
θάρσει: τά γ᾽ ἔνδον ἀσφαλῶς ἔχει πόλις.
ἀλλ᾽ εἰσόρα τὸν πρῶτον, εἰ βούλῃ μαθεῖν.

Ἀντιγόνη
τίς οὗτος ὁ λευκολόφας,
πρόπαρ ὃς ἀγεῖται στρατοῦ πάγχαλκον ἀσπίδ᾽
ἀμφὶ βραχίονι κουφίζων;

Παιδαγωγός
λοχαγός, ὦ δέσποινα.

Ἀντιγόνη
τίς, πόθεν γεγώς;
αὔδασον, ὦ γεραιέ, τίς ὀνομάζεται;

Παιδαγωγός
οὗτος Μυκηναῖος μὲν αὐδᾶται γένος,
Λερναῖα δ᾽ οἰκεῖ νάμαθ᾽, Ἱππομέδων ἄναξ.

Ἀντιγόνη
ἔ ἔ ὡς γαῦρος, ὡς φοβερὸς εἰσιδεῖν,
γίγαντι γηγενέτᾳ προσόμοιος
ἀστερωπὸς ἐν γραφαῖσιν, οὐχὶ πρόσφορος
ἀμερίῳ γέννᾳ.

Παιδαγωγός
τὸν δ᾽ ἐξαμείβοντ᾽ οὐχ ὁρᾷς Δίρκης ὕδωρ;

Ἀντιγόνη
ἄλλος ἄλλος ὅδε τευχέων τρόπος.
τίς δ᾽ ἐστὶν οὗτος;

Παιδαγωγός
παῖς μὲν Οἰνέως ἔφυ
Τυδεύς, Ἄρη δ᾽ Αἰτωλὸν ἐν στέρνοις ἔχει.

Ἀντιγόνη
οὗτος ὁ τᾶς Πολυνείκεος,
ὦ γέρον, αὐτοκασιγνήτᾳ νύμφας
ὁμόγαμος κυρεῖ;
ὡς ἀλλόχρως ὅπλοισι, μειξοβάρβαρος.

Παιδαγωγός
σακεσφόροι γὰρ πάντες Αἰτωλοί, τέκνον,
λόγχαις τ᾽ ἀκοντιστῆρες εὐστοχώτατοι.

[Ἀντιγόνη]
σὺ δ᾽, ὦ γέρον, πῶς αἰσθάνῃ σαφῶς τάδε;

Παιδαγωγός
σημεῖ᾽ ἰδὼν τότ᾽ ἀσπίδων ἐγνώρισα,
σπονδὰς ὅτ᾽ ἦλθον σῷ κασιγνήτῳ φέρων
ἃ προσδεδορκὼς οἶδα τοὺς ὡπλισμένους.]

Ἀντιγόνη
τίς δ᾽ οὗτος ἀμφὶ μνῆμα τὸ Ζήθου περᾷ
καταβόστρυχος, ὄμμασι γοργὸς
εἰσιδεῖν νεανίας,
λοχαγός, ὡς ὄχλος νιν ὑστέρῳ ποδὶ
πάνοπλος ἀμφέπει;

Παιδαγωγός
ὅδ᾽ ἐστὶ Παρθενοπαῖος, Ἀταλάντης γόνος.

Ἀντιγόνη
ἀλλά νιν ἁ κατ᾽ ὄρη μετὰ ματέρος
Ἄρτεμις ἱεμένα τόξοις δαμάσασ᾽ ὀλέσειεν,
ὃς ἐπ᾽ ἐμὰν πόλιν ἔβα πέρσων.

Παιδαγωγός
εἴη τάδ᾽, ὦ παῖ. σὺν δίκῃ δ᾽ ἥκουσι γῆν:
ὃ καὶ δέδοικα μὴ σκοπῶσ᾽ ὀρθῶς θεοί.

Ἀντιγόνη
ποῦ δ᾽ ὃς ἐμοὶ μιᾶς ἐγένετ᾽ ἐκ ματρὸς
πολυπόνῳ μοίρᾳ;
ὦ φίλτατ᾽, εἰπέ, ποῦ ‘στι Πολυνείκης, γέρον.

Παιδαγωγός
ἐκεῖνος ἑπτὰ παρθένων τάφου πέλας
Νιόβης Ἀδράστῳ πλησίον παραστατεῖ.
ὁρᾷς;

Ἀντιγόνη
ὁρῶ δῆτ᾽ οὐ σαφῶς, ὁρῶ δέ πως
μορφῆς τύπωμα στέρνα τ᾽ ἐξῃκασμένα.
ἀνεμώκεος εἴθε δρόμον νεφέλας ποσὶν ἐξανύσαιμι
δι᾽ αἰθέρος
πρὸς ἐμὸν ὁμογενέτορα, περὶ δ᾽ ὠλένας
δέρᾳ φιλτάτᾳ βάλοιμ᾽ <ἐν> χρόνῳ
φυγάδα μέλεον. ὡς

ὅπλοισι χρυσέοισιν ἐκπρεπής, γέρον,
ἑᾠοις ὅμοια φλεγέθων βολαῖς [ἀελίου].

Παιδαγωγός
ἦξει δόμους τούσδ᾽, ὥστε σ᾽ ἐμπλῆσαι χαρᾶς,
ἔνσπονδος.

Ἀντιγόνη
οὗτος δ᾽, ὦ γεραιέ, τίς κυρεῖ,
ὃς ἅρμα λευκὸν ἡνιοστροφεῖ βεβώς;

Παιδαγωγός
ὁ μάντις Ἀμφιάραος, ὦ δέσποιν᾽, ὅδε:
σφάγια δ᾽ ἅμ᾽ αὐτῷ, γῆς φιλαίματοι ῥοαί.

Ἀντιγόνη
ὦ λιπαροζώνου θύγατερ Ἀελίου
Σελαναία, χρυσεόκυκλον φέγγος,
ὡς ἀτρεμαῖα κέντρα καὶ σώφρονα
πώλοις μεταφέρων ἰθύνει.
ποῦ δ᾽ ὃς τὰ δεινὰ τῇδ᾽ ἐφυβρίζει πόλει;

Παιδαγωγός
Καπανεύς; ἐκεῖνος προσβάσεις τεκμαίρεται
πύργων ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω τείχη μετρῶν.

Ἀντιγόνη
ἰώ,
Νέμεσι καὶ Διὸς βαρύβρομοι βρονταί,
κεραυνῶν τε φῶς αἰθαλόεν, σύ τοι
μεγαλαγορίαν ὑπεράνορα κοιμίζεις:
ὅδ᾽ ἐστίν, αἰχμαλώτιδας
ὃς δορὶ Θηβαίας Μυκηνῇσιν
Λερναίᾳ τε δώσειν τριαίνᾳ,
Ποσειδανίοις Ἀμυμωνίοις
ὕδασι δουλείαν περιβαλών —
μήποτε μήποτε τάνδ᾽, ὦ πότνια,

χρυσεοβόστρυχον ὦ Διὸς ἔρνος
Ἄρτεμι, δουλοσύναν τλαίην.

Παιδαγωγός
ὦ τέκνον, ἔσβα δῶμα καὶ κατὰ στέγας
ἐν παρθενῶσι μίμνε σοῖς, ἐπεὶ πόθου
ἐς τέρψιν ἦλθες ὧν ἔχρῃζες εἰσιδεῖν.
ὄχλος γάρ, ὡς ταραγμὸς εἰσῆλθεν πόλιν,
χωρεῖ γυναικῶν πρὸς δόμους τυραννικούς,
φιλόψογον δὲ χρῆμα θηλειῶν ἔφυ,
σμικράς τ᾽ ἀφορμὰς ἢν λάβωσι τῶν λόγων,
πλείους ἐπεσφέρουσιν: ἡδονὴ δέ τις
γυναιξὶ μηδὲν ὑγιὲς ἀλλήλας λέγειν.

Χορός
Τύριον οἶδμα λιποῦσ᾽ ἔβαν
ἀκροθίνια Λοξίᾳ
Φοινίσσας ἀπὸ νάσου
Φοίβῳ δούλα μελάθρων,
ἵν᾽ ὑπὸ δειράσι νιφοβόλοις
Παρνασοῦ κατενάσθη,
Ἰόνιον κατὰ πόντον ἐλά-
τᾳ πλεύσασα περιρρύτῳ
ὑπὲρ ἀκαρπίστων πεδίων
Σικελίας Ζεφύρου πνοαῖς
ἱππεύσαντος, ἐν οὐρανῷ
κάλλιστον κελάδημα.
πόλεος ἐκπροκριθεῖσ᾽ ἐμᾶς
καλλιστεύματα Λοξίᾳ
Καδμείων ἔμολον γᾶν,
κλεινῶν Ἀγηνοριδᾶν
ὁμογενεῖς ἐπὶ Λαΐου
πεμφθεῖσ᾽ ἐνθάδε πύργους.
ἴσα δ᾽ ἀγάλμασι χρυσοτεύ-
κτοις Φοίβῳ λάτρις ἐγενόμαν:
ἔτι δὲ Κασταλίας ὕδωρ
περιμένει με κόμας ἐμᾶς

δεῦσαι παρθένιον χλιδὰν
Φοιβείαισι λατρείαις.
ἰὼ λάμπουσα πέτρα πυρὸς
δικόρυφον σέλας ὑπὲρ ἄκρων
βακχειῶν Διονύσου,
οἵνα θ᾽ ἃ καθαμέριον
στάζεις τὸν πολύκαρπον
οἰνάνθας ἱεῖσα βότρυν,
ζάθεά τ᾽ ἄντρα δράκοντος οὔ-
ρειαί τε σκοπιαὶ θεῶν
νιφόβολόν τ᾽ ὄρος ἱερόν, εἰ-
λίσσων ἀθανάτας θεοῦ
χορὸς γενοίμαν ἄφοβος
παρὰ μεσόμφαλα γύαλα Φοί-
βου Δίρκαν προλιποῦσα.
νῦν δέ μοι πρὸ τειχέων
θούριος μολὼν Ἄρης
αἷμα δάιον φλέγει
τᾷδ᾽, ὃ μὴ τύχοι, πόλει:
κοινὰ γὰρ φίλων ἄχη,
κοινὰ δ᾽, εἴ τι πείσεται
ἑπτάπυργος ἅδε γᾶ,
Φοινίσσᾳ χώρᾳ. φεῦ φεῦ.
κοινὸν αἷμα, κοινὰ τέκεα
τᾶς κερασφόρου πέφυκεν Ἰοῦς:
ὧν μέτεστί μοι πόνων.
ἀμφὶ δὲ πτόλιν νέφος
ἀσπίδων πυκνὸν φλέγει
σχῆμα φοινίου μάχης,
ἂν Ἄρης τάχ᾽ εἴσεται
παισὶν Οἰδίπου φέρων
πημονὰν Ἐρινύων.
Ἄργος ὦ Πελασγικόν,
δειμαίνω τὰν σὰν ἀλκάν,
καὶ τὸ θεόθεν: οὐ γὰρ ἄδικον
εἰς ἀγῶνα τόνδ᾽ ἔνοπλος ὁρμᾷ [παῖς]
ὃς μετέρχεται δόμους.

Πολυνείκης
τὰ μὲν πυλωρῶν κλῇθρά μ᾽ εἰσεδέξατο
δι᾽ εὐπετείας τειχέων ἔσω μολεῖν.
ὃ καὶ δέδοικα μή με δικτύων ἔσω
λαβόντες οὐκ ἐκφρῶσ᾽ ἀναίμακτον χρόα.
ὧν οὕνεκ᾽ ὄμμα πανταχῇ διοιστέον
κἀκεῖσε καὶ τὸ δεῦρο, μὴ δόλος τις ᾖ.
ὡπλισμένος δὲ χεῖρα τῷδε φασγάνῳ
τὰ πίστ᾽ ἐμαυτῷ τοῦ θράσους παρέξομαι.
ὠή, τίς οὗτος; ἢ κτύπον φοβούμεθα;
ἅπαντα γὰρ τολμῶσι δεινὰ φαίνεται,
ὅταν δι᾽ ἐχθρᾶς ποὺς ἀμείβηται χθονός.
πέποιθα μέντοι μητρί, κοὐ πέποιθ᾽ ἅμα,
ἥτις μ᾽ ἔπεισε δεῦρ᾽ ὑπόσπονδον μολεῖν.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐγγὺς ἀλκή: βώμιοι γὰρ ἐσχάραι
πέλας πάρεισι, κοὐκ ἔρημα δώματα.
φέρ᾽ ἐς σκοτεινὰς περιβολὰς μεθῶ ξίφος
καὶ τάσδ᾽ ἔρωμαι, τίνες ἐφεστᾶσιν δόμοις.
ξέναι γυναῖκες, εἶπατ᾽, ἐκ ποίας πάτρας
Ἑλληνικοῖσι δώμασιν πελάζετε;

Χορός
Φοίνισσα μὲν γῆ πατρὶς ἡ θρέψασά με,
Ἀγήνορος δὲ παῖδες ἐκ παίδων δορὸς
Φοίβῳ μ᾽ ἔπεμψαν ἐνθάδ᾽ ἀκροθίνιον.
μέλλων δὲ πέμπειν μ᾽ Οἰδίπου κλεινὸς γόνος
μαντεῖα σεμνὰ Λοξίου τ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἐσχάρας —
ἐν τῷδ᾽ ἐπεστράτευσαν Ἀργεῖοι πόλιν.
σὺ δ᾽ ἀντάμειψαί μ᾽, ὅστις ὢν ἐλήλυθας
ἑπτάστομον πύργωμα Θηβαίας χθονός.

Πολυνείκης
πατὴρ μὲν ἡμῖν Οἰδίπους ὁ Λαΐου,
ἔτικτε δ᾽ Ἰοκάστη με, παῖς Μενοικέως:
καλεῖ δὲ Πολυνείκη με Θηβαῖος λεώς.

Χορός
ὦ συγγένεια τῶν Ἀγήνορος τέκνων,
ἐμῶν τυράννων, ὧν ἀπεστάλην ὕπο —

Χορός
γονυπετεῖς ἕδρας προσπίτνω σ᾽, ἄναξ,
τὸν οἴκοθεν νόμον σέβουσ᾽ —
ἔβας ὦ χρόνῳ γᾶν πατρῴαν.
ἰὼ ἰώ: πότνια, μόλε πρόδομος,
ἀμπέτασον πύλας.
κλύεις, ὦ τεκοῦσα τόνδε μᾶτερ;
τί μέλλεις ὑπώροφα μέλαθρα περᾶν
θιγεῖν τ᾽ ὠλέναισιν τέκνου;

Ἰοκάστη
Φοίνισσαν βοὰν
κλύουσ᾽, ὦ νεάνιδες, γηραιὸν
πόδ᾽ ἕλκω, τρομερὰν βάσιν: ἰὼ τέκνον,
χρόνῳ σὸν ὄμμα μυρίαις τ᾽ ἐν ἁμέραις
προσεῖδον: ἀμφίβαλλε μα-
στὸν ὠλέναισι ματέρος,
παρηίδων τ᾽ ὄρεγμα βο-
στρύχων τε κυανόχρωτα χαί-
τας πλόκαμον, δέραν σκιάζων ἁμάν.
ἰὼ ἰώ, μόλις φανεὶς
ἄελπτα κἀδόκητα ματρὸς ὠλέναις.
τί φῶ σε; πῶς ἅπαντα
καὶ χερσὶ καὶ λόγοισι
πολυέλικτον ἀδονὰν
[ἐκεῖσε καὶ τὸ δεῦρο]
περιχορεύουσα τέρψιν παλαιᾶν λάβω
χαρμονᾶν; ἰὼ τέκος,
ἔρημον πατρῷον ἔλιπες δόμον
φυγὰς ἀποσταλεὶς ὁμαίμου λώβᾳ,
ἦ ποθεινὸς φίλοις,
ἦ ποθεινὸς Θήβαις.
ὅθεν ἐμάν τε λευκόχροα κείρομαι

δακρυόεσσ᾽ ἀνεῖσα πένθει κόμαν,
ἄπεπλος φαρέων λευκῶν, <ὦ> τέκνον,
δυσόρφναια δ᾽ ἀμφὶ τρύχη τάδε
σκότι᾽ ἀμείβομαι.

ὁ δ᾽ ἐν δόμοισι πρέσβυς ὀμματοστερὴς
ἀπήνας ὁμοπτέρου τᾶς ἀπο-
ζυγείσας δόμων
πόθον ἀμφιδάκρυτον ἀεὶ κατ-
έχων ἀνῆξε μὲν ξίφους
ἐπ᾽ αὐτόχειρά τε σφαγάν,
ὑπὲρ τέραμνά τ᾽ ἀγχόνας,
στενάζων ἀρὰς τέκνοις:
σὺν ἀλαλαῖσι δ᾽ αἰὲν αἰαγμάτων
σκότια κρύπτεται.
σὲ δ᾽, ὦ τέκνον, [καὶ] γάμοισι δὴ
κλύω ζυγέντα παιδοποιὸν ἀδονὰν
ξένοισιν ἐν δόμοις ἔχειν
ξένον τε κῆδος ἀμφέπειν,
ἄλαστα ματρὶ τᾷδε Λα-
ίῳ τε τῷ παλαιγενεῖ,
γάμων ἐπακτὸν ἄταν.
ἐγὼ δ᾽ οὔτε σοι πυρὸς ἀνῆψα φῶς
νόμιμον ἐν γάμοις
]ὡς πρέπει[ματέρι μακαρίᾳ:
ἀνυμέναια δ᾽ Ἰσμηνὸς ἐκηδεύθη
λουτροφόρου χλιδᾶς, ἀνὰ δὲ Θηβαίαν
πόλιν ἐσιγάθη σᾶς ἔσοδοι νύμφας.
ὄλοιτο, τάδ᾽ εἴτε σίδαρος
εἴτ᾽ ἔρις εἴτε πατὴρ ὁ σὸς αἴτιος,
εἴτε τὸ δαιμόνιον κατεκώμασε
δώμασιν Οἰδιπόδα:
πρὸς ἐμὲ γὰρ κακῶν ἔμολε τῶνδ᾽ ἄχη.

Χορός
δεινὸν γυναιξὶν αἱ δι᾽ ὠδίνων γοναί,
καὶ φιλότεκνόν πως πᾶν γυναικεῖον γένος.

Πολυνείκης
μῆτερ, φρονῶν εὖ κοὐ φρονῶν ἀφικόμην
ἐχθροὺς ἐς ἄνδρας: ἀλλ᾽ ἀναγκαίως ἔχει
πατρίδος ἐρᾶν ἅπαντας: ὃς δ᾽ ἄλλως λέγει,
λόγοισι χαίρει τὸν δὲ νοῦν ἐκεῖσ᾽ ἔχει.
οὕτω δ᾽ ἐτάρβουν ἐς φόβον τ᾽ ἀφικόμην,
μή τις δόλος με πρὸς κασιγνήτου κτάνῃ,
ὥστε ξιφήρη χεῖρ᾽ ἔχων δι᾽ ἄστεως
κυκλῶν πρόσωπον ἦλθον. ἓν δέ μ᾽ ὠφελεῖ,
σπονδαί τε καὶ σὴ πίστις, ἥ μ᾽ ἐσήγαγε
τείχη πατρῷα: πολύδακρυς δ᾽ ἀφικόμην,
χρόνιος ἰδὼν μέλαθρα καὶ βωμοὺς θεῶν
γυμνάσιά θ᾽ οἷσιν ἐνετράφην Δίρκης θ᾽ ὕδωρ:
ὧν οὐ δικαίως ἀπελαθεὶς ξένην πόλιν
ναίω, δι᾽ ὄσσων νᾶμ᾽ ἔχων δακρύρροον.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ γὰρ ἄλγους ἄλγος αὖ σὲ δέρκομαι
[κάρα ξυρῆκες καὶ πέπλους μελαγχίμους]
ἔχουσαν, οἴμοι τῶν ἐμῶν ἐγὼ κακῶν.
ὡς δεινὸν ἔχθρα, μῆτερ, οἰκείων φίλων
[καὶ δυσλύτους ἔχουσα τὰς διαλλαγάς].

τί γὰρ πατήρ μοι πρέσβυς ἐν δόμοισι δρᾷ,
σκότον δεδορκώς; τί δὲ κασίγνηται δύο;
ἦ που στένουσι τλήμονες φυγὰς ἐμάς;

Ἰοκάστη
κακῶς θεῶν τις Οἰδίπου φθείρει γένος:
οὕτω γὰρ ἤρξατ᾽, ἄνομα μὲν τεκεῖν ἐμέ,
κακῶς δὲ γῆμαι πατέρα σὸν φῦναί τε σέ.
ἀτὰρ τί ταῦτα; δεῖ φέρειν τὰ τῶν θεῶν.
ὅπως δ᾽ ἔρωμαι, μή τι σὴν δάκω φρένα,
δέδοιχ᾽, ἃ χρῄζω: διὰ πόθου δ᾽ ἐλήλυθα.

Πολυνείκης
ἀλλ᾽ ἐξερώτα, μηδὲν ἐνδεὲς λίπῃς:
ἃ γὰρ σὺ βούλῃ, ταῦτ᾽ ἐμοί, μῆτερ, φίλα.

Ἰοκάστη
καὶ δή σ᾽ ἐρωτῶ πρῶτον ὧν χρῄζω τυχεῖν,
τί τὸ στέρεσθαι πατρίδος; ἦ κακὸν μέγα;

Πολυνείκης
μέγιστον: ἔργῳ δ᾽ ἐστὶ μεῖζον ἢ λόγῳ.

Ἰοκάστη
τίς ὁ τρόπος αὐτοῦ; τί φυγάσιν τὸ δυσχερές;

Πολυνείκης
ἓν μὲν μέγιστον, οὐκ ἔχει παρρησίαν.

Ἰοκάστη
δούλου τόδ᾽ εἶπας, μὴ λέγειν ἅ τις φρονεῖ.

Πολυνείκης
τὰς τῶν κρατούντων ἀμαθίας φέρειν χρεών.

Ἰοκάστη
καὶ τοῦτο λυπρόν, συνασοφεῖν τοῖς μὴ σοφοῖς.

Πολυνείκης
ἀλλ᾽ ἐς τὸ κέρδος παρὰ φύσιν δουλευτέον.

Ἰοκάστη
αἱ δ᾽ ἐλπίδες βόσκουσι φυγάδας, ὡς λόγος.

Πολυνείκης
καλοῖς βλέπουσαί γ᾽ ὄμμασιν, μέλλουσι δέ.

Ἰοκάστη
οὐδ᾽ ὁ χρόνος αὐτὰς διεσάφησ᾽ οὔσας κενάς;

Πολυνείκης
ἔχουσιν Ἀφροδίτην τιν᾽ ἡδεῖαν κακῶν.

Ἰοκάστη
πόθεν δ᾽ ἐβόσκου, πρὶν γάμοις εὑρεῖν βίον;

Πολυνείκης
ποτὲ μὲν ἐπ᾽ ἦμαρ εἶχον, εἶτ᾽ οὐκ εἶχον ἄν.

Ἰοκάστη
φίλοι δὲ πατρὸς καὶ ξένοι σ᾽ οὐκ ὠφέλουν;

Πολυνείκης
εὖ πρᾶσσε: τὰ φίλων δ᾽ οὐδέν, ἤν τι δυστυχῇς.

Ἰοκάστη
οὐδ᾽ ηὐγένειά σ᾽ ἦρεν εἰς ὕψος μέγαν;

Πολυνείκης
405 κακὸν τὸ μὴ ἔχειν: τὸ γένος οὐκ ἔβοσκέ με.

Ἰοκάστη
ἡ πατρίς, ὡς ἔοικε, φίλτατον βροτοῖς.

Πολυνείκης
οὐδ᾽ ὀνομάσαι δύναι᾽ ἂν ὡς ἐστὶν φίλον.

Ἰοκάστη
πῶς δ᾽ ἦλθες Ἄργος; τίν᾽ ἐπίνοιαν ἔσχεθες;

Πολυνείκης
ἔχρησ᾽ Ἀδράστῳ Λοξίας χρησμόν τινα.

Ἰοκάστη
410 ποῖον; τί τοῦτ᾽ ἔλεξας; οὐκ ἔχω μαθεῖν.

Πολυνείκης
κάπρῳ λέοντί θ᾽ ἁρμόσαι παίδων γάμους.

Ἰοκάστη
καὶ σοὶ τί θηρῶν ὀνόματος μετῆν, τέκνον;

Πολυνείκης
οὐκ οἶδ᾽: ὁ δαίμων μ᾽ ἐκάλεσεν πρὸς τὴν τύχην.

Ἰοκάστη
σοφὸς γὰρ ὁ θεός: τίνι τρόπῳ δ᾽ ἔσχες λέχος;

Πολυνείκης
νὺξ ἦν, Ἀδράστου δ᾽ ἦλθον ἐς παραστάδας.

Ἰοκάστη
κοίτας ματεύων, ἦ φυγὰς πλανώμενος;

Πολυνείκης
ἦν ταῦτα: κᾆτά γ᾽ ἦλθεν ἄλλος αὖ φυγάς.

Ἰοκάστη
τίς οὗτος; ὡς ἄρ᾽ ἄθλιος κἀκεῖνος ἦν.

Πολυνείκης
Τυδεύς, ὃν Οἰνέως φασὶν ἐκφῦναι πατρός.

Ἰοκάστη
τί θηρσὶν ὑμᾶς δῆτ᾽ Ἄδραστος ᾔκασεν;

Πολυνείκης
στρωμνῆς ἐς ἀλκὴν οὕνεκ᾽ ἤλθομεν πέρι.

Ἰοκάστη
ἐνταῦθα Ταλαοῦ παῖς συνῆκε θέσφατα;

Πολυνείκης
κἄδωκέ γ᾽ ἡμῖν δύο δυοῖν νεάνιδας.

Ἰοκάστη
ἆρ᾽ εὐτυχεῖς οὖν τοῖς γάμοις ἢ δυστυχεῖς;

Πολυνείκης
οὐ μεμπτὸς ἡμῖν ὁ γάμος ἐς τόδ᾽ ἡμέρας.

Ἰοκάστη
πῶς δ᾽ ἐξέπεισας δεῦρό σοι σπέσθαι στρατόν;

Πολυνείκης
δισσοῖς Ἄδραστος ὤμοσεν γαμβροῖς τόδε,
[Τυδεῖ τε κἀμοί: σύγγαμος γάρ ἐστ᾽ ἐμός:]
ἄμφω κατάξειν ἐς πάτραν, πρόσθεν δ᾽ ἐμέ.
πολλοὶ δὲ Δαναῶν καὶ Μυκηναίων ἄκροι
πάρεισι, λυπρὰν χάριν, ἀναγκαίαν δ᾽, ἐμοὶ
διδόντες: ἐπὶ γὰρ τὴν ἐμὴν στρατεύομαι
πόλιν. θεοὺς δ᾽ ἐπώμοσ᾽ ὡς ἀκουσίως
τοῖς φιλτάτοις ἑκοῦσιν ἠράμην δόρυ.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐς σὲ τείνει τῶνδε διάλυσις κακῶν,
μῆτερ, διαλλάξασαν ὁμογενεῖς φίλους
παῦσαι πόνων με καὶ σὲ καὶ πᾶσαν πόλιν.
πάλαι μὲν οὖν ὑμνηθέν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως ἐρῶ:
τὰ χρήματ᾽ ἀνθρώποισι τιμιώτατα,
δύναμίν τε πλείστην τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἔχει.
ἀγὼ μεθήκω δεῦρο μυρίαν ἄγων
λόγχην: πένης γὰρ οὐδὲν εὐγενὴς ἀνήρ.

Χορός
καὶ μὴν Ἐτεοκλῆς ἐς διαλλαγὰς ὅδε
χωρεῖ: σὸν ἔργον, μῆτερ Ἰοκάστη, λέγειν
τοιούσδε μύθους οἷς διαλλάξεις τέκνα.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
μῆτερ, πάρειμι: τὴν χάριν δὲ σοὶ διδοὺς
ἦλθον. τί χρὴ δρᾶν; ἀρχέτω δέ τις λόγου:
ὡς ἀμφὶ τείχη καὶ ξυνωρίδας λόχων
τάσσων ἐπέσχον πόλιν, ὅπως κλύοιμί σου
κοινὰς βραβείας, αἷς ὑπόσπονδον μολεῖν
τόνδ᾽ εἰσεδέξω τειχέων πείσασά με.

Ἰοκάστη
ἐπίσχες: οὗτοι τὸ ταχὺ τὴν δίκην ἔχει,
βραδεῖς δὲ μῦθοι πλεῖστον ἀνύουσιν σοφόν.
σχάσον δὲ δεινὸν ὄμμα καὶ θυμοῦ πνοάς:
οὐ γὰρ τὸ λαιμότμητον εἰσορᾷς κάρα
Γοργόνος, ἀδελφὸν δ᾽ εἰσορᾷς ἥκοντα σόν.

σύ τ᾽ αὖ πρόσωπον πρὸς κασίγνητον στρέφε,
Πολύνεικες: ἐς γὰρ ταὐτὸν ὄμμασιν βλέπων
λέξεις τ᾽ ἄμεινον τοῦδέ τ᾽ ἐνδέξῃ λόγους.
παραινέσαι δὲ σφῷν τι βούλομαι σοφόν:
ὅταν φίλος τις ἀνδρὶ θυμωθεὶς φίλῳ
ἐς ἓν συνελθὼν ὄμματ᾽ ὄμμασιν διδῷ,
ἐφ᾽ οἷσιν ἥκει, ταῦτα χρὴ μόνον σκοπεῖν,
κακῶν δὲ τῶν πρὶν μηδενὸς μνείαν ἔχειν.
λόγος μὲν οὖν σὸς πρόσθε, Πολύνεικες τέκνον:
σὺ γὰρ στράτευμα Δαναϊδῶν ἥκεις ἄγων,
ἄδικα πεπονθώς, ὡς σὺ φῄς: κριτὴς δέ τις
θεῶν γένοιτο καὶ διαλλακτὴς κακῶν.

Πολυνείκης
ἁπλοῦς ὁ μῦθος τῆς ἀληθείας ἔφυ,
κοὐ ποικίλων δεῖ τἄνδιχ᾽ ἑρμηνευμάτων:
ἔχει γὰρ αὐτὰ καιρόν: ὁ δ᾽ ἄδικος λόγος
νοσῶν ἐν αὑτῷ φαρμάκων δεῖται σοφῶν.
ἐγὼ δὲ πατρὸς δωμάτων προυσκεψάμην
τοὐμόν τε καὶ τοῦδ᾽, ἐκφυγεῖν χρῄζων ἀρὰς
ἃς Οἰδίπους ἐφθέγξατ᾽ εἰς ἡμᾶς ποτε,
ἐξῆλθον ἔξω τῆσδ᾽ ἑκὼν αὐτὸς χθονός,
δοὺς τῷδ᾽ ἀνάσσειν πατρίδος ἐνιαυτοῦ κύκλον,
ὥστ᾽ αὐτὸς ἄρχειν αὖθις ἀνὰ μέρος λαβὼν
καὶ μὴ δι᾽ ἔχθρας τῷδε καὶ φθόνου μολὼν
κακόν τι δρᾶσαι καὶ παθεῖν, ἃ γίγνεται.
ὃ δ᾽ αἰνέσας ταῦθ᾽ ὁρκίους τε δοὺς θεούς,
ἔδρασεν οὐδὲν ὧν ὑπέσχετ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἔχει
τυραννίδ᾽ αὐτὸς καὶ δόμων ἐμῶν μέρος.

καὶ νῦν ἕτοιμός εἰμι τἀμαυτοῦ λαβὼν
στρατὸν μὲν ἔξω τῆσδ᾽ ἀποστεῖλαι χθονός,
οἰκεῖν δὲ τὸν ἐμὸν οἶκον ἀνὰ μέρος λαβὼν
καὶ τῷδ᾽ ἀφεῖναι τὸν ἴσον αὖθις <αὖ> χρόνον,
καὶ μήτε πορθεῖν πατρίδα μήτε προσφέρειν
πύργοισι πηκτῶν κλιμάκων προσαμβάσεις,
ἃ μὴ κυρήσας τῆς δίκης πειράσομαι

δρᾶν. μάρτυρας δὲ τῶνδε δαίμονας καλῶ,
ὡς πάντα πράσσων σὺν δίκῃ, δίκης ἄτερ
ἀποστεροῦμαι πατρίδος ἀνοσιώτατα.
ταῦτ᾽ αὖθ᾽ ἕκαστα, μῆτερ, οὐχὶ περιπλοκὰς
λόγων ἀθροίσας εἶπον, ἀλλὰ καὶ σοφοῖς
καὶ τοῖσι φαύλοις ἔνδιχ᾽, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ.

Χορός
ἐμοὶ μέν, εἰ καὶ μὴ καθ᾽ Ἑλλήνων χθόνα
τεθράμμεθ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ οὖν ξυνετά μοι δοκεῖς λέγειν.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
εἰ πᾶσι ταὐτὸν καλὸν ἔφυ σοφόν θ᾽ ἅμα,
οὐκ ἦν ἂν ἀμφίλεκτος ἀνθρώποις ἔρις:
νῦν δ᾽ οὔθ᾽ ὅμοιον οὐδὲν οὔτ᾽ ἴσον βροτοῖς,
πλὴν ὀνόμασαι: τὸ δ᾽ ἔργον οὐκ ἔστιν τόδε.
ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐδέν, μῆτερ, ἀποκρύψας ἐρῶ:
ἄστρων ἂν ἔλθοιμ᾽ ἡλίου πρὸς ἀντολὰς
καὶ γῆς ἔνερθεν, δυνατὸς ὢν δρᾶσαι τάδε,
τὴν θεῶν μεγίστην ὥστ᾽ ἔχειν Τυραννίδα.
τοῦτ᾽ οὖν τὸ χρηστόν, μῆτερ, οὐχὶ βούλομαι
ἄλλῳ παρεῖναι μᾶλλον ἢ σῴζειν ἐμοί:
ἀνανδρία γάρ, τὸ πλέον ὅστις ἀπολέσας
τοὔλασσον ἔλαβε. πρὸς δὲ τοῖσδ᾽ αἰσχύνομαι,
ἐλθόντα σὺν ὅπλοις τόνδε καὶ πορθοῦντα γῆν
τυχεῖν ἃ χρῄζει: ταῖς γὰρ ἂν Θήβαις τόδε
γένοιτ᾽ ὄνειδος, εἰ Μυκηναίου δορὸς
φόβῳ παρείην σκῆπτρα τἀμὰ τῷδ᾽ ἔχειν.
χρῆν δ᾽ αὐτὸν οὐχ ὅπλοισι τὰς διαλλαγάς,
μῆτερ, ποιεῖσθαι: πᾶν γὰρ ἐξαιρεῖ λόγος
ὃ καὶ σίδηρος πολεμίων δράσειεν ἄν.
ἀλλ᾽, εἰ μὲν ἄλλως τήνδε γῆν οἰκεῖν θέλει,
ἔξεστ᾽: ἐκεῖνο δ᾽ οὐχ ἑκὼν μεθήσομαι.
ἄρχειν παρόν μοι, τῷδε δουλεύσω ποτέ;
πρὸς ταῦτ᾽ ἴτω μὲν πῦρ, ἴτω δὲ φάσγανα,
ζεύγνυσθε δ᾽ ἵππους, πεδία πίμπλαθ᾽ ἁρμάτων,
ὡς οὐ παρήσω τῷδ᾽ ἐμὴν τυραννίδα.

εἴπερ γὰρ ἀδικεῖν χρή, τυραννίδος πέρι
κάλλιστον ἀδικεῖν, τἄλλα δ᾽ εὐσεβεῖν χρεών.

Χορός
οὐκ εὖ λέγειν χρὴ μὴ ‘πὶ τοῖς ἔργοις καλοῖς:
οὐ γὰρ καλὸν τοῦτ᾽, ἀλλὰ τῇ δίκῃ πικρόν.

Ἰοκάστη

Ἰοκάστη
ὦ τέκνον, οὐχ ἅπαντα τῷ γήρᾳ κακά,
Ἐτεόκλεες, πρόσεστιν: ἀλλ᾽ ἡμπειρία
ἔχει τι λέξαι τῶν νέων σοφώτερον.
τί τῆς κακίστης δαιμόνων ἐφίεσαι
Φιλοτιμίας, παῖ; μὴ σύ γ᾽: ἄδικος ἡ θεός:
πολλοὺς δ᾽ ἐς οἴκους καὶ πόλεις εὐδαίμονας
ἐσῆλθε κἀξῆλθ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ὀλέθρῳ τῶν χρωμένων:
ἐφ᾽ ᾗ σὺ μαίνῃ. κεῖνο κάλλιον, τέκνον,
Ἰσότητα τιμᾶν, ἢ φίλους ἀεὶ φίλοις
πόλεις τε πόλεσι συμμάχους τε συμμάχοις
συνδεῖ: τὸ γὰρ ἴσον μόνιμον ἀνθρώποις ἔφυ,
τῷ πλέονι δ᾽ αἰεὶ πολέμιον καθίσταται
τοὔλασσον ἐχθρᾶς θ᾽ ἡμέρας κατάρχεται.
καὶ γὰρ μέτρ᾽ ἀνθρώποισι καὶ μέρη σταθμῶν
Ἰσότης ἔταξε κἀριθμὸν διώρισε,
νυκτός τ᾽ ἀφεγγὲς βλέφαρον ἡλίου τε φῶς
ἴσον βαδίζει τὸν ἐνιαύσιον κύκλον,
κοὐδέτερον αὐτῶν φθόνον ἔχει νικώμενον.
εἶθ᾽ ἥλιος μὲν νύξ τε δουλεύει βροτοῖς
σὺ δ᾽ οὐκ ἀνέξῃ δωμάτων ἔχων ἴσον
καὶ τῷδε νεῖμαι; κᾆτα ποῦ ‘στιν ἡ δίκη;

τί τὴν τυραννίδ᾽, ἀδικίαν εὐδαίμονα,
τιμᾷς ὑπέρφευ καὶ μέγ᾽ ἤγησαι τόδε;
περιβλέπεσθαι τίμιον; κενὸν μὲν οὖν.
ἢ πολλὰ μοχθεῖν πόλλ᾽ ἔχων ἐν δώμασι
βούλῃ; τί δ᾽ ἔστι τὸ πλέον; ὄνομ᾽ ἔχει μόνον:
ἐπεὶ τά γ᾽ ἀρκοῦνθ᾽ ἱκανὰ τοῖς γε σώφροσιν.

οὗτοι τὰ χρήματ᾽ ἴδια κέκτηνται βροτοί,
τὰ τῶν θεῶν δ᾽ ἔχοντες ἐπιμελούμεθα:
ὅταν δὲ χρῄζωσ᾽, αὖτ᾽ ἀφαιροῦνται πάλιν.
[ὁ δ᾽ ὄλβος οὐ βέβαιος, ἀλλ᾽ ἐφήμερος.]

ἄγ᾽, ἤν σ᾽ ἔρωμαι δύο λόγω προθεῖσ᾽ ἅμα,
πότερα τυραννεῖν ἢ πόλιν σῷσαι θέλεις,
ἐρεῖς τυραννεῖν; ἢν δὲ νικήσῃ σ᾽ ὅδε;
[Ἀργεῖά τ᾽ ἔγχη δόρυ τὸ Καδμείων ἕλῃ,]
ὄψῃ δαμασθὲν ἄστυ Θηβαῖον τόδε,
ὄψῃ δὲ πολλὰς αἰχμαλωτίδας κόρας
βίᾳ πρὸς ἀνδρῶν πολεμίων πορθουμένας.
ὀδυνηρὸς ἆρ᾽ ὁ πλοῦτος, ὃν ζητεῖς ἔχειν,
γενήσεται Θήβαισι, φιλότιμος δὲ σύ.

σοὶ μὲν τάδ᾽ αὐδῶ. σοὶ δέ, Πολύνεικες, λέγω:
ἀμαθεῖς Ἄδραστος χάριτας ἔς σ᾽ ἀνήψατο,
ἀσύνετα δ᾽ ἦλθες καὶ σὺ πορθήσων πόλιν.
φέρ᾽, ἢν ἕλῃς γῆν τήνδ᾽ — ὃ μὴ τύχοι ποτέ —
πρὸς θεῶν, τρόπαια πῶς ἀναστήσεις Διί;
πῶς δ᾽ αὖ κατάρξῃ θυμάτων, ἑλὼν πάτραν,
καὶ σκῦλα γράψεις πῶς ἐπ᾽ Ἰνάχου ῥοαῖς;
‘Θήβας πυρώσας τάσδε Πολυνείκης θεοῖς
ἀσπίδας ἔθηκε;’ μήποτ᾽, ὦ τέκνον, κλέος
τοιόνδε σοι γένοιθ᾽ ὑφ᾽ Ἑλλήνων λαβεῖν.
ἢν δ᾽ αὖ κρατηθῇς καὶ τὰ τοῦδ᾽ ὑπερδράμῃ,
πῶς Ἄργος ἥξεις μυρίους λιπὼν νεκρούς;
ἐρεῖ δὲ δή τις: ὦ κακὰ μνηστεύματα
Ἄδραστε προσθείς, διὰ μιᾶς νύμφης γάμον
ἀπωλόμεσθα. δύο κακὼ σπεύδεις, τέκνον,
κείνων στέρεσθαι τῶνδέ τ᾽ ἐν μέσῳ πεσεῖν.

μέθετον τὸ λίαν, μέθετον: ἀμαθία δυοῖν,
ἐς ταὔθ᾽ ὅταν μόλητον, ἔχθιστον κακόν.

Χορός
ὦ θεοί, γένοισθε τῶνδ᾽ ἀπότροποι κακῶν
καὶ ξύμβασίν τιν᾽ Οἰδίπου τέκνοις δότε.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
μῆτερ, οὐ λόγων ἔθ᾽ ἁγών, ἀλλ᾽ ἀναλοῦται χρόνος
οὐν μέσῳ μάτην, περαίνει δ᾽ οὐδὲν ἡ προθυμία:
οὐ γὰρ ἂν ξυμβαῖμεν ἄλλως ἢ ‘πὶ τοῖς εἰρημένοις,
ὥστ᾽ ἐμὲ σκήπτρων κρατοῦντα τῆσδ᾽ ἄνακτ᾽ εἶναι χθονός:
τῶν μακρῶν δ᾽ ἀπαλλαγεῖσα νουθετημάτων μ᾽ ἔα.
καὶ σὺ τῶνδ᾽ ἔξω κομίζου τειχέων, ἢ κατθανῇ.

Πολυνείκης
πρὸς τίνος; τίς ὧδ᾽ ἄτρωτος, ὅστις εἰς ἡμᾶς ξίφος
φόνιον ἐμβαλὼν τὸν αὐτὸν οὐκ ἀποίσεται μόρον;

Ἐτεοκλῆς
ἐγγύς, οὐ πρόσω βέβηκεν: ἐς χέρας λεύσσεις ἐμάς;

Πολυνείκης
εἰσορῶ: δειλὸν δ᾽ ὁ πλοῦτος καὶ φιλόψυχον κακόν.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
κᾆτα σὺν πολλοῖσιν ἦλθες πρὸς τὸν οὐδὲν ἐς μάχην;

Πολυνείκης
ἀσφαλὴς γάρ ἐστ᾽ ἀμείνων ἢ θρασὺς στρατηλάτης.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
κομπὸς εἶ σπονδαῖς πεποιθώς, αἵ σε σῴζουσιν θανεῖν.

Πολυνείκης
καὶ σέ: δεύτερον δ᾽ ἀπαιτῶ σκῆπτρα καὶ μέρη χθονός.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
οὐκ ἀπαιτούμεσθ᾽: ἐγὼ γὰρ τὸν ἐμὸν οἰκήσω δόμον.

Πολυνείκης
τοῦ μέρους ἔχων τὸ πλεῖον;

Ἐτεοκλῆς
φήμ᾽: ἀπαλλάσσου δὲ γῆς.

Πολυνείκης
ὦ θεῶν βωμοὶ πατρῴων —

Ἐτεοκλῆς
οὓς σὺ πορθήσων πάρει.

Πολυνείκης
κλύετέ μου —

Ἐτεοκλῆς
τίς δ᾽ ἂν κλύοι σου πατρίδ᾽ ἐπεστρατευμένου;

Πολυνείκης
καὶ θεῶν τῶν λευκοπώλων δώματα —

Ἐτεοκλῆς
οἳ στυγοῦσί σε.

Πολυνείκης
ἐξελαυνόμεσθα πατρίδος —

Ἐτεοκλῆς
καὶ γὰρ ἦλθες ἐξελῶν.

Πολυνείκης
ἀδικίᾳ γ᾽, ὦ θεοί.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
Μυκήναις, μὴ ‘νθάδ᾽ ἀνακάλει θεούς.

Πολυνείκης
ἀνόσιος πέφυκας —

Ἐτεοκλῆς
ἀλλ᾽ οὐ πατρίδος, ὡς σύ, πολέμιος.

Πολυνείκης
ὅς μ᾽ ἄμοιρον ἐξελαύνεις.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
καὶ κατακτενῶ γε πρός.

Πολυνείκης
ὦ πάτερ, κλύεις ἃ πάσχω;

Ἐτεοκλῆς
καὶ γὰρ οἷα δρᾷς κλύει.

Πολυνείκης
καὶ σύ, μῆτερ;

Ἐτεοκλῆς
ἀθέμιτόν σοι μητρὸς ὀνομάζειν κάρα.

Πολυνείκης
ὦ πόλις.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
μολὼν ἐς Ἄργος ἀνακάλει Λέρνης ὕδωρ.

Πολυνείκης
εἶμι, μὴ πόνει: σὲ δ᾽ αἰνῶ, μῆτερ.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
ἔξιθι χθονός.

Πολυνείκης
ἔξιμεν: πατέρα δέ μοι δὸς εἰσιδεῖν.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
οὐκ ἂν τύχοις.

Πολυνείκης
ἀλλὰ παρθένους ἀδελφάς.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
οὐδὲ τάσδ᾽ ὄψῃ ποτέ.

Πολυνείκης
ὦ κασίγνηταi.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
τί ταύτας ἀνακαλεῖς ἔχθιστος ὤν;

Πολυνείκης
μῆτερ, ἀλλά μοι σὺ χαῖρε.

Ἰοκάστη
χαρτὰ γοῦν πάσχω, τέκνον.

Πολυνείκης
οὐκέτ᾽ εἰμὶ παῖς σός.

Ἰοκάστη
ἐς πόλλ᾽ ἀθλία πέφυκ᾽ ἐγώ.

Πολυνείκης
620 ὅδε γὰρ εἰς ἡμᾶς ὑβρίζει.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
καὶ γὰρ ἀνθυβρίζομαι.

Πολυνείκης
ποῦ ποτε στήσῃ πρὸ πύργων;

Ἐτεοκλῆς
ὡς τί μ᾽ ἱστορεῖς τόδε;

Πολυνείκης
ἀντιτάξομαι κτενῶν σε.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
κἀμὲ τοῦδ᾽ ἔρως ἔχει.

Ἰοκάστη
ὦ τάλαιν᾽ ἐγώ: τί δράσετ᾽, ὦ τέκνα;

Πολυνείκης
αὐτὸ σημανεῖ.

Ἰοκάστη
πατρὸς οὐ φεύξεσθ᾽ Ἐρινῦς;

Ἐτεοκλῆς
ἐρρέτω πρόπας δόμος.

Πολυνείκης
ὡς τάχ᾽ οὐκέθ᾽ αἱματηρὸν τοὐμὸν ἀργήσει ξίφος.
τὴν δὲ θρέψασάν με γαῖαν καὶ θεοὺς μαρτύρομαι,
ὡς ἄτιμος οἰκτρὰ πάσχων ἐξελαύνομαι χθονός,
δοῦλος ὥς, ἀλλ᾽ οὐχὶ ταὐτοῦ πατρὸς Οἰδίπου γεγώς:
κἄν τί σοι, πόλις, γένηται, μὴ ἐμέ, τόνδε δ᾽ αἰτιῶ:
οὐχ ἑκὼν γὰρ ἦλθον, ἄκων δ᾽ ἐξελαύνομαι χθονός.
καὶ σύ, Φοῖβ᾽ ἄναξ Ἀγυιεῦ, καὶ μέλαθρα, χαίρετε,
ἥλικές θ᾽ οὐμοί, θεῶν τε δεξίμηλ᾽ ἀγάλματα.
οὐ γὰρ οἶδ᾽ εἴ μοι προσειπεῖν αὖθις ἔσθ᾽ ὑμᾶς ποτε:
ἐλπίδες δ᾽ οὔπω καθεύδουσ᾽, αἷς πέποιθα σὺν θεοῖς
τόνδ᾽ ἀποκτείνας κρατήσειν τῆσδε Θηβαίας χθονός.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
ἔξιθ᾽ ἐκ χώρας: ἀληθῶς δ᾽ ὄνομα Πολυνείκη πατὴρ
ἔθετό σοι θείᾳ προνοίᾳ νεικέων ἐπώνυμον.

Χορός
Κάδμος ἔμολε τάνδε γᾶν
Τύριος, ᾧ τετρασκελὴς
μόσχος ἀδάματον πέσημα
δίκε τελεσφόρον διδοῦσα
χρησμόν, οὗ κατοικίσαι
πεδία νιν τὸ θέσφατον
πυροφόρα δόμων ἔχρη,
καλλιπόταμος ὕδατος ἵνα τε
νοτὶς ἐπέρχεται γύας,
Δίρκας χλοηφόρους
καὶ βαθυσπόρους γύας:

Βρόμιον ἔνθα τέκετο μά-
650 τηρ Διὸς γάμοισι,
κισσὸς ὃν περιστεφὴς
ἔλικος εὐθὺς ἔτι βρέφος
χλοηφόροισιν ἔρνεσιν
κατασκίοισιν ὀλβίσας ἐνώτισεν,
655 Βάκχιον χόρευμα παρθένοισι Θηβαΐαισι
καὶ γυναιξὶν εὐίοις.

Χορός
ἔνθα φόνιος ἦν δράκων
Ἄρεος ὠμόφρων φύλαξ
νάματ᾽ ἔνυδρα καὶ ῥέεθρα
660 χλοερὰ δεργμάτων κόραισι
πολυπλάνοις ἐπισκοπῶν:
ὃν ἐπὶ χέρνιβας μολὼν
Κάδμος ὄλεσε μαρμάρῳ:
κρᾶτα φόνιον ὀλεσίθηρος
665 ὠλένας δικὼν βολαῖς,
δίας ἀμάτορος <δ᾽>
ἐς βαθυσπόρους γύας
γαπετεῖς δικὼν ὀδόν-
τας [Παλλάδος] φραδαῖσιν:
670 ἔνθεν ἐξανῆκε γᾶ
πάνοπλον ὄψιν ὑπὲρ ἄκρων
ὀρῶν χθονός: σιδαρόφρων
δέ νιν φόνος πάλιν ξυνῆψε γᾷ φίλᾳ.
αἵματος δ᾽ ἔδευσε γαῖαν, ἅ νιν εὐηλίοισι
675 δεῖξεν αἰθέρος πνοαῖς.

Χορός
καὶ σέ, τὸν προμάτορος
Ἰοῦς ποτ᾽ ἔκγονον
Ἔπαφον, ὦ Διὸς γένεθλον,
[ἐκάλεσ᾽] ἐκάλεσα βαρβάρῳ βοᾷ,
680 ἰώ, βαρβάροις λιταῖς:
βᾶθι βᾶθι τάνδε γᾶν:

— σοί νιν ἔκγονοι κτίσαν
καὶ διώνυμοι θεαί,
Περσέφασσα καὶ φίλα
Δαμάτηρ θεά,
πάντων ἄνασσα, πάντων δὲ Γᾶ τροφός,
κτήσαντο — πέμπε πυρφόρους
θεάς, ἄμυνε τᾷδε γᾷ:
πάντα δ᾽ εὐπετῆ θεοῖς.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
χώρει σὺ καὶ κόμιζε τὸν Μενοικέως
Κρέοντ᾽, ἀδελφὸν μητρὸς Ἰοκάστης ἐμῆς,
λέγων τάδ᾽, ὡς οἰκεῖα καὶ κοινὰ χθονὸς
θέλω πρὸς αὐτὸν συμβαλεῖν βουλεύματα,
πρὶν ἐς μάχην τε καὶ δορὸς τάξιν μολεῖν.
καίτοι ποδῶν σῶν μόχθον ἐκλύει παρών:
ὁρῶ γὰρ αὐτὸν πρὸς δόμους στείχοντ᾽ ἐμούς.

Κρέων
ἦ πόλλ᾽ ἐπῆλθον εἰσιδεῖν χρῄζων σ᾽, ἄναξ
Ἐτεόκλεες, πέριξ δὲ Καδμείων πύλας
φυλακάς τ᾽ ἐπῆλθον σὸν δέμας θηρώμενος.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ σ᾽ ἔχρῃζον εἰσιδεῖν, Κρέον:
πολλῷ γὰρ ἦῦρον ἐνδεεῖς διαλλαγάς
ὡς ἐς λόγους συνῆψα Πολυνείκει μολών.

Κρέων
ἤκουσα μεῖζον αὐτὸν ἢ Θήβας φρονεῖν,
κήδει τ᾽ Ἀδράστου καὶ στρατῷ πεποιθότα.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐς θεοὺς χρὴ ταῦτ᾽ ἀναρτήσαντ᾽ ἔχειν:
ἃ δ᾽ ἐμποδὼν μάλιστα, ταῦθ᾽ ἥκω φράσων.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
τὰ ποῖα ταῦτα; τὸν λόγον γὰρ ἀγνοῶ.

Κρέων
ἥκει τις αἰχμάλωτος Ἀργείων πάρα.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
λέγει δὲ δὴ τί τῶν ἐκεῖ νεώτερον;

Κρέων
μέλλειν [πέριξ πύργοισι Καδμείων πόλιν
ὅπλοις] ἐλίξειν αὐτίκ᾽ Ἀργείων στρατόν.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
ἐξοιστέον τἄρ᾽ ὅπλα Καδμείων πόλει.

Κρέων
ποῖ; μῶν νεάζων οὐχ ὁρᾷς ἃ χρή σ᾽ ὁρᾶν;

Ἐτεοκλῆς
ἐκτὸς τάφρων τῶνδ᾽, ὡς μαχουμένους τάχα.

Κρέων
σμικρὸν τὸ πλῆθος τῆσδε γῆς, οἳ δ᾽ ἄφθονοι.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
ἐγᾦδα κείνους τοῖς λόγοις ὄντας θρασεῖς.

Κρέων
ἔχει τιν᾽ ὄγκον τἄργος Ἑλλήνων πάρα.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
θάρσει: τάχ᾽ αὐτῶν πεδίον ἐμπλήσω φόνου.

Κρέων
θέλοιμ᾽ ἄν: ἀλλὰ τοῦθ᾽ ὁρῶ πολλοῦ πόνου.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
ὡς οὐ καθέξω τειχέων ἔσω στρατόν.

Κρέων
καὶ μὴν τὸ νικᾶν ἐστι πᾶν εὐβουλία.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
βούλῃ τράπωμαι δῆθ᾽ ὁδοὺς ἄλλας τινάς;

Κρέων
πάσας γε, πρὶν κίνδυνον εἰς ἅπαξ μολεῖν.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
εἰ νυκτὸς αὐτοῖς προσβάλοιμεν ἐκ λόχου;

Κρέων
εἴπερ σφαλείς γε δεῦρο σωθήσῃ πάλιν.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
ἴσον φέρει νύξ, τοῖς δὲ τολμῶσιν πλέον.

Κρέων
ἐνδυστυχῆσαι δεινὸν εὐφρόνης κνέφας.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
ἀλλ᾽ ἀμφὶ δεῖπνον οὖσι προσβάλω δόρυ;

Κρέων
ἔκπληξις ἂν γένοιτο: νικῆσαι δὲ δεῖ.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
βαθύς γέ τοι Διρκαῖος ἀναχωρεῖν πόρος.

Κρέων
ἅπαν κάκιον τοῦ φυλάσσεσθαι καλῶς.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
τί δ᾽, εἰ καθιππεύσαιμεν Ἀργείων στρατόν;

Κρέων
κἀκεῖ πέφρακται λαὸς ἅρμασιν πέριξ.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
τί δῆτα δράσω; πολεμίοισι δῶ πόλιν;

Κρέων
μὴ δῆτα: βουλεύου δ᾽, ἐπείπερ εἶ σοφός.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
τίς οὖν πρόνοια γίγνεται σοφωτέρα;

Κρέων
ἕπτ᾽ ἄνδρας αὐτοῖς φασιν, ὡς ἤκουσ᾽ ἐγώ —

Ἐτεοκλῆς
τί προστετάχθαι δρᾶν; τὸ γὰρ σθένος βραχύ.

Κρέων
† λόχων ἀνάσσειν † ἑπτὰ προσκεῖσθαι πύλαις.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
τί δῆτα δρῶμεν; ἀπορίαν γὰρ οὐ μενῶ.

Κρέων
ἕπτ᾽ ἄνδρας αὐτοῖς καὶ σὺ πρὸς πύλαις ἑλοῦ.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
λόχων ἀνάσσειν ἢ μονοστόλου δορός;

Κρέων
λόχων, προκρίνας οἵπερ ἀλκιμώτατοι.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
ξυνῆκ᾽: ἀμύνειν τειχέων προσαμβάσεις.

Κρέων
καὶ ξυστρατήγους <γ᾽>: εἷς δ᾽ ἀνὴρ οὐ πάνθ᾽ ὁρᾷ.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
θάρσει προκρίνας ἢ φρενῶν εὐβουλίᾳ;

Κρέων
ἀμφότερον: ἀπολειφθὲν γὰρ οὐδὲν θάτερον.

Ἐτεοκλῆς
ἔσται τάδ᾽: ἐλθὼν ἑπτάπυργον ἐς πόλιν
τάξω λοχαγοὺς πρὸς πύλαισιν, ὡς λέγεις,
ἴσους ἴσοισι πολεμίοισιν ἀντιθείς.
ὄνομα δ᾽ ἑκάστου διατριβὴ πολλὴ λέγειν,
ἐχθρῶν ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῖς τείχεσιν καθημένων.
ἀλλ᾽ εἶμ᾽, ὅπως ἂν μὴ καταργῶμεν χέρα.
καί μοι γένοιτ᾽ ἀδελφὸν ἀντήρη λαβεῖν
καὶ ξυσταθέντα διὰ μάχης ἑλεῖν δορί.
[κτανεῖν θ᾽, ὃς ἦλθε πατρίδα πορθήσων ἐμήν.]
γάμους δ᾽ ἀδελφῆς Ἀντιγόνης παιδός τε σοῦ
Αἵμονος, ἐάν τι τῆς τύχης ἐγὼ σφαλῶ,
σοὶ χρὴ μέλεσθαι: τὴν δόσιν δ᾽ ἐχέγγυον
τὴν πρόσθε ποιῶ νῦν ἐπ᾽ ἐξόδοις ἐμαῖς.
μητρὸς δ᾽ ἀδελφὸς εἶ: τί δεῖ μακρηγορεῖν;
τρέφ᾽ ἀξίως νιν σοῦ τε τήν τ᾽ ἐμὴν χάριν.
πατὴρ δ᾽ ἐς αὐτὸν ἀμαθίαν ὀφλισκάνει,
ὄψιν τυφλώσας: οὐκ ἄγαν σφ᾽ ἐπῄνεσα:
ἡμᾶς δ᾽ ἀραῖσιν, ἢν τύχῃ, κατακτενεῖ.

ἓν δ᾽ ἐστὶν ἡμῖν ἀργόν, εἴ τι θέσφατον
οἰωνόμαντις Τειρεσίας ἔχει φράσαι,
τοῦδ᾽ ἐκπυθέσθαι ταῦτ᾽: ἐγὼ δὲ παῖδα σὸν
Μενοικέα, σοῦ πατρὸς αὐτεπώνυμον,
λαβόντα πέμψω δεῦρο Τειρεσίαν, Κρέον:
σοὶ μὲν γὰρ ἡδὺς ἐς λόγους ἀφίξεται,
ἐγὼ δὲ τέχνην μαντικὴν ἐμεμψάμην
ἤδη πρὸς αὐτόν, ὥστε μοι μομφὰς ἔχειν.
πόλει δὲ καὶ σοὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἐπισκήπτω, Κρέον:
ἥνπερ κρατήσῃ τἀμά, Πολυνείκους νέκυν
μήποτε ταφῆναι τῇδε Θηβαίᾳ χθονί,
θνῄσκειν δὲ τὸν θάψαντα, κἂν φίλων τις ᾖ.
[σοὶ μὲν τάδ᾽ εἶπον: προσπόλοις δ᾽ ἐμοῖς λέγω:]
ἐκφέρετε τεύχη πάνοπλά τ᾽ ἀμφιβλήματα,
ὡς εἰς ἀγῶνα τὸν προκείμενον δορὸς
ὁρμώμεθ᾽ ἤδη ξὺν δίκῃ νικηφόρῳ.

τῇ δ᾽ Εὐλαβείᾳ, χρησιμωτάτῃ θεῶν,
προσευχόμεσθα τήνδε διασῷσαι πόλιν.

Χορός
ὦ πολύμοχθος Ἄρης, τί ποθ᾽ αἵματι
καὶ θανάτῳ κατέχῃ Βρομίου παράμουσος ἑορταῖς;
οὐκ ἐπὶ καλλιχόροις στεφάνοισι νεάνιδος ὥρας
βόστρυχον ἀμπετάσας λωτοῦ κατὰ πνεύματα μέλπῃ
μοῦσαν, ἐν ᾇ χάριτες χοροποιοί,
ἀλλὰ σὺν ὁπλοφόροις στρατὸν Ἀργείων ἐπιπνεύσας
αἵματι Θήβας
κῶμον ἀναυλότατον προχορεύεις.
οὐδ᾽ ὑπὸ θυρσομανεῖ νεβρίδων μέτα δίνᾳ,
ἅρμασι καὶ ψαλίων τετραβάμοσι μωνυχοπώλων
ἱππείαις ἐπὶ χεύμασι βαίνων
Ἰσμηνοῖο θοάζεις, Ἀργείοις ἐπιπνεύσας
Σπαρτῶν γένναν,
ἀσπιδοφέρμονα θίασον ἐνόπλιον,
ἀντίπαλον κατὰ λάινα τείχεα
χαλκῷ κοσμήσας.
ἦ δεινά τις Ἔρις θεός, ἃ τάδε
μήσατο πήματα γᾶς βασιλεῦσιν,
Λαβδακίδαις πολυμόχθοις.

Χορός
ὦ ζαθέων πετάλων πολυθηρότα-
τον νάπος, Ἀρτέμιδος χιονοτρόφον ὄμμα Κιθαιρών,
μήποτε τὸν θανάτῳ προτεθέντα, λόχευμ᾽ Ἰοκάστας,
ὤφελες Οἰδιπόδαν θρέψαι, βρέφος ἔκβολον οἴκων,
χρυσοδέτοις περόναις ἐπίσαμον:
μηδὲ τὸ παρθένιον πτερόν, οὔρειον τέρας, ἐλθεῖν
πένθεα γαίας
Σφιγγὸς ἀμουσοτάταισι σὺν ᾠδαῖς,
ἅ ποτε Καδμογενῆ τετραβάμοσι χαλαῖς
τείχεσι χριμπτομένα φέρεν αἰθέρος εἰς ἄβατον φῶς
γένναν, ἂν ὁ κατὰ χθονὸς Ἅιδας
Καδμείοις ἐπιπέμπει: δυσδαίμων δ᾽ ἔρις ἄλλα

θάλλει παίδων
Οἰδιπόδα κατὰ δώματα καὶ πόλιν.
οὐ γὰρ ὃ μὴ καλὸν οὔποτ᾽ ἔφυ καλόν,
οὐδ᾽ οἱ μὴ νόμιμοι
† παῖδες ματρὶ λόχευμα, μίασμα πατρός:
ἢ δὲ συναίμονος ἐς λέχος ἦλθεν.

Χορός
ἔτεκες, ὦ Γαῖ᾽, ἔτεκές ποτε,
βάρβαρον ὡς ἀκοὰν ἐδάην ἐδάην ποτ᾽ ἐν οἴκοις,
τὰν ἀπὸ θηροτρόφου φοινικολόφοιο δράκοντος
γένναν ὀδοντοφυῆ, Θήβαις κάλλιστον ὄνειδος:
Ἁρμονίας δέ ποτ᾽ εἰς ὑμεναίους
ἦλυθον οὐρανίδαι, φόρμιγγί τε τείχεα Θήβας
τᾶς Ἀμφιονίας τε λύρας ὕπο πύργος ἀνέστα
διδύμων ποταμῶν πόρον ἀμφὶ μέσον,
Δίρκα χλοεροτρόφον ᾇ πεδίον
πρόπαρ Ἰσμηνοῦ καταδεύει:
Ἰώ θ᾽, ἁ κερόεσσα προμάτωρ,
Καδμείων βασιλῆας ἐγείνατο,
μυριάδας δ᾽ ἀγαθῶν ἑτέροις ἑτέ-
ρας μεταμειβομένα πόλις ἅδ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἄκροις ἕστακ᾽
Ἀρηΐοις στεφάνοισιν.

Τειρεσίας
ἡγοῦ πάροιθε, θύγατερ: ὡς τυφλῷ ποδὶ
ὀφθαλμὸς εἶ σύ, ναυβάταισιν ἄστρον ὥς:
δεῦρ᾽ ἐς τὸ λευρὸν πέδον ἴχνος τιθεῖσ᾽ ἐμόν,
πρόβαινε, μὴ σφαλῶμεν: ἀσθενὴς πατήρ:
κλήρους τέ μοι φύλασσε παρθένῳ χερί,
οὓς ἔλαβον οἰωνίσματ᾽ ὀρνίθων μαθὼν
θάκοισιν ἐν ἱεροῖσιν, οὗ μαντεύομαι.
τέκνον Μενοικεῦ, παῖ Κρέοντος, εἰπέ μοι
πόση τις ἡ ‘πίλοιπος ἄστεως ὁδὸς
πρὸς πατέρα τὸν σόν: ὡς ἐμὸν κάμνει γόνυ,
πυκνὴν δὲ βαίνων ἦλυσιν μόλις περῶ.

Κρέων
θάρσει: πέλας γάρ, Τειρεσία, φίλοισι σοῖς
ἐξώρμισαι σὸν πόδα: λαβοῦ δ᾽ αὐτοῦ, τέκνον:
ὡς πᾶσ᾽ ἀπήνη πούς τε πρεσβύτου φιλεῖ
χειρὸς θυραίας ἀναμένειν κουφίσματα.

Τειρεσίας
εἶέν, πάρεσμεν: τί με καλεῖς σπουδῇ, Κρέον;

Κρέων
οὔπω λελήσμεθ᾽: ἀλλὰ σύλλεξαι σθένος
καὶ πνεῦμ᾽ ἄθροισον, αἶπος ἐκβαλὼν ὁδοῦ.

Τειρεσίας
κόπῳ παρεῖμαι γοῦν Ἐρεχθειδῶν ἄπο
δεῦρ᾽ ἐκκομισθεὶς τῆς πάροιθεν ἡμέρας:
κἀκεῖ γὰρ ἦν τις πόλεμος Εὐμόλπου δορός,
οὗ καλλινίκους Κεκροπίδας ἔθηκ᾽ ἐγώ:
καὶ τόνδε χρυσοῦν στέφανον, ὡς ὁρᾷς, ἔχω
λαβὼν ἀπαρχὰς πολεμίων σκυλευμάτων.

Κρέων
οἰωνὸν ἐθέμην καλλίνικα σὰ στέφη:
ἐν γὰρ κλύδωνι κείμεθ᾽, ὥσπερ οἶσθα σύ,
δορὸς Δαναϊδῶν, καὶ μέγας Θήβαις ἀγών.
βασιλεὺς μὲν οὖν βέβηκε κοσμηθεὶς ὅπλοις
ἤδη πρὸς ἀλκὴν Ἐτεοκλῆς Μυκηνίδα:
ἐμοὶ δ᾽ ἐπέσταλκ᾽ ἐκμαθεῖν σέθεν πάρα,
τί δρῶντες ἂν μάλιστα σώσαιμεν πόλιν.

Τειρεσίας
Ἐτεοκλέους μὲν οὕνεκ᾽ ἂν κλῄσας στόμα
χρησμοὺς ἐπέσχον: σοὶ δ᾽, ἐπεὶ χρῄζεις μαθεῖν,
λέξω. νοσεῖ γὰρ ἥδε γῆ πάλαι, Κρέον,
ἐξ οὗ ‘τεκνώθη Λάιος βίᾳ θεῶν
πόσιν τ᾽ ἔφυσε μητρὶ μέλεον Οἰδίπουν:
αἵ θ᾽ αἱματωποὶ δεργμάτων διαφθοραὶ
θεῶν σόφισμα κἀπίδειξις Ἑλλάδι.

ἃ συγκαλύψαι παῖδες Οἰδίπου χρόνῳ
χρῄζοντες, ὡς δὴ θεοὺς ὑπεκδραμούμενοι,
ἥμαρτον ἀμαθῶς: οὔτε γὰρ γέρα πατρὶ
οὔτ᾽ ἔξοδον διδόντες, ἄνδρα δυστυχῆ
ἐξηγρίωσαν: ἐκ δ᾽ ἔπνευσ᾽ αὐτοῖς ἀρὰς
δεινάς, νοσῶν τε καὶ πρὸς ἠτιμασμένος.
ἀγὼ τί <οὐ> δρῶν, ποῖα δ᾽ οὐ λέγων ἔπη
ἐς ἔχθος ἦλθον παισὶ τοῖσιν Οἰδίπου;
ἐγγὺς δὲ θάνατος αὐτόχειρ αὐτοῖς, Κρέον:
πολλοὶ δὲ νεκροὶ περὶ νεκροῖς πεπτωκότες
Ἀργεῖα καὶ Καδμεῖα μείξαντες βέλη
πικροὺς γόους δώσουσι Θηβαίᾳ χθονί.
σύ τ᾽ ὦ τάλαινα συγκατασκάπτῃ πόλι,
εἰ μὴ λόγοισι τοῖς ἐμοῖς τὶς πείσεται.
ἐκεῖνο μὲν γὰρ πρῶτον ἦν, τῶν Οἰδίπου
μηδένα πολίτην μηδ᾽ ἄνακτ᾽ εἶναι χθονός,
ὡς δαιμονῶντας κἀνατρέψοντας πόλιν.
ἐπεὶ δὲ κρεῖσσον τὸ κακὸν ἐστι τἀγαθοῦ,
μί᾽ ἔστιν ἄλλη μηχανὴ σωτηρίας.
ἀλλ᾽ — οὐ γὰρ εἰπεῖν οὔτ᾽ ἐμοὶ τόδ᾽ ἀσφαλὲς
πικρόν τε τοῖσι τὴν τύχην κεκτημένοις
πόλει παρασχεῖν φάρμακον σωτηρίας —
ἄπειμι. χαίρεθ᾽: εἷς γὰρ ὢν πολλῶν μέτα
τὸ μέλλον, εἰ χρή, πείσομαι: τί γὰρ πάθω;

Κρέων
ἐπίσχες αὐτοῦ, πρέσβυ.

Τειρεσίας
μὴ ‘πιλαμβάνου.

Κρέων
μεῖνον, τί φεύγεις;

Τειρεσίας
ἡ τύχη σ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐγώ.

Κρέων
φράσον πολίταις καὶ πόλει σωτηρίαν.

Τειρεσίας
βούλῃ σὺ μέντοι κοὐχὶ βουλήσῃ τάχα.

Κρέων
καὶ πῶς πατρῴαν γαῖαν οὐ σῷσαι θέλω;

Τειρεσίας
θέλεις ἀκοῦσαι δῆτα καὶ σπουδὴν ἔχεις;

Κρέων
ἐς γὰρ τί μᾶλλον δεῖ προθυμίαν ἔχειν;

Τειρεσίας
κλύοις ἂν ἤδη τῶν ἐμῶν θεσπισμάτων.
πρῶτον δ᾽ ἐκεῖνο βούλομαι σαφῶς μαθεῖν,
ποῦ ‘στιν Μενοικεύς, ὅς με δεῦρ᾽ ἐπήγαγεν;

Κρέων
ὅδ᾽ οὐ μακρὰν ἄπεστι, πλησίον δὲ σοῦ.

Τειρεσίας
ἀπελθέτω νυν θεσφάτων ἐμῶν ἑκάς.

Κρέων
ἐμὸς πεφυκὼς παῖς ἃ δεῖ σιγήσεται.

Τειρεσίας
βούλῃ παρόντος δῆτά σοι τούτου φράσω;

Κρέων
κλύων γὰρ ἂν τέρποιτο τῆς σωτηρίας.

Τειρεσίας
ἄκουε δή νυν θεσφάτων ἐμῶν ὁδόν:
[ἃ δρῶντες ἂν σώσαιτε Καδμείων πόλιν]

σφάξαι Μενοικέα τόνδε δεῖ σ᾽ ὑπὲρ πάτρας,
σὸν παῖδ᾽, ἐπειδὴ τὴν τύχην αὐτὸς καλεῖς.

Κρέων
τί φῄς; τίν᾽ εἶπας τόνδε μῦθον, ὦ γέρον;

Τειρεσίας
ἅπερ πέφυκε, ταῦτα κἀνάγκη σὲ δρᾶν.

Κρέων
ὦ πολλὰ λέξας ἐν βραχεῖ χρόνῳ κακά.

Τειρεσίας
σοί γ᾽, ἀλλὰ πατρίδι μεγάλα καὶ σωτήρια.

Κρέων
οὐκ ἔκλυον, οὐκ ἤκουσα: χαιρέτω πόλις.

Τειρεσίας
ἀνὴρ ὅδ᾽ οὐκέθ᾽ αὑτός: ἐκνεύει πάλιν.

Κρέων
χαίρων ἴθ᾽: οὐ γὰρ σῶν με δεῖ μαντευμάτων.

Τειρεσίας
ἀπόλωλεν ἡ ἀλήθει᾽, ἐπεὶ σὺ δυστυχεῖς;

Κρέων
ὦ πρός σε γονάτων καὶ γερασμίου τριχὸς —

Τειρεσίας
τί προσπίτνεις με; δυσφύλακτ᾽ αἰτῇ κακά.

Κρέων
σίγα: πόλει δὲ τούσδε μὴ λέξῃς λόγους.

Τειρεσίας
ἀδικεῖν κελεύεις μ᾽: οὐ σιωπήσαιμεν ἄν.

Κρέων
τί δή με δράσεις; παῖδά μου κατακτενεῖς;

Τειρεσίας
ἄλλοις μελήσει ταῦτ᾽, ἐμοὶ δ᾽ εἰρήσεται.

Κρέων
ἐκ τοῦ δ᾽ ἐμοὶ τόδ᾽ ἦλθε καὶ τέκνῳ κακόν;

Τειρεσίας
ὀρθῶς μ᾽ ἐρωτᾷς κεἰς ἀγῶν᾽ ἔρχῃ λόγων.
δεῖ τόνδε θαλάμαις, οὗ δράκων ὁ γηγενὴς
ἐγένετο Δίρκης ναμάτων ἐπίσκοπος,
σφαγέντα φόνιον αἷμα γῇ δοῦναι χοὰς
Κάδμου, παλαιῶν Ἄρεος ἐκ μηνιμάτων,
ὃς γηγενεῖ δράκοντι τιμωρεῖ φόνον.
καὶ ταῦτα δρῶντες σύμμαχον κτήσεσθ᾽ Ἄρη.
χθὼν δ᾽ ἀντὶ καρποῦ καρπὸν ἀντί θ᾽ αἵματος
αἷμ᾽ ἣν λάβῃ βρότειον, ἔξετ᾽ εὐμενῆ
γῆν, ἥ ποθ᾽ ἡμῖν χρυσοπήληκα στάχυν
σπαρτῶν ἀνῆκεν: ἐκ γένους δὲ δεῖ θανεῖν
τοῦδ᾽, ὃς δράκοντος γένυος ἐκπέφυκε παῖς.

σὺ δ᾽ ἐνθάδ᾽ ἡμῖν λοιπὸς εἶ σπαρτῶν γένους
ἀκέραιος, ἔκ τε μητρὸς ἀρσένων τ᾽ ἄπο,
οἱ σοί τε παῖδες. Αἵμονος μὲν οὖν γάμοι
σφαγὰς ἀπείργουσ᾽. οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ᾗθεος:
κεἰ μὴ γὰρ εὐνῆς ἥψατ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἔχει λέχος.
οὗτος δὲ πῶλος τῇδ᾽ ἀνειμένος πόλει
θανὼν πατρῴαν γαῖαν ἐκσώσειεν ἄν.
πικρὸν δ᾽ Ἀδράστῳ νόστον Ἀργείοισί τε
θήσει, μέλαιναν κῆρ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ὄμμασιν βαλών,
κλεινάς τε Θήβας. τοῖνδ᾽ ἑλοῦ δυοῖν πότμοιν
τὸν ἕτερον: ἢ γὰρ παῖδα σῷσον ἢ πόλιν.

τὰ μὲν παρ᾽ ἡμῶν πάντ᾽ ἔχεις: ἡγοῦ, τέκνον,
πρὸς οἶκον. ὅστις δ᾽ ἐμπύρῳ χρῆται τέχνῃ,
μάταιος: ἢν μὲν ἐχθρὰ σημήνας τύχῃ,

πικρὸς καθέστηχ᾽ οἷς ἂν οἰωνοσκοπῇ:
ψευδῆ δ᾽ ὑπ᾽ οἴκτου τοῖσι χρωμένοις λέγων
ἀδικεῖ τὰ τῶν θεῶν. Φοῖβον ἀνθρώποις μόνον
χρῆν θεσπιῳδεῖν, ὃς δέδοικεν οὐδένα.

Χορός
Κρέον, τί σιγᾷς γῆρυν ἄφθογγον σχάσας;
κἀμοὶ γὰρ οὐδὲν ἧσσον ἔκπληξις πάρα.

Κρέων
τί δ᾽ ἄν τις εἴποι; δῆλον οἵ γ᾽ ἐμοὶ λόγοι.
ἐγὼ γὰρ οὔποτ᾽ ἐς τόδ᾽ εἶμι συμφορᾶς,
ὥστε σφαγέντα παῖδα προσθεῖναι πόλει.
πᾶσιν γὰρ ἀνθρώποισι φιλότεκνος βίος,
οὐδ᾽ ἂν τὸν αὐτοῦ παῖδά τις δοίη κτανεῖν.
μή μ᾽ εὐλογείτω τἀμά τις κτείνων τέκνα.
αὐτὸς δ᾽ — ἐν ὡραίῳ γὰρ ἔσταμεν βίου —
θνῄσκειν ἕτοιμος πατρίδος ἐκλυτήριον.

ἀλλ᾽ εἶα, τέκνον, πρὶν μαθεῖν πᾶσαν πόλιν,
ἀκόλαστ᾽ ἐάσας μάντεων θεσπίσματα,
φεῦγ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα τῆσδ᾽ ἀπαλλαχθεὶς χθονός:
λέξει γὰρ ἀρχαῖς καὶ στρατηλάταις τάδε,
[πύλας ἐφ᾽ ἑπτὰ καὶ λοχαγέτας μολών:]
κἂν μὲν φθάσωμεν, ἔστι σοι σωτηρία:
ἢν δ᾽ ὑστερήσῃς, οἰχόμεσθα, κατθανῇ.

Μενοικεύς
ποῖ δῆτα φεύγω; τίνα πόλιν; τίνα ξένων;

Κρέων
ὅπου χθονὸς τῆσδ᾽ ἐκποδὼν μάλιστ᾽ ἔσῃ.

Μενοικεύς
οὐκοῦν σὲ φράζειν εἰκός, ἐκπονεῖν δ᾽ ἐμέ.

Κρέων
Δελφοὺς περάσας —

Μενοικεύς
ποῖ με χρή, πάτερ, μολεῖν;

Κρέων
Αἰτωλίδ᾽ ἐς γῆν.

Μενοικεύς
ἐκ δὲ τῆσδε ποῖ περῶ;

Κρέων
Θεσπρωτὸν οὖδας.

Μενοικεύς
σεμνὰ Δωδώνης βάθρα;

Κρέων
ἔγνως.

Μενοικεύς
τί δὴ τόδ᾽ ἔρυμά μοι γενήσεται;

Κρέων
πόμπιμος ὁ δαίμων.

Μενοικεύς
χρημάτων δὲ τίς πόρος;

Κρέων
ἐγὼ πορεύσω χρυσόν.

Μενοικεύς

Μενοικεύς
εὖ λέγεις, πάτερ.
χώρει νυν: ὡς σὴν πρὸς κασιγνήτην μολών,
ἧς πρῶτα μαστὸν εἵλκυσ᾽, Ἰοκάστην λέγω,

μητρὸς στερηθεὶς ὀρφανός τ᾽ ἀποζυγείς —
[προσηγορήσων εἶμι καὶ σῴσων βίον.]
ἀλλ᾽ εἶα, χώρει: μὴ τὸ σὸν κωλυέτω. —

γυναῖκες, ὡς εὖ πατρὸς ἐξεῖλον φόβον,
κλέψας λόγοισιν, ὥσθ᾽ ἃ βούλομαι τυχεῖν:
ὅς μ᾽ ἐκκομίζει, πόλιν ἀποστερῶν τύχης,
καὶ δειλίᾳ δίδωσι. καὶ συγγνωστὰ μὲν
γέροντι, τοὐμὸν δ᾽ οὐχὶ συγγνώμην ἔχει,
προδότην γενέσθαι πατρίδος ἥ μ᾽ ἐγείνατο.
ὡς οὖν ἂν εἰδῆτ᾽, εἶμι καὶ σῴσω πόλιν
ψυχήν τε δώσω τῆσδ᾽ ὑπερθανεῖν χθονός.
αἰσχρὸν γάρ: οἱ μὲν θεσφάτων ἐλεύθεροι
κοὐκ εἰς ἀνάγκην δαιμόνων ἀφιγμένοι
στάντες παρ᾽ ἀσπίδ᾽ οὐκ ὀκνήσουσιν θανεῖν,
πύργων πάροιθε μαχόμενοι πάτρας ὕπερ:
ἐγὼ δέ, πατέρα καὶ κασίγνητον προδοὺς
πόλιν τ᾽ ἐμαυτοῦ, δειλὸς ὢς ἔξω χθονὸς
ἄπειμ᾽: ὅπου δ᾽ ἂν ζῶ, κακὸς φανήσομαι.

μὰ τὸν μετ᾽ ἄστρων Ζῆν᾽ Ἄρη τε φοίνιον,
ὃς τοὺς ὑπερτείλαντας ἐκ γαίας ποτὲ
Σπαρτοὺς ἄνακτας τῆσδε γῆς ἱδρύσατο.
ἀλλ᾽ εἶμι καὶ στὰς ἐξ ἐπάλξεων ἄκρων
σφάξας ἐμαυτὸν σηκὸν ἐς μελαμβαθῆ
δράκοντος, ἔνθ᾽ ὁ μάντις ἐξηγήσατο,
ἐλευθερώσω γαῖαν: εἴρηται λόγος.
στείχω δέ, θανάτου δῶρον οὐκ αἰσχρὸν πόλει
δώσων, νόσου δὲ τήνδ᾽ ἀπαλλάξω χθόνα.
εἰ γὰρ λαβὼν ἕκαστος ὅ τι δύναιτό τις
χρηστὸν διέλθοι τοῦτο κἀς κοινὸν φέροι
πατρίδι, κακῶν ἂν αἱ πόλεις ἐλασσόνων
πειρώμεναι τὸ λοιπὸν εὐτυχοῖεν ἄν.

Χορός
ἔβας ἔβας,
ὦ πτεροῦσσα, γᾶς λόχευμα

νερτέρου τ᾽ Ἐχίδνας,
Καδμείων ἁρπαγά,
πολύφθορος πολύστονος
μειξοπάρθενος,
δάιον τέρας,
φοιτάσι πτεροῖς
χαλαῖσί τ᾽ ὠμοσίτοις:
Διρκαίων ἅ ποτ᾽ ἐκ
τόπων νέους πεδαίρουσ᾽
ἄλυρον ἀμφὶ μοῦσαν
ὀλομέναν τ᾽ Ἐρινὺν
ἔφερες ἔφερες ἄχεα πατρίδι
φόνια: φόνιος ἐκ θεῶν
ὃς τάδ᾽ ἦν ὁ πράξας.
ἰάλεμοι δὲ ματέρων,
ἰάλεμοι δὲ παρθένων
ἐστέναζον οἴκοις:
ἰηιήιον βοάν,
ἰηιήιον μέλος,
ἄλλος ἄλλ᾽ ἐπωτότυζε
διαδοχαῖς ἀνὰ πτόλιν.
βροντᾷ δὲ στεναγμὸς
ἀχά τ᾽ ἦν ὅμοιος,
ὁπότε πόλεος ἀφανίσειεν
ἁ πτεροῦσσα παρθένος τιν᾽ ἀνδρῶν.

Χορός

χρόνῳ δ᾽ ἔβα
Πυθίαις ἀποστολαῖσιν
Οἰδίπους ὁ τλάμων
Θηβαίαν τάνδε γᾶν
τότ᾽ ἀσμένοις, πάλιν δ᾽ ἄχη:
ματρὶ γὰρ γάμους
δυσγάμους τάλας
καλλίνικος ὢν
αἰνιγμάτων συνάπτει,
μιαίνει δὲ πτόλιν:

δι᾽ αἱμάτων δ᾽ ἀμείβει
μυσαρὸν εἰς ἀγῶνα
καταβαλὼν ἀραῖσι
τέκεα μέλεος. ἀγάμεθ᾽ ἀγάμεθ᾽,
ὃς ἐπὶ θάνατον οἴχεται
γᾶς ὑπὲρ πατρῴας,
Κρέοντι μὲν λιπὼν γόους,
τὰ δ᾽ ἑπτάπυργα κλῇθρα γᾶς
καλλίνικα θήσων.
γενοίμεθ᾽ ὦδε ματέρες
γενοίμεθ᾽ εὔτεκνοι, φίλα
Παλλάς, ἃ δράκοντος αἷμα
λιθόβολον κατειργάσω,
Καδμείαν μέριμναν
ὁρμήσασ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἔργον,
ὅθεν ἐπέσυτο τάνδε γαῖαν
ἁρπαγαῖσι δαιμόνων τις ἄτα.

Ἄγγελος
ὠή, τίς ἐν πύλαισι δωμάτων κυρεῖ;
ἀνοίγετ᾽: ἐκπορεύετ᾽ Ἰοκάστην δόμων.
ὠὴ μάλ᾽ αὖθις: διὰ μακροῦ μέν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως
ἔξελθ᾽, ἄκουσον, Οἰδίπου κλεινὴ δάμαρ,
λήξασ᾽ ὀδυρμῶν πενθίμων τε δακρύων.

Ἰοκάστη
ὦ φίλτατ᾽, οὔ που ξυμφορὰν ἥκεις φέρων
Ἐτεοκλέους θανόντος, οὖ παρ᾽ ἀσπίδα
βέβηκας αἰεὶ πολεμίων εἴργων βέλη;
[τί μοί ποθ᾽ ἥκεις καινὸν ἀγγελῶν ἔπος;]
τέθνηκεν ἢ ζῇ παῖς ἐμός; σήμαινέ μοι.

Ἄγγελος
ζῇ, μὴ τρέσῃς τόδ᾽, ὥς <σ᾽> ἀπαλλάξω φόβου.

Ἰοκάστη
τί δ᾽; ἑπτάπυργοι πῶς ἔχουσι περιβολαί;

Ἄγγελος
ἑστᾶσ᾽ ἄθραυστοι, κοὐκ ἀνήρπασται πόλις.

Ἰοκάστη
ἦλθον δὲ πρὸς κίνδυνον Ἀργείου δορός;

Ἄγγελος
ἀκμήν γ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αὐτήν: ἀλλ᾽ ὁ Καδμείων Ἄρης
κρείσσων κατέστη τοῦ Μυκηναίου δορός.

Ἰοκάστη
ἓν εἰπὲ πρὸς θεῶν, εἴ τι Πολυνείκους πέρι
οἶσθ᾽: ὡς μέλει μοι καὶ τόδ᾽, εἰ λεύσσει φάος.

Ἄγγελος
ζῇ σοι ξυνωρὶς ἐς τόδ᾽ ἡμέρας τέκνων.

Ἰοκάστη
εὐδαιμονοίης. πῶς γὰρ Ἀργείων δόρυ
πυλῶν ἀπεστήσασθε πυργηρούμενοι;
λέξον, γέροντα τυφλὸν ὡς κατὰ στέγας
ἐλθοῦσα τέρψω, τῆσδε γῆς σεσῳσμένης.

Ἄγγελος

Ἄγγελος
ἐπεὶ Κρέοντος παῖς ὁ γῆς ὑπερθανὼν
πύργων ἐπ᾽ ἄκρων στὰς μελάνδετον ξίφος
λαιμῶν διῆκε τῇδε γῇ σωτήριον,
λόχους ἔνειμεν ἑπτὰ καὶ λοχαγέτας
πύλας ἐφ᾽ ἑπτά, φύλακας Ἀργείου δορός,
σὸς παῖς, ἐφέδρους <δ᾽> ἱππότας μὲν ἱππόταις
ἔταξ᾽, ὁπλίτας δ᾽ ἀσπιδηφόροις ἔπι,
ὡς τῷ νοσοῦντι τειχέων εἴη δορὸς
ἀλκὴ δι᾽ ὀλίγου. περγάμων δ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ὀρθίων
λεύκασπιν εἰσορῶμεν Ἀργείων στρατὸν
Τευμησὸν ἐκλιπόντα, καὶ τάφρου πέλας
δρόμῳ ξυνῆψαν ἄστυ Καδμείας χθονός.

παιὰν δὲ καὶ σάλπιγγες ἐκελάδουν ὁμοῦ
ἐκεῖθεν ἔκ τε τειχέων ἡμῶν πάρα.

καὶ πρῶτα μὲν προσῆγε Νηίταις πύλαις
λόχον πυκναῖσιν ἀσπίσιν πεφρικότα
ὁ τῆς κυναγοῦ Παρθενοπαῖος ἔκγονος,
ἐπίσημ᾽ ἔχων οἰκεῖον ἐν μέσῳ σάκει,
ἐκηβόλοις τόξοισιν Ἀταλάντην κάπρον
χειρουμένην Αἰτωλόν. ἐς δὲ Προιτίδας
πύλας ἐχώρει σφάγι᾽ ἔχων ἐφ᾽ ἅρματι
ὁ μάντις Ἀμφιάραος, οὐ σημεῖ᾽ ἔχων
ὑβρισμέν᾽, ἀλλὰ σωφρόνως ἄσημ᾽ ὅπλα.

Ὠγύγια δ᾽ ἐς πυλώμαθ᾽ Ἱππομέδων ἄναξ
ἔστειχ᾽ ἔχων σημεῖον ἐν μέσῳ σάκει
στικτοῖς Πανόπτην ὄμμασιν δεδορκότα,
τὰ μὲν σὺν ἄστρων ἐπιτολαῖσιν ὄμματα
βλέποντα, τὰ δὲ κρύπτοντα δυνόντων μέτα,
ὡς ὕστερον θανόντος εἰσορᾶν παρῆν.

Ὁμολωίσιν δὲ τάξιν εἶχε πρὸς πύλαις
Τυδεύς, λέοντος δέρος ἔχων ἐπ᾽ ἀσπίδι
χαίτῃ πεφρικός: δεξιᾷ δὲ λαμπάδα
Τιτὰν Προμηθεὺς ἔφερεν ὡς πρήσων πόλιν.

ὁ σὸς δὲ Κρηναίαισι Πολυνείκης πύλαις
Ἄρη προσῆγε: Ποτνιάδες δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀσπίδι
ἐπίσημα πῶλοι δρομάδες ἐσκίρτων φόβῳ,
εὖ πως στρόφιγξιν ἔνδοθεν κυκλούμεναι
πόρπαχ᾽ ὑπ᾽ αὐτόν, ὥστε μαίνεσθαι δοκεῖν.

ὁ δ᾽ οὐκ ἔλασσον Ἄρεος ἐς μάχην φρονῶν
Καπανεὺς προσῆγε λόχον ἐπ᾽ Ἠλέκτραις πύλαις:
σιδηρονώτοις δ᾽ ἀσπίδος τύποις ἐπῆν
γίγας ἐπ᾽ ὤμοις γηγενὴς ὅλην πόλιν
φέρων μοχλοῖσιν ἐξανασπάσας βάθρων,
ὑπόνοιαν ἡμῖν οἷα πείσεται πόλις.

ταῖς δ᾽ ἑβδόμαις Ἄδραστος ἐν πύλαισιν ἦν,
ἑκατὸν ἐχίδναις ἀσπίδ᾽ ἐκπληρῶν γραφῇ,
[ὕδρας ἔχων λαιοῖσιν ἐν βραχίοσιν]
Ἀργεῖον αὔχημ᾽: ἐκ δὲ τειχέων μέσων
δράκοντες ἔφερον τέκνα Καδμείων γνάθοις.
παρῆν δ᾽ ἑκάστου τῶνδέ μοι θεάματα
ξύνθημα παρφέροντι ποιμέσιν λόχων.

καὶ πρῶτα μὲν τόξοισι καὶ μεσαγκύλοις
ἐμαρνάμεσθα σφενδόναις θ᾽ ἑκηβόλοις
πετρῶν τ᾽ ἀραγμοῖς: ὡς δ᾽ ἐνικῶμεν μάχῃ,
ἔκλαγξε Τυδεὺς καὶ σὸς ἐξαίφνης γόνος:
ὦ τέκνα Δαναῶν, πρὶν κατεξάνθαι βολαῖς,
τί μέλλετ᾽ ἄρδην πάντες ἐμπίπτειν πύλαις,
γυμνῆτες ἱππῆς ἁρμάτων τ᾽ ἐπιστάται;
ἠχῆς δ᾽ ὅπως ἤκουσαν, οὔτις ἀργὸς ἦν:
πολλοὶ δ᾽ ἔπιπτον κρᾶτας αἱματούμενοι,
ἡμῶν τ᾽ ἐς οὖδας εἶδες ἂν πρὸ τειχέων
πυκνοὺς κυβιστητῆρας ἐκπεπνευκότας:
ξηρὰν δ᾽ ἔδευον γαῖαν αἵματος ῥοαῖς.

ὁ δ᾽ Ἀρκάς, οὐκ Ἀργεῖος, Ἀταλάντης γόνος
τυφὼς πύλαισιν ὥς τις ἐμπεσὼν βοᾷ
πῦρ καὶ δικέλλας, ὡς κατασκάψων πόλιν:
ἀλλ᾽ ἔσχε μαργῶντ᾽ αὐτὸν ἐναλίου θεοῦ
Περικλύμενος παῖς λᾶαν ἐμβαλὼν κάρᾳ
ἁμαξοπληθῆ, γεῖσ᾽ ἐπάλξεων ἄπο:
ξανθὸν δὲ κρᾶτα διεπάλυνε καὶ ῥαφὰς
ἔρρηξεν ὀστέων, ἄρτι δ᾽ οἰνωπὸν γένυν
καθημάτωσεν: οὐδ᾽ ἀποίσεται βίον
τῇ καλλιτόξῳ μητρὶ Μαινάλου κόρη.

ἐπεὶ δὲ τάσδ᾽ ἐσεῖδεν εὐτυχεῖς πύλας,
ἄλλας ἐπῄει παῖς σός, εἰπόμην δ᾽ ἐγώ.
ὁρῶ δὲ Τυδέα καὶ παρασπιστὰς πυκνοὺς
Αἰτωλίσιν λόγχαισιν εἰς ἄκρον στόμα
πύργων ἀκοντίζοντας, ὥστ᾽ ἐπάλξεων

λιπεῖν ἐρίπνας φυγάδας: ἀλλά νιν πάλιν
κυναγὸς ὡσεὶ παῖς σὸς ἐξαθροίζεται,
πύργοις δ᾽ ἐπέστησ᾽ αὖθις. ἐς δ᾽ ἄλλας πύλας
ἠπειγόμεσθα, τοῦτο παύσαντες νοσοῦν.
Καπανεὺς δὲ πῶς εἴποιμ᾽ ἂν ὡς ἐμαίνετο;
μακραύχενος γὰρ κλίμακος προσαμβάσεις
ἔχων ἐχώρει, καὶ τοσόνδ᾽ ἐκόμπασε,
μηδ᾽ ἂν τὸ σεμνὸν πῦρ νιν εἰργαθεῖν Διὸς
τὸ μὴ οὐ κατ᾽ ἄκρων περγάμων ἑλεῖν πόλιν.
καὶ ταῦθ᾽ ἅμ᾽ ἠγόρευε καὶ πετρούμενος
ἀνεῖρφ᾽ ὑπ᾽ αὐτὴν ἀσπίδ᾽ εἰλίξας δέμας,
κλίμακος ἀμείβων ξέστ᾽ ἐνηλάτων βάθρα.
ἤδη δ᾽ ὑπερβαίνοντα γεῖσα τειχέων
βάλλει κεραυνῷ Ζεύς νιν: ἐκτύπησε δὲ
χθών, ὥστε δεῖσαι πάντας: ἐκ δὲ κλιμάκων
[ἐσφενδονᾶτο χωρὶς ἀλλήλων μέλη,
κόμαι μὲν εἰς Ὄλυμπον, αἷμα δ᾽ ἐς χθόνα,
χεῖρες δὲ καὶ κῶλ᾽ ὡς κύκλωμ᾽ Ἰξίονος]
εἰλίσσετ᾽: ἐς γῆν δ᾽ ἔμπυρος πίπτει νεκρός.

ὡς δ᾽ εἶδ᾽ Ἄδραστος Ζῆνα πολέμιον στρατῷ,
ἔξω τάφρου καθῖσεν Ἀργείων στρατόν.
οἱ δ᾽ αὖ παρ᾽ ἡμῶν δεξιὸν Διὸς τέρας
ἰδόντες ἐξήλαυνον ἁρμάτων ὄχους
ἱππῆς ὁπλῖται, κἀς μέσ᾽ Ἀργείων ὅπλα
συνῆψαν ἔγχη: πάντα δ᾽ ἦν ὁμοῦ κακά:
ἔθνῃσκον ἐξέπιπτον ἀντύγων ἄπο,
τροχοί τ᾽ ἐπήδων ἄξονές τ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἄξοσι,
νεκροὶ δὲ νεκροῖς ἐξεσωρεύονθ᾽ ὁμοῦ.
πύργων μὲν οὖν γῆς ἔσχομεν κατασκαφὰς
ἐς τὴν παροῦσαν ἡμέραν: εἰ δ᾽ εὐτυχὴς
ἔσται τὸ λοιπὸν ἥδε γῆ, θεοῖς μέλει:
καὶ νῦν γὰρ αὐτὴν δαιμόνων ἔσῳσέ τις.

Χορός
καλὸν τὸ νικᾶν: εἰ δ᾽ ἀμείνον᾽ οἱ θεοὶ
γνώμην ἔχουσιν — εὐτυχὴς εἴην ἐγώ.

Ἰοκάστη
καλῶς τὰ τῶν θεῶν καὶ τὰ τῆς τύχης ἔχει:
παῖδές τε γάρ μοι ζῶσι κἀκπέφευγε γῆ.
Κρέων δ᾽ ἔοικε τῶν ἐμῶν νυμφευμάτων
τῶν τ᾽ Οἰδίπου δύστηνος ἀπολαῦσαι κακῶν,
παιδὸς στερηθείς, τῇ πόλει μὲν εὐτυχῶς,
ἰδίᾳ δὲ λυπρῶς. ἀλλ᾽ ἄνελθέ μοι πάλιν,
τί τἀπὶ τούτοις παῖδ᾽ ἐμὼ δρασείετον.

Ἄγγελος
ἔα τὰ λοιπά: δεῦρ᾽ ἀεὶ γὰρ εὐτυχεῖς.

Ἰοκάστη
τοῦτ᾽ εἰς ὕποπτον εἶπας: οὐκ ἐατέον.

Ἄγγελος
μεῖζον τί χρῄζεις παῖδας ἢ σεσῳσμένους;

Ἰοκάστη
καὶ τἀπίλοιπά γ᾽ εἰ καλῶς πράσσω κλύειν.

Ἄγγελος
μέθες μ᾽: ἔρημος παῖς ὑπασπιστοῦ σέθεν.

Ἰοκάστη
κακόν τι κεύθεις καὶ στέγεις ὑπὸ σκότῳ.

Ἄγγελος
κοὐκ ἄν γε λέξαιμ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀγαθοῖσι σοῖς κακά.

Ἰοκάστη
ἢν μή γε φεύγων ἐκφύγῃς πρὸς αἰθέρα.

Ἄγγελος

Ἄγγελος
αἰαῖ: τί μ᾽ οὐκ εἴασας ἐξ εὐαγγέλου
φήμης ἀπελθεῖν, ἀλλὰ μηνῦσαι κακά;

τὼ παῖδε τὼ σὼ μέλλετον, τολμήματα
αἴσχιστα, χωρὶς μονομαχεῖν παντὸς στρατοῦ,
λέξαντες Ἀργείοισι Καδμείοισί τε
ἐς κοινὸν οἷον μήποτ᾽ ὤφελον λόγον.
Ἐτεοκλέης δ᾽ ὑπῆρξ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ὀρθίου σταθεὶς
πύργου, κελεύσας σῖγα κηρῦξαι στρατῷ:
[ἔλεξε δ᾽: ὦ γῆς Ἑλλάδος στρατηλάται]
Δαναῶν ἀριστῆς, οἵπερ ἦλθετ᾽ ἐνθάδε,
Κάδμου τε λαός, μήτε Πολυνείκους χάριν
ψυχὰς ἀπεμπολᾶτε μήθ᾽ ἡμῶν ὕπερ.
ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτὸς τόνδε κίνδυνον μεθεὶς
μόνος συνάψω συγγόνῳ τῷμῷ μάχην:
κἂν μὲν κτάνω τόνδ᾽, οἶκον οἰκήσω μόνος,
ἡσσώμενος δὲ τῷδε παραδώσω μόνῳ:
ὑμεῖς δ᾽ ἀγῶν᾽ ἀφέντες, Ἀργεῖοι, χθόνα
νίσεσθε, βίοτον μὴ λιπόντες ἐνθάδε,
Σπαρτῶν τε λαὸς ἅλις ὅσος κεῖται νεκρός.
τοσαῦτ᾽ ἔλεξε: σὸς δὲ Πολυνείκης γόνος
ἐκ τάξεων ὥρουσε κἀπῄνει λόγους.
πάντες δ᾽ ἐπερρόθησαν Ἀργεῖοι τάδε
Κάδμου τε λαὸς ὡς δίκαι᾽ ἡγούμενοι.
ἐπὶ τοῖσδε δ᾽ ἐσπείσαντο, κἀν μεταιχμίοις
ὅρκους συνῆψαν ἐμμενεῖν στρατηλάται.

ἤδη δ᾽ ἔκρυπτον σῶμα παγχάλκοις ὅπλοις
δισσοὶ γέροντος Οἰδίπου νεανίαι:
φίλοι δ᾽ ἐκόσμουν, τῆσδε μὲν πρόμον χθονὸς
Σπαρτῶν ἀριστῆς, τὸν δὲ Δαναϊδῶν ἄκροι.
ἔσταν δὲ λαμπρὼ χρῶμά τ᾽ οὐκ ἠλλαξάτην
μαργῶντ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀλλήλοισιν ἰέναι δόρυ.
παρεξιόντες δ᾽ ἄλλος ἄλλοθεν φίλων
λόγοις ἐθάρσυνόν τε κἀξηύδων τάδε:
Πολύνεικες, ἐν σοὶ Ζηνὸς ὀρθῶσαι βρέτας
τρόπαιον Ἄργει τ᾽ εὐκλεᾶ δοῦναι λόγον:
Ἐτεοκλέα δ᾽ αὖ: νῦν πόλεως ὑπερμαχεῖς,
νῦν καλλίνικος γενόμενος σκήπτρων κρατεῖς.
τάδ᾽ ἠγόρευον παρακαλοῦντες ἐς μάχην.

μάντεις δὲ μῆλ᾽ ἔσφαζον, ἐμπύρους τ᾽ ἀκμὰς
ῥήξεις τ᾽ ἐνώμων ὑγρότητ᾽ ἐναντίαν
ἄκραν τε λαμπάδ᾽, ἣ δυοῖν ὅρους ἔχει,
νίκης τε σῆμα καὶ τὸ τῶν ἡσσωμένων.

ἀλλ᾽, εἴ τιν᾽ ἀλκὴν ἢ σοφοὺς ἔχεις λόγους
ἢ φίλτρ᾽ ἐπῳδῶν, στεῖχ᾽, ἐρήτυσον τέκνα
δεινῆς ἀμίλλης: ὡς ὁ κίνδυνος μέγας:
κἄπαθλα δεινὰ δάκρυά σοι γενήσεται
δισσοῖν στερείσῃ τῇδ᾽ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τέκνοιν.

Ἰοκάστη
ὦ τέκνον ἔξελθ᾽ Ἀντιγόνη δόμων πάρος:
οὐκ ἐν χορείαις οὐδὲ παρθενεύμασι
νῦν σοι προχωρεῖ δαιμόνων κατάστασις,
ἀλλ᾽ ἄνδρ᾽ ἀρίστω καὶ κασιγνήτω σέθεν
ἐς θάνατον ἐκνεύοντε κωλῦσαί σε δεῖ
ξὺν μητρὶ τῇ σῇ μὴ πρὸς ἀλλήλοιν θανεῖν.

Ἀντιγόνη
τίν᾽, ὦ τεκοῦσα μῆτερ, ἔκπληξιν νέαν
φίλοις ἀυτεῖς τῶνδε δωμάτων πάρος;

Ἰοκάστη
ὦ θύγατερ, ἔρρει σῶν κασιγνήτων βίος.

Ἀντιγόνη
πῶς εἶπας;

Ἰοκάστη
αἰχμὴν ἐς μίαν καθέστατον.

Ἀντιγόνη
οἲ ‘γώ, τί λέξεις, μῆτερ;

Ἰοκάστη
οὐ φίλ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἔπου.

Ἀντιγόνη
ποῖ, παρθενῶνας ἐκλιποῦσ᾽;

Ἰοκάστη
ἀνὰ στρατόν.

Ἀντιγόνη
αἰδούμεθ᾽ ὄχλον.

Ἰοκάστη
οὐκ ἐν αἰσχύνῃ τὰ σά.

Ἀντιγόνη
δράσω δὲ δὴ τί;

Ἰοκάστη
συγγόνων λύσεις ἔριν.

Ἀντιγόνη
τί δρῶσα, μῆτερ;

Ἰοκάστη
προσπίτνουσ᾽ ἐμοῦ μέτα.

Ἀντιγόνη
ἡγοῦ σὺ πρὸς μεταίχμι᾽: οὐ μελλητέον.

Ἰοκάστη
ἔπειγ᾽ ἔπειγε, θύγατερ: ὡς, ἢν μὲν φθάσω
παῖδας πρὸ λόγχης, οὐμὸς ἐν φάει βίος:
θανοῦσι δ᾽ αὐτοῖς συνθανοῦσα κείσομαι.

Χορός
αἰαῖ αἰαῖ, τρομερὰν φρίκᾳ
τρομερὰν φρέν᾽ ἔχω: διὰ σάρκα δ᾽ ἐμὰν
ἔλεος ἔλεος ἔμολε μα-
τέρος δειλαίας.
δίδυμα τέκεα πότερος ἄρα

πότερον αἱμάξει —
ἰώ μοι πόνων, ἰὼ Ζεῦ, ἰὼ γᾶ —
ὁμογενῆ δέραν, ὁμογενῆ ψυχὰν
δι᾽ ἀσπίδων, δι᾽ αἱμάτων;
τάλαιν᾽ ἐγὼ τάλαινα, πό-
τερον ἄρα νέκυν ὀλόμενον ἰαχήσω;

Χορός
φεῦ δᾶ φεῦ δᾶ, δίδυμοι θῆρες,
φόνιαι ψυχαὶ δορὶ παλλόμεναι
πέσεα πέσεα δάι᾽ αὐ-
τίχ᾽ αἱμάξετον.
τάλανες, ὅ τι ποτὲ μονομάχον
ἐπὶ φρέν᾽ ἠλθέτην,
βοᾷ βαρβάρῳ στενακτὰν ἰαχὰν
μελομέναν νεκροῖς δάκρυσι θρηνήσω.
σχεδὸν τύχα πέλας φόνου:
κρινεῖ φάος τὸ μέλλον. ἄ-
ποτμος ἄποτμος ὁ φόνος ἕνεκ᾽ Ἐρινύων.

ἀλλὰ γὰρ Κρέοντα λεύσσω τόνδε δεῦρο συννεφῆ
πρὸς δόμους στείχοντα, παύσω τοὺς παρεστῶτας γόους.

Κρέων
οἴμοι, τί δράσω; πότερ᾽ ἐμαυτὸν ἢ πόλιν
στένω δακρύσας, ἣν πέριξ ἔχει νέφος
[τοιοῦτον ὥστε δι᾽ Ἀχέροντος ἰέναι;]
ἐμός τε γὰρ παῖς γῆς ὅλωλ᾽ ὑπερθανών,
τοὔνομα λαβὼν γενναῖον, ἀνιαρὸν δ᾽ ἐμοί:
ὃν ἄρτι κρημνῶν ἐκ δρακοντείων ἑλὼν
αὐτοσφαγῆ δύστηνος ἐκόμισ᾽ ἐν χεροῖν,
βοᾷ δὲ δῶμα πᾶν: ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἥκω μέτα
γέρων ἀδελφὴν γραῖαν Ἰοκάστην, ὅπως
λούσῃ προθῆταί τ᾽ οὐκέτ᾽ ὄντα παῖδ᾽ ἐμόν.
τοῖς γὰρ θανοῦσι χρὴ τὸν οὐ τεθνηκότα
τιμὰς διδόντα χθόνιον εὐσεβεῖν θεόν.

Χορός
βέβηκ᾽ ἀδελφὴ σή, Κρέων, ἔξω δόμων
κόρη τε μητρὸς Ἀντιγόνη κοινῷ ποδί.

Κρέων
ποῖ; κἀπὶ ποίαν συμφοράν; σήμαινέ μοι.

Χορός
ἥκουσε τέκνα μονομάχῳ μέλλειν δορὶ
ἐς ἀσπίδ᾽ ἥξειν βασιλικῶν δόμων ὕπερ.

Κρέων
πῶς φῄς; νέκυν τοι παιδὸς ἀγαπάζων ἐμοῦ
οὐκ ἐς τόδ᾽ ἦλθον ὥστε καὶ τάδ᾽ εἰδέναι.

Χορός
ἀλλ᾽ οἴχεται μὲν σὴ κασιγνήτη πάλαι:
δοκῶ δ᾽ ἀγῶνα τὸν περὶ ψυχῆς, Κρέον,
ἤδη πεπρᾶχθαι παισὶ τοῖσιν Οἰδίπου.

Κρέων
οἴμοι, τὸ μὲν σημεῖον εἰσορῶ τόδε,
σκυθρωπὸν ὄμμα καὶ πρόσωπον ἀγγέλου
στείχοντος, ὃς πᾶν ἀγγελεῖ τὸ δρώμενον.

Ἄγγελος
ὦ τάλας ἐγώ, τίν᾽ εἶπω μῦθον ἢ τίνας γόους;

Κρέων
οἰχόμεσθ᾽: οὐκ εὐπροσώποις φροιμίοις ἄρχῃ λόγου.

Ἄγγελος
ὦ τάλας, δισσῶς αὐτῶ: μεγάλα γὰρ φέρω κακά.

Κρέων
πρὸς πεπραγμένοισιν ἄλλοις πήμασιν. λέγεις δὲ τί;

Ἄγγελος
οὐκέτ᾽ εἰσὶ σῆς ἀδελφῆς παῖδες ἐν φάει, Κρέον.

Κρέων
αἰαῖ:
μεγάλα μοι θροεῖς πάθεα καὶ πόλει.
ὦ δώματ᾽ εἰσηκούσατ᾽ Οἰδίπου τάδε
παίδων ὁμοίαις συμφοραῖς ὀλωλότων;

Χορός
ὥστ᾽ ἂν δακρῦσαί γ᾽, εἰ φρονοῦντ᾽ ἐτύγχανεν.

Κρέων
οἴμοι ξυμφορᾶς βαρυποτμωτάτας,
[οἴμοι κακῶν δύστηνος: ὦ τάλας ἐγώ.]

Ἄγγελος
εἰ καὶ τὰ πρὸς τούτοισί γ᾽ εἰδείης κακά.

Κρέων
καὶ πῶς γένοιτ᾽ ἂν τῶνδε δυσποτμώτερα;

Ἄγγελος
τέθνηκ᾽ ἀδελφὴ σὴ δυοῖν παίδοιν μέτα.

Χορός
ἀνάγετ᾽ ἀνάγετε κωκυ-
τόν, ἐπὶ κάρα τε λευκοπήχεις κτύπους χεροῖν.

Κρέων
ὦ τλῆμον, οἷον τέρμον᾽, Ἰοκάστη, βίου
γάμων τε τῶν σῶν Σφιγγὸς αἰνιγμοὺς ἔτλης.
πῶς καὶ πέπρακται διπτύχων παίδων φόνος
ἀρᾶς τ᾽ ἀγώνισμ᾽ Οἰδίπου; σήμαινέ μοι.

Ἄγγελος

Ἄγγελος
τὰ μὲν πρὸ πύργων εὐτυχήματα χθονὸς
οἶσθ᾽: οὐ μακρὰν γὰρ τειχέων περιπτυχαί.
[ὥστ᾽ οὐχ ἅπαντά σ᾽ εἰδέναι τὰ δρώμενα.]
ἐπεὶ δὲ χαλκέοις σῶμ᾽ ἐκοσμήσανθ᾽ ὅπλοις
οἱ τοῦ γέροντος Οἰδίπου νεανίαι,
ἔστησαν ἐλθόντ᾽ ἐς μέσον μεταίχμιον
[δισσὼ στρατηγὼ καὶ διπλὼ στρατηλάτα]
ὡς εἰς ἀγῶνα μονομάχου τ᾽ ἀλκὴν δορός.
βλέψας δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ Ἄργος ἦκε Πολυνείκης ἀράς:
ὦ πότνι᾽ Ἥρα — σὸς γάρ εἰμ᾽, ἐπεὶ γάμοις
ἔζευξ᾽ Ἀδράστου παῖδα καὶ ναίω χθόνα —
δός μοι κτανεῖν ἀδελφόν, ἀντήρη δ᾽ ἐμὴν
καθαιματῶσαι δεξιὰν νικηφόρον: —
[αἴσχιστον αἰτῶν στέφανον, ὁμογενῆ κτανεῖν.
πολλοῖς δ᾽ ἐπῄει δάκρυα τῆς τύχης ὅση,
κἄβλεψαν ἀλλήλοισι διαδόντες κόρας.]
Ἐτεοκλέης δὲ Παλλάδος χρυσάσπιδος
βλέψας πρὸς οἶκον ηὔξατ᾽: ὦ Διὸς κόρη,
δὸς ἔγχος ἡμῖν καλλίνικον ἐκ χερὸς
ἐς στέρν᾽ ἀδελφοῦ τῆσδ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ὠλένης βαλεῖν
κτανεῖν θ᾽ ὃς ἦλθε πατρίδα πορθήσων ἐμήν.

ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἀφείθη πυρσὸς ὣς Τυρσηνικῆς
σάλπιγγος ἠχὴ σῆμα φοινίου μάχης,
ᾔξαν δράμημα δεινὸν ἀλλήλοις ἔπι:
κάπροι δ᾽ ὅπως θήγοντες ἀγρίαν γένυν
ξυνῆψαν, ἀφρῷ διάβροχοι γενειάδας:
ᾔσσον δὲ λόγχαις: ἀλλ᾽ ὑφίζανον κύκλοις,
ὅπως σίδηρος ἐξολισθάνοι μάτην.
εἰ δ᾽ ὄμμ᾽ ὑπερσχὸν ἴτυος ἄτερος μάθοι,
λόγχην ἐνώμα, στόματι προφθῆναι θέλων.
ἀλλ᾽ εὖ προσῆγον ἀσπίδων κεγχρώμασιν
ὀφθαλμόν, ἀργὸν ὥστε γίγνεσθαι δόρυ.
πλείων δὲ τοῖς ὁρῶσιν ἐστάλασσ᾽ ἱδρὼς
ἢ τοῖσι δρῶσι, διὰ φίλων ὀρρωδίαν.

1390

Ἐτεοκλέης δὲ ποδὶ μεταψαίρων πέτρον
ἴχνους ὑπόδρομον, κῶλον ἐκτὸς ἀσπίδος
τίθησι: Πολυνείκης δ᾽ ἀπήντησεν δορί,
πληγὴν σιδήρῳ παραδοθεῖσαν εἰσιδών,
κνήμην τε διεπέρασεν Ἀργεῖον δόρυ:
στρατὸς δ᾽ ἀνηλάλαξε Δαναϊδῶν ἅπας.
κἀν τῷδε μόχθῳ γυμνὸν ὦμον εἰσιδὼν
ὁ πρόσθε τρωθεὶς στέρνα Πολυνείκους βίᾳ
διῆκε λόγχην, κἀπέδωκεν ἡδονὰς
Κάδμου πολίταις, ἀπὸ δ᾽ ἔθραυσ᾽ ἄκρον δόρυ.
ἐς δ᾽ ἄπορον ἥκων δορὸς ἐπὶ σκέλος πάλιν
χωρεῖ, λαβὼν δ᾽ ἀφῆκε μάρμαρον πέτρον
μέσον δ᾽ ἄκοντ᾽ ἔθραυσεν: ἐξ ἴσου δ᾽ Ἄρης
ἦν, κάμακος ἀμφοῖν χεῖρ᾽ ἀπεστερημένοιν.

ἔνθεν δὲ κώπας ἁρπάσαντε φασγάνων
ἐς ταὐτὸν ἦκον, συμβαλόντε δ᾽ ἀσπίδας
πολὺν ταραγμὸν ἀμφιβάντ᾽ εἶχον μάχης.
καί πως νοήσας Ἐτεοκλῆς τὸ Θεσσαλὸν
ἐσήγαγεν σόφισμ᾽ ὁμιλίᾳ χθονός.
ἐξαλλαγεὶς γὰρ τοῦ παρεστῶτος πόνου,
λαιὸν μὲν ἐς τοὔπισθεν ἀμφέρει πόδα,
πρόσω τὰ κοῖλα γαστρὸς εὐλαβούμενος,
προβὰς δὲ κῶλον δεξιὸν δι᾽ ὀμφαλοῦ
καθῆκεν ἔγχος σφονδύλοις τ᾽ ἐνήρμοσεν.
ὁμοῦ δὲ κάμψας πλευρὰ καὶ νηδὺν τάλας
σὺν αἱματηραῖς σταγόσι Πολυνείκης πίτνει.
ὃ δ᾽, ὡς κρατῶν δὴ καὶ νενικηκὼς μάχῃ,
ξίφος δικὼν ἐς γαῖαν ἐσκύλευέ νιν
τὸν νοῦν πρὸς αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔχων, ἐκεῖσε δέ.
ὃ καί νιν ἔσφηλ᾽: ἔτι γὰρ ἐμπνέων βραχύ,
σῴζων σίδηρον ἐν λυγρῷ πεσήματι,
μόλις μέν, ἐξέτεινε δ᾽ εἰς ἦπαρ ξίφος.
Ἐτεοκλέους ὁ πρόσθε Πολυνείκης πεσών.

γαῖαν δ᾽ ὀδὰξ ἑλόντες ἀλλήλων πέλας
πίπτουσιν ἄμφω κοὐ διώρισαν κράτος.

Χορός

φεῦ φεῦ, κακῶν σῶν, Οἰδίπου, σ᾽ ὅσον στένω:
τὰς σὰς δ᾽ ἀρὰς ἔοικεν ἐκπλῆσαι θεός.

Ἄγγελος

ἄκουε δή νυν καὶ τὰ πρὸς τούτοις κακά.
ἐπεὶ τέκνω πεσόντ᾽ ἐλειπέτην βίον,
ἐν τῷδε μήτηρ ἡ τάλαινα προσπίτνει
σὺν παρθένῳ τε καὶ προθυμίᾳ ποδός.
τετρωμένους δ᾽ ἰδοῦσα καιρίους σφαγὰς
ᾤμωξεν: ὦ τέκν᾽, ὑστέρα βοηδρόμος
πάρειμι. προσπίτνουσα δ᾽ ἐν μέρει τέκνα
ἔκλαι᾽, ἐθρήνει, τὸν πολὺν μαστῶν πόνον
στένουσ᾽, ἀδελφή θ᾽ ἡ παρασπίζουσ᾽ ὁμοῦ:
ὦ γηροβοσκὼ μητρός, ὦ γάμους ἐμοὺς
προδόντ᾽ ἀδελφῷ φιλτάτῳ. στέρνων δ᾽ ἄπο
φύσημ᾽ ἀνεὶς δύσθνητον Ἐτεοκλῆς ἄναξ
ἤκουσε μητρός, κἀπιθεὶς ὑγρὰν χέρα
φωνὴν μὲν οὐκ ἀφῆκεν, ὀμμάτων δ᾽ ἄπο
προσεῖπε δακρύοις, ὥστε σημῆναι φίλα.
ὃ δ᾽ ἦν ἔτ᾽ ἔμπνους, πρὸς κασιγνήτην δ᾽ ἰδὼν
γραῖάν τε μητέρ᾽ εἶπε Πολυνείκης τάδε:
Ἀπωλόμεσθα, μῆτερ: οἰκτίρω δὲ σὲ
καὶ τήνδ᾽ ἀδελφὴν καὶ κασίγνητον νεκρόν.
φίλος γὰρ ἐχθρὸς ἐγένετ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως φίλος.
θάψον δέ μ᾽, ὦ τεκοῦσα, καὶ σύ, σύγγονε,
ἐν γῇ πατρῴᾳ, καὶ πόλιν θυμουμένην
παρηγορεῖτον, ὡς τοσόνδε γοῦν τύχω
χθονὸς πατρῴας, κεἰ δόμους ἀπώλεσα.
ξυνάρμοσον δὲ βλέφαρά μου τῇ σῇ χερί,
μῆτερ — τίθησι δ᾽ αὐτὸς ὀμμάτων ἔπι —
καὶ χαίρετ᾽: ἤδη γάρ με περιβάλλει σκότος.

ἄμφω δ᾽ ἅμ᾽ ἐξέπνευσαν ἄθλιον βίον.
μήτηρ δ᾽, ὅπως ἐσεῖδε τήνδε συμφοράν,
ὑπερπαθήσασ᾽, ἥρπασ᾽ ἐκ νεκρῶν ξίφος
κἄπραξε δεινά: διὰ μέσου γὰρ αὐχένος
ὠθεῖ σίδηρον, ἐν δὲ τοῖσι φιλτάτοις
θανοῦσα κεῖται περιβαλοῦσ᾽ ἀμφοῖν χέρας.

ἀνῆξε δ᾽ ὀρθὸς λαὸς εἰς ἔριν λόγων,
ἡμεῖς μὲν ὡς νικῶντα δεσπότην ἐμόν,
οἱ δ᾽ ὡς ἐκεῖνον. ἦν δ᾽ ἔρις στρατηλάταις,
οἱ μὲν πατάξαι πρόσθε Πολυνείκη δορί,
οἱ δ᾽ ὡς θανόντων οὐδαμοῦ νίκη πέλοι.
κἀν τῷδ᾽ ὑπεξῆλθ᾽ Ἀντιγόνη στρατοῦ δίχα.
οἱ δ᾽ εἰς ὅπλ᾽ ᾖσσον: εὖ δέ πως προμηθίᾳ
καθῆστο Κάδμου λαὸς ἀσπίδων ἔπι:
κἄφθημεν οὔπω τεύχεσιν πεφραγμένον
Ἀργεῖον ἐσπεσόντες ἐξαίφνης στρατόν.
κοὐδεὶς ὑπέστη, πεδία δ᾽ ἐξεπίμπλασαν
φεύγοντες, ἔρρει δ᾽ αἷμα μυρίων νεκρῶν
λόγχαις πιτνόντων. ὡς δ᾽ ἐνικῶμεν μάχῃ,
οἱ μὲν Διὸς τροπαῖον ἵστασαν βρέτας,
οἱ δ᾽ ἀσπίδας συλῶντες Ἀργείων νεκρῶν
σκυλεύματ᾽ εἴσω τειχέων ἐπέμπομεν.
ἄλλοι δὲ τοὺς θανόντας Ἀντιγόνης μέτα
νεκροὺς φέρουσιν ἐνθάδ᾽ οἰκτίσαι φίλοις.
πόλει δ᾽ ἀγῶνες οἱ μὲν εὐτυχέστατοι
τῇδ᾽ ἐξέβησαν, οἱ δὲ δυστυχέστατοι.

Χορός

οὐκ εἰς ἀκοὰς ἔτι δυστυχία
δώματος ἥκει: πάρα γὰρ λεύσσειν
πτώματα νεκρῶν τρισσῶν ἤδη
τάδε πρὸς μελάθροις κοινῷ θανάτῳ
σκοτίαν αἰῶνα λαχόντων.

Ἀντιγόνη

οὐ προκαλυπτομένα βοτρυχώδεος
ἁβρὰ παρηίδος οὐδ᾽ ὑπὸ παρθενί-
ας τὸν ὑπὸ βλεφάροις φοίνικ᾽, ἐρύθημα προσώπου,
αἰδομένα φέρομαι βάκχα νεκύ-
ων, κράδεμνα δικοῦσα κόμας ἀπ᾽ ἐ-
μᾶς, στολίδος κροκόεσσαν ἀνεῖσα τρυφάν,
ἀγεμόνευμα νεκροῖσι πολύστονον. αἰαῖ, ἰώ μοι.
ὦ Πολύνεικες, ἔφυς ἄρ᾽ ἐπώνυμος: ὤμοι μοι, Θῆβαι:
σὰ δ᾽ ἔρις — οὐκ ἔρις, ἀλλὰ φόνῳ φόνος —
Οἰδιπόδα δόμον ὤλεσε κρανθεῖσ᾽
αἵματι δεινῷ, αἵματι λυγρῷ.
τίνα προσῳδὸν
ἢ τίνα μουσοπόλον στοναχὰν ἐπὶ
δάκρυσι δάκρυσιν, ὦ δόμος, ὦ δόμος,
ἀγκαλέσωμαι,
τρισσὰ φέρουσα τάδ᾽ αἵματα σύγγονα,
ματέρα καὶ τέκνα, χάρματ᾽ Ἐρινύος;
ἃ δόμον Οἰδιπόδα πρόπαν ὤλεσε,
τᾶς ἀγρίας ὅτε
δυσξυνέτου ξυνετὸν μέλος ἔγνω
Σφιγγὸς ἀοιδοῦ σῶμα φονεύσας.
ἰώ μοί μοι, πάτερ,
τίς Ἑλλὰς ἢ βάρβαρος ἢ
τῶν προπάροιθ᾽ εὐγενετᾶν
ἕτερος ἔτλα κακῶν τοσῶνδ᾽
αἵματος ἀμερίου
τοιάδ᾽ ἄχεα φανερά;
τάλαιν᾽, ὡς ἐλελίζει —
τίς ἄρ᾽ ὄρνις, ἢ δρυὸς ἢ
ἐλάτας ἀκροκόμοις ἀμφὶ κλάδοις ἑζομένα,
μονομάτορσιν ὀδυρμοῖς
ἐμοῖς ἄχεσι συνῳδός;
αἴλινον αἰάγμασιν ἃ
τοῖσδε προκλαίω μονάδ᾽ αἰ-
ῶνα διάξουσα τὸν αἰεὶ χρόνον ἐν
λειβομένοισιν δάκρυσιν [ἰαχήσω].

τίν᾽ ἐπὶ πρῶτον ἀπὸ χαί-
τας σπαραγμοῖς ἀπαρχὰς βάλω;
ματρὸς ἐμᾶς ἢ διδύμοι-
σι γάλακτος παρὰ μαστοῖς
ἢ πρὸς ἀδελ-
φῶν οὐλόμεν᾽ αἰκίσματα νεκρῶν;

ὀτοτοτοῖ λεῖπε σοὺς
δόμους, ἀλαὸν ὄμμα φέρων,
πάτερ γεραιέ, δεῖξον,
Οἰδιπόδα, σὸν αἰῶνα μέλεον, ὃς † ἐπὶ
δώμασιν ἀέριον σκότον ὄμμασι †
σοῖσι βαλὼν ἕλκεις μακρόπνουν ζόαν.
κλύεις, ὦ κατ᾽ αὐλὰν
ἀλαίνων γεραιὸν
πόδ᾽ ἢ δεμνίοις δύ-
στανος ἰαύων;

Οἰδίπους
τί μ᾽, ὦ παρθένε, βακτρεύμασι τυφλοῦ
ποδὸς ἐξάγαγες ἐς φῶς
λεχήρη σκοτίων ἐκ θαλάμων οἰκ-
τροτάτοισιν δακρύοισιν,
πολιὸν αἰθέρος ἀφανὲς εἴδωλον ἢ
νέκυν ἔνερθεν ἢ
πτανὸν ὄνειρον;

Ἀντιγόνη
δυστυχὲς ἀγγελίας ἔπος οἴσῃ,
πάτερ, οὐκέτι σοι τέκνα λεύσσει
φάος οὐδ᾽ ἄλοχος, παραβάκτροις
ἃ πόδα σὸν τυφλόπουν θεραπεύμασιν αἰὲν ἐμόχθει,
<ὦ> πάτερ, ὤμοι.

Οἰδίπους
ὤμοι ἐμῶν παθέων: πάρα γὰρ στενάχειν τάδ᾽, ἀυτεῖν.

τρισσαὶ ψυχαί: ποίᾳ μοίρᾳ
πῶς ἔλιπον φάος; ὦ τέκνον, αὔδα.

Ἀντιγόνη
οὐκ ἐπ᾽ ὀνείδεσιν οὐδ᾽ ἐπιχάρμασιν,
ἀλλ᾽ ὀδύναισι λέγω: σὸς ἀλάστωρ
ξίφεσιν βρίθων
καὶ πυρὶ καὶ σχετλίαισι μάχαις ἐπὶ παῖδας ἔβα σούς,
ὦ πάτερ, ὤ μοι.

Οἰδίπους
αἰαῖ.

Ἀντιγόνη
τί τάδε καταστένεις,

Οἰδίπους
τέκνα.

Ἀντιγόνη
δι᾽ ὀδύνας ἔβας:
εἰ δὲ τέθριππά γ᾽ ἔθ᾽ ἅρματα λεύσσων
ἀελίου τάδε σώματα νεκρῶν
ὄμματος αὐγαῖς σαῖς ἐπενώμας —

Οἰδίπους
τῶν μὲν ἐμῶν τεκέων φανερὸν κακόν:
ἃ δὲ τάλαιν᾽ ἄλοχος τίνι μοι, τέκνον, ὤλετο μοίρᾳ;

Ἀντιγόνη
δάκρυα γοερὰ
φανερὰ πᾶσι τιθεμένα,
τέκεσι μαστὸν ἔφερεν ἔφερεν
ἱκέτις ἱκέτιν ὀρομένα.
ἦρε δ᾽ ἐν Ἠλέκτραισι πύλαις τέκνα
λωτοτρόφον κατὰ λείμακα λόγχαις,
κοινὸν ἐνυάλιον,
μάτηρ, ὥστε λέοντας ἐναύλους,

μαρναμένους ἐπὶ τραύμασιν, αἵματος
ἤδη ψυχρὰν λοιβὰν φονίαν,
ἃν ἔλαχ᾽ Ἅιδας, ὥπασε δ᾽ Ἄρης:
χαλκόκροτον δὲ λαβοῦσα νεκρῶν πάρα φάσγανον εἴσω
σαρκὸς ἔβαψεν, ἄχει δὲ τέκνων ἔπεσ᾽ ἀμφὶ τέκνοισι.
πάντα δ᾽ ἐν ἅματι τῷδε συνάγαγεν,
ὦ πάτερ, ἀμετέροισι δόμοισιν ἄχη θεὸς ὃς
τάδε τελευτᾷ.

Χορός
πολλῶν κακῶν κατῆρξεν Οἰδίπου δόμοις
τόδ᾽ ἦμαρ: εἴη δ᾽ εὐτυχέστερος βίος.

Κρέων
οἴκτων μὲν ἤδη λήγεθ᾽, ὡς ὥρα τάφου
μνήμην τίθεσθαι: τόνδε δ᾽, Οἰδίπου, λόγον
ἄκουσον: ἀρχὰς τῆσδε γῆς ἔδωκέ μοι
Ἐτεοκλέης παῖς σός, γάμων φερνὰς διδοὺς
Αἵμονι κόρης τε λέκτρον Ἀντιγόνης σέθεν.
οὐκ οὖν σ᾽ ἐάσω τήνδε γῆν οἰκεῖν ἔτι:
σαφῶς γὰρ εἶπε Τειρεσίας οὐ μή ποτε
σοῦ τήνδε γῆν οἰκοῦντος εὖ πράξειν πόλιν.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐκκομίζου. καὶ τάδ᾽ οὐχ ὕβρει λέγω
οὐδ᾽ ἐχθρὸς ὢν σός, διὰ δὲ τοὺς ἀλάστορας
τοὺς σοὺς δεδοικὼς μή τι γῆ πάθῃ κακόν.

Οἰδίπους
ὦ μοῖρ᾽, ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς ὥς μ᾽ ἔφυσας ἄθλιον
καὶ τλήμον᾽, εἴ τις ἄλλος ἀνθρώπων ἔφυ:
ὃν καὶ πρὶν ἐς φῶς μητρὸς ἐκ γονῆς μολεῖν,
ἄγονον Ἀπόλλων Λαΐῳ μ᾽ ἐθέσπισεν
φονέα γενέσθαι πατρός: ὦ τάλας ἐγώ.
ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἐγενόμην, αὖθις ὁ σπείρας πατὴρ
κτείνει με νομίσας πολέμιον πεφυκέναι:
χρῆν γὰρ θανεῖν νιν ἐξ ἐμοῦ: πέμπει δέ με
μαστὸν ποθοῦντα θηρσὶν ἄθλιον βοράν:
οὗ σῳζόμεσθα — Ταρτάρου γὰρ ὤφελεν

ἐλθεῖν Κιθαιρὼν εἰς ἄβυσσα χάσματα,
ὅς μ᾽ οὐ διώλεσ᾽, ἀλλὰ . . . . .
. . . . . δουλεῦσαί τέ μοι
δαίμων ἔδωκε Πόλυβον ἀμφὶ δεσπότην.
κτανὼν δ᾽ ἐμαυτοῦ πατέρ᾽ ὁ δυσδαίμων ἐγὼ
ἐς μητρὸς ἦλθον τῆς ταλαιπώρου λέχος,
παῖδάς τ᾽ ἀδελφοὺς ἔτεκον, οὓς ἀπώλεσα,
ἀρὰς παραλαβὼν Λαΐου καὶ παισὶ δούς.
οὐ γὰρ τοσοῦτον ἀσύνετος πέφυκ᾽ ἐγὼ
ὥστ᾽ εἰς ἔμ᾽ ὄμματ᾽ ἔς τ᾽ ἐμῶν παίδων βίον
ἄνευ θεῶν του ταῦτ᾽ ἐμηχανησάμην.

εἶέν: τί δράσω δῆθ᾽ ὁ δυσδαίμων ἐγώ;
τίς ἡγεμών μοι ποδὸς ὁμαρτήσει τυφλοῦ;
ἦδ᾽ ἡ θανοῦσα; ζῶσά γ᾽ ἂν σάφ᾽ οἶδ᾽ ὅτι.
ἀλλ᾽ εὔτεκνος ξυνωρίς; ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἔστι μοι.
ἀλλ᾽ ἔτι νεάζων αὐτὸς εὕροιμ᾽ ἂν βίον;
πόθεν; τί μ᾽ ἄρδην ὦδ᾽ ἀποκτείνεις, Κρέον;
ἀποκτενεῖς γάρ, εἴ με γῆς ἔξω βαλεῖς.
οὐ μὴν ἐλίξας γ᾽ ἀμφὶ σὸν χεῖρας γόνυ
κακὸς φανοῦμαι: τὸ γὰρ ἐμόν ποτ᾽ εὐγενὲς
οὐκ ἂν προδοίην, οὐδέ περ πράσσων κακῶς.

Κρέων

σοί τ᾽ εὖ λέλεκται γόνατα μὴ χρῴζειν ἐμά,
ἐγὼ δὲ ναίειν σ᾽ οὐκ ἐάσαιμ᾽ ἂν χθόνα.
νεκρῶν δὲ τῶνδε τὸν μὲν ἐς δόμους χρεὼν
ἤδη κομίζειν, τόνδε δ᾽, ὃς πέρσων πόλιν
πατρίδα σὺν ἄλλοις ἦλθε, Πολυνείκους νέκυν
ἐκβάλετ᾽ ἄθαπτον τῆσδ᾽ ὅρων ἔξω χθονός.
κηρύξεται δὲ πᾶσι Καδμείοις τάδε:
ὃς ἂν νεκρὸν τόνδ᾽ ἢ καταστέφων ἁλῷ
ἢ γῇ καλύπτων, θάνατον ἀνταλλάξεται.
[ἐᾶν δ᾽ ἄκλαυτον, ἄταφον, οἰωνοῖς βοράν.]
σὺ δ᾽ ἐκλιποῦσα τριπτύχους θρήνους νεκρῶν
κόμιζε σαυτήν, Ἀντιγόνη, δόμων ἔσω

καὶ παρθενεύου τὴν ἰοῦσαν ἡμέραν
μένουσ᾽, ἐν ᾗ σε λέκτρον Αἵμονος μένει.

Ἀντιγόνη
ὦ πάτερ, ἐν οἵοις κείμεθ᾽ ἄθλιοι κακοῖς.
ὥς σε στενάζω τῶν τεθνηκότων πλέον:
οὐ γὰρ τὸ μέν σοι βαρὺ κακῶν, τὸ δ᾽ οὐ βαρύ,
ἀλλ᾽ εἰς ἅπαντα δυστυχὴς ἔφυς, πάτερ.
ἀτὰρ σ᾽ ἐρωτῶ τὸν νεωστὶ κοίρανον:
τί τόνδ᾽ ὑβρίζεις πατέρ᾽ ἀποστέλλων χθονός;
τί θεσμοποιεῖς ἐπὶ ταλαιπώρῳ νεκρῷ;

Κρέων
Ἐτεοκλέους βουλεύματ᾽, οὐχ ἡμῶν, τάδε.

Ἀντιγόνη
ἄφρονά γε, καὶ σὺ μῶρος ὃς ἐπίθου τάδε.

Κρέων
πῶς; τἀντεταλμέν᾽ οὐ δίκαιον ἐκπονεῖν;

Ἀντιγόνη
οὔκ, ἢν πονηρά γ᾽ ᾖ κακῶς τ᾽ εἰρημένα.

Κρέων
τί δ᾽; οὐ δικαίως ὅδε κυσὶν δοθήσεται;

Ἀντιγόνη
οὐκ ἔννομον γὰρ τὴν δίκην πράσσεσθέ νιν.

Κρέων
εἴπερ γε πόλεως ἐχθρὸς ἦν οὐκ ἐχθρὸς ὤν.

Ἀντιγόνη
οὐκοῦν ἔδωκε τῇ τύχῃ τὸν δαίμονα.

Κρέων
καὶ τῷ τάφῳ νυν τὴν δίκην παρασχέτω.

Ἀντιγόνη
τί πλημμελήσας, τὸ μέρος εἰ μετῆλθε γῆς;

Κρέων
ἄταφος ὅδ᾽ ἀνήρ, ὡς μάθῃς, γενήσεται.

Ἀντιγόνη
ἐγώ σφε θάψω, κἂν ἀπεννέπῃ πόλις.

Κρέων
σαυτὴν ἄρ᾽ ἐγγὺς τῷδε συνθάψεις νεκρῷ.

Ἀντιγόνη
ἀλλ᾽ εὐκλεές τοι δύο φίλω κεῖσθαι πέλας.

Κρέων
λάζυσθε τήνδε κἀς δόμους κομίζετε.

Ἀντιγόνη
οὐ δῆτ᾽, ἐπεὶ τοῦδ᾽ οὐ μεθήσομαι νεκροῦ.

Κρέων
ἔκριν᾽ ὁ δαίμων, παρθέν᾽, οὐχ ἃ σοὶ δοκεῖ.

Ἀντιγόνη
κἀκεῖνο κέκριται, μὴ ἐφυβρίζεσθαι νεκρούς.

Κρέων
ὡς οὔτις ἀμφὶ τῷδ᾽ ὑγρὰν θήσει κόνιν.

Ἀντιγόνη
ναὶ πρός σε τῆσδε μητρὸς Ἰοκάστης, Κρέον.

Κρέων
μάταια μοχθεῖς: οὐ γὰρ ἂν τύχοις τάδε.

Ἀντιγόνη
σὺ δ᾽ ἀλλὰ νεκρῷ λουτρὰ περιβαλεῖν μ᾽ ἔα.

Κρέων
ἓν τοῦτ᾽ ἂν εἴη τῶν ἀπορρήτων πόλει.

Ἀντιγόνη
ἀλλ᾽ ἀμφὶ τραύματ᾽ ἄγρια τελαμῶνας βαλεῖν.

Κρέων
οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως σὺ τόνδε τιμήσεις νέκυν.

Ἀντιγόνη
ὦ φίλτατ᾽, ἀλλὰ στόμα γε σὸν προσπτύξομαι.

Κρέων
οὐ μὴ ἐς γάμους σοὺς συμφορὰν κτήσῃ γόοις.

Ἀντιγόνη
ἦ γὰρ γαμοῦμαι ζῶσα παιδὶ σῷ ποτε;

Κρέων
πολλή σ᾽ ἀνάγκη: ποῖ γὰρ ἐκφεύξῃ λέχος;

Ἀντιγόνη
νὺξ ἆρ᾽ ἐκείνη Δαναΐδων μ᾽ ἕξει μίαν.

Κρέων
εἶδες τὸ τόλμημ᾽ οἷον ἐξωνείδισεν;

Ἀντιγόνη
ἴστω σίδηρος ὅρκιόν τέ μοι ξίφος.

Κρέων
τί δ᾽ ἐκπροθυμῇ τῶνδ᾽ ἀπηλλάχθαι γάμων;

Ἀντιγόνη
συμφεύξομαι τῷδ᾽ ἀθλιωτάτῳ πατρί.

Κρέων
γενναιότης σοι, μωρία δ᾽ ἔνεστί τις.

Ἀντιγόνη
καὶ ξυνθανοῦμαί γ᾽, ὡς μάθῃς περαιτέρω.

Κρέων
ἴθ᾽, οὐ φονεύσεις παῖδ᾽ ἐμόν, λίπε χθόνα.

Οἰδίπους
ὦ θύγατερ, αἰνῶ μέν σε τῆς προθυμίας.

Ἀντιγόνη
ἀλλ᾽ εἰ γαμοίμην, σὺ δὲ μόνος φεύγοις, πάτερ;

Οἰδίπους
μέν᾽ εὐτυχοῦσα, τἄμ᾽ ἐγὼ στέρξω κακά.

Ἀντιγόνη
καὶ τίς σε τυφλὸν ὄντα θεραπεύσει, πάτερ;

Οἰδίπους
πεσὼν ὅπου μοι μοῖρα κείσομαι πέδῳ.

Ἀντιγόνη
ὁ δ᾽ Οἰδίπους ποῦ καὶ τὰ κλείν᾽ αἰνίγματα;

Οἰδίπους
ὄλωλ᾽: ἓν ἦμάρ μ᾽ ὤλβισ᾽, ἓν δ᾽ ἀπώλεσεν.

Ἀντιγόνη
οὔκουν μετασχεῖν κἀμὲ δεῖ τῶν σῶν κακῶν;

Οἰδίπους
αἰσχρὰ φυγὴ θυγατρὶ σὺν τυφλῷ πατρί.

Ἀντιγόνη
οὔ, σωφρονούσῃ γ᾽, ἀλλὰ γενναία, πάτερ.

Οἰδίπους
προσάγαγέ νύν με, μητρὸς ὡς ψαύσω σέθεν.

Ἀντιγόνη
ἰδού, γεραιᾶς φιλτάτης ψαῦσον χερί.

Οἰδίπους
ὦ μῆτερ, ὦ ξυνάορ᾽ ἀθλιωτάτη.

Ἀντιγόνη
οἰκτρὰ πρόκειται, πάντ᾽ ἔχουσ᾽ ὁμοῦ κακά.

Οἰδίπους
Ἐτεοκλέους δὲ πτῶμα Πολυνείκους τε ποῦ;

Ἀντιγόνη
τώδ᾽ ἐκτάδην σοι κεῖσθον ἀλλήλοιν πέλας.

Οἰδίπους
πρόσθες τυφλὴν χεῖρ᾽ ἐπὶ πρόσωπα δυστυχῆ.

Ἀντιγόνη
ἰδού, θανόντων σῶν τέκνων ἅπτου χερί.

Οἰδίπους
ὦ φίλα πεσήματ᾽ ἄθλι᾽ ἀθλίου πατρός.

Ἀντιγόνη
ὦ φίλτατον δῆτ᾽ ὄνομα Πολυνείκους ἐμοί.

Οἰδίπους
νῦν χρησμός, ὦ παῖ, Λοξίου περαίνεται.

Ἀντιγόνη
ὁ ποῖος; ἀλλ᾽ ἦ πρὸς κακοῖς ἐρεῖς κακά;

Οἰδίπους
ἐν ταῖς Ἀθήναις κατθανεῖν μ᾽ ἀλώμενον.

Ἀντιγόνη
ποῦ; τίς σε πύργος Ἀτθίδος προσδέξεται;

Οἰδίπους
ἱερὸς Κολωνός, δώμαθ᾽ ἱππίου θεοῦ.
ἀλλ᾽ εἶα, τυφλῷ τῷδ᾽ ὑπηρέτει πατρί,
ἐπεὶ προθυμῇ τῆσδε κοινοῦσθαι φυγῆς.

Ἀντιγόνη
ἴθ᾽ ἐς φυγὰν τάλαιναν: ὄρεγε χέρα φίλαν,
πάτερ γεραιέ, πομπίμαν
ἔχων ἔμ᾽ ὥστε ναυσίπομπον αὔραν.

Οἰδίπους
<ἰδοὺ> ἰδού, πορεύομαι:
τέκνον, σύ μοι ποδαγὸς ἀθλία γενοῦ.

Ἀντιγόνη
γενόμεθα γενόμεθ᾽, ἄθλιαί
γε δῆτα Θηβαῖαν μάλιστα παρθένων.

Οἰδίπους
πόθι γεραιὸν ἴχνος τίθημι;
βάκτρα πρόσφερ᾽, ὦ τέκνον.

Ἀντιγόνη
τᾷδε τᾷδε βᾶθί μοι,
τᾷδε τᾷδε πόδα τιθείς,
ὥστ᾽ ὄνειρον ἰσχύν.

Οἰδίπους
ἰὼ ἰώ, δυστυχεστάτας φυγὰς
ἐλαύνων τὸν γέροντά μ᾽ ἐκ πάτρας.
ἰὼ ἰώ, δεινὰ δείν᾽ ἐγὼ τλάς.

Ἀντιγόνη
τί τλάς; τί τλάς; οὐχ ὁρᾷ Δίκα κακούς,
οὐδ᾽ ἀμείβεται βροτῶν ἀσυνεσίας.

Οἰδίπους
ὅδ᾽ εἰμὶ μοῦσαν ὃς ἐπὶ καλ-

λίνικον οὐράνιον ἔβαν
<μειξο>παρθένου κόρας
αἴνιγμ᾽ ἀσύνετον εὑρών.

Ἀντιγόνη
Σφιγγὸς ἀναφέρεις ὄνειδος.
ἄπαγε τὰ πάρος εὐτυχήματ᾽ αὐδῶν.
τάδε σ᾽ ἐπέμενε μέλεα πάθεα
φυγάδα πατρίδος ἄπο γενόμενον,
ὦ πάτερ, θανεῖν που.

ποθεινὰ δάκρυα παρὰ φίλαισι παρθένοις
λιποῦσ᾽ ἄπειμι πατρίδος ἀποπρὸ γαίας
ἀπαρθένευτ᾽ ἀλωμένα.
φεῦ τὸ χρήσιμον φρενῶν
ἐς πατρός γε συμφορὰς
εὐκλεᾶ με θήσει:
τάλαιν᾽ ἐγὼ <σῶν> συγγόνου θ᾽ ὑβρισμάτων,
ὃς ἐκ δόμων νέκυς ἄθαπτος οἴχεται
μέλεος, ὅν, εἴ με καὶ θανεῖν, πάτερ, χρεών,
σκότια γᾷ καλύψω.

Οἰδίπους
πρὸς ἥλικας φάνηθι σάς.

Ἀντιγόνη
ἅλις ὀδυρμάτων ἐμῶν.

Οἰδίπους
σὺ δ᾽ ἀμφὶ βωμίους λιτὰς —

Ἀντιγόνη
κόρον ἔχουσ᾽ ἐμῶν κακῶν.

Οἰδίπους
ἴθ᾽ ἀλλὰ Βρόμιος ἵνα τε σηκὸς
ἄβατος ὄρεσι μαινάδων.

Ἀντιγόνη
Καδμείαν ᾦ νεβρίδα
στολιδωσαμένα ποτ᾽ ἐγὼ Σεμέλας
θίασον ἱερὸν ὄρεσιν ἀνεχόρευσα,
χάριν ἀχάριτον ἐς θεοὺς διδοῦσα;

Οἰδίπους
ὦ πάτρας κλεινῆς πολῖται, λεύσσετ᾽, Οἰδίπους ὅδε,
ὃς τὰ κλείν᾽ αἰνίγματ᾽ ἔγνω καὶ μέγιστος ἦν ἀνήρ,
ὃς μόνος Σφιγγὸς κατέσχον τῆς μιαιφόνου κράτη,
νῦν ἄτιμος αὐτὸς οἰκτρὸς ἐξελαύνομαι χθονός.
ἀλλὰ γὰρ τί ταῦτα θρηνῶ καὶ μάτην ὀδύρομαι;
τὰς γὰρ ἐκ θεῶν ἀνάγκας θνητὸν ὄντα δεῖ φέρειν.

Χορός
ὦ μέγα σεμνὴ Νίκη, τὸν ἐμὸν
βίοτον κατέχοις
καὶ μὴ λήγοις στεφανοῦσα.

ORESTES

Ἠλέκτρα

Οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν δεινὸν ὧδ’ εἰπεῖν ἔπος
οὐδὲ πάθος οὐδὲ ξυμφορὰ θεήλατος,
ἧς οὐκ ἂν ἄραιτ’ ἄχθος ἀνθρώπου φύσις.
Ὁ γὰρ μακάριος κοὐκ ὀνειδίζω τύχας
[5] Διὸς πεφυκώς, ὡς λέγουσι, Τάνταλος
κορυφῆς ὑπερτέλλοντα δειμαίνων πέτρον
ἀέρι ποτᾶται· καὶ τίνει ταύτην δίκην,
ὡς μὲν λέγουσιν, ὅτι θεοῖς ἄνθρωπος ὢν
κοινῆς τραπέζης ἀξίωμ’ ἔχων ἴσον,
[10] ἀκόλαστον ἔσχε γλῶσσαν, αἰσχίστην νόσον.
Οὗτος φυτεύει Πέλοπα, τοῦ δ’ Ἀτρεὺς ἔφυ,
ᾧ στέμματα ξήνασ’ ἐπέκλωσεν θεὰ
ἔριν, Θυέστῃ πόλεμον ὄντι συγγόνῳ
θέσθαι. Τί τἄρρητ’ ἀναμετρήσασθαί με δεῖ;
[15] Ἔδαισε δ’ οὖν νιν τέκν’ ἀποκτείνας Ἀτρεύς.
Ἀτρέως δέ· τὰς γὰρ ἐν μέσῳ σιγῶ τύχας·
Ὁ κλεινός, εἰ δὴ κλεινός, Ἀγαμέμνων ἔφυ
Μενέλεώς τε Κρήσσης μητρὸς Ἀερόπης ἄπο.
Γαμεῖ δ’ ὃ μὲν δὴ τὴν θεοῖς στυγουμένην
[20] Μενέλαος Ἑλένην, ὃ δὲ Κλυταιμήστρας λέχος
ἐπίσημον εἰς Ἕλληνας Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ·
ᾧ παρθένοι μὲν τρεῖς ἔφυμεν ἐκ μιᾶς,
Χρυσόθεμις Ἰφιγένειά τ’ Ἠλέκτρα τ’ ἐγώ,
ἄρσην δ’ Ὀρέστης, μητρὸς ἀνοσιωτάτης,
[25] ἢ πόσιν ἀπείρῳ περιβαλοῦσ’ ὑφάσματι
ἔκτεινεν· ὧν δ’ ἕκατι, παρθένῳ λέγειν
οὐ καλόν· ἐῶ τοῦτ’ ἀσαφὲς ἐν κοινῷ σκοπεῖν.
Φοίβου δ’ ἀδικίαν μὲν τί δεῖ κατηγορεῖν;
Πείθει δ’ Ὀρέστην μητέρ’ ἥ σφ’ ἐγείνατο
[30] κτεῖναι, πρὸς οὐχ ἅπαντας εὔκλειαν φέρον.
[31] Ὅμως δ’ ἀπέκτειν’ οὐκ ἀπειθήσας θεῷ·
Κἀγὼ μετέσχον, οἷα δὴ γυνή, φόνου.

Πυλάδης θ’, ὃς ἡμῖν συγκατείργασται τάδε.
Ἐντεῦθεν ἀγρίᾳ συντακεὶς νόσῳ νοσεῖ
[35] τλήμων Ὀρέστης ὅδε πεσὼν ἐν δεμνίοις
κεῖται, τὸ μητρὸς δ’ αἷμά νιν τροχηλατεῖ
μανίαισιν· ὀνομάζειν γὰρ αἰδοῦμαι θεὰς
εὐμενίδας, αἳ τόνδ’ ἐξαμιλλῶνται φόβῳ.
[39] Ἕκτον δὲ δὴ τόδ’ ἦμαρ ἐξ ὅτου σφαγαῖς
[40] θανοῦσα μήτηρ πυρὶ καθήγνισται δέμας,
ὧν οὔτε σῖτα διὰ δέρης ἐδέξατο,
οὐ λούτρ’ ἔδωκε χρωτί· χλανιδίων δ’ ἔσω
κρυφθείς, ὅταν μὲν σῶμα κουφισθῇ νόσου,
ἔμφρων δακρύει, ποτὲ δὲ δεμνίων ἄπο
[45] πηδᾷ δρομαῖος, πῶλος ὡς ὑπὸ ζυγοῦ.
Ἔδοξε δ’ Ἄργει τῷδε μήθ’ ἡμᾶς στέγαις,
μὴ πυρὶ δέχεσθαι, μήτε προσφωνεῖν τινα
μητροκτονοῦντας· κυρία δ’ ἥδ’ ἡμέρα,
ἐν ᾗ διοίσει ψῆφον Ἀργείων πόλις,
[50] εἰ χρὴ θανεῖν νὼ λευσίμῳ πετρώματι.
Ἢ φάσγανον θήξαντ’ ἐπ’ αὐχένος βαλεῖν.
[52] Ἐλπίδα δὲ δή τιν’ ἔχομεν ὥστε μὴ θανεῖν·
ἥκει γὰρ ἐς γῆν Μενέλεως Τροίας ἄπο,
λιμένα δὲ Ναυπλίειον ἐκπληρῶν πλάτῃ
[55] ἀκταῖσιν ὁρμεῖ, δαρὸν ἐκ Τροίας χρόνον
ἄλαισι πλαγχθείς· τὴν δὲ δὴ πολύστονον
Ἑλένην, φυλάξας νύκτα, μή τις εἰσιδὼν
μεθ’ ἡμέραν στείχουσαν, ὧν ὑπ’ Ἰλίῳ
παῖδες τεθνᾶσιν, ἐς πέτρων ἔλθῃ βολάς,
[60] προύπεμψεν ἐς δῶμ’ ἡμέτερον· ἔστιν δ’ ἔσω
κλαίουσ’ ἀδελφὴν συμφοράν τε δωμάτων.
Ἔχει δὲ δή τιν’ ἀλγέων παραψυχήν·
ἦν γὰρ κατ’ οἴκους ἔλιφ’, ὅτ’ ἐς Τροίαν ἔπλει,
παρθένον ἐμῇ τε μητρὶ παρέδωκεν τρέφειν
[65] Μενέλαος ἀγαγὼν Ἑρμιόνην Σπάρτης ἄπο,
ταύτῃ γέγηθε κἀπιλήθεται κακῶν.
Βλέπω δὲ πᾶσαν εἰς ὁδόν, πότ’ ὄψομαι
Μενέλαον ἥκονθ’· ὡς τά γ’ ἄλλ’ ἐπ’ ἀσθενοῦς

ῥώμης ὀχούμεθ’, ἤν τι μὴ κείνου πάρα
[70] σωθῶμεν. Ἄπορον χρῆμα δυστυχῶν δόμος.

Ἑλένη

[71] Ὦ παῖ Κλυταιμήστρας τε καὶ Ἀγαμέμνονος,
παρθένε μακρὸν δὴ μῆκος Ἠλέκτρα χρόνου,
πῶς, ὦ τάλαινα, σύ τε κασίγνητός τε σὸς
τλήμων Ὀρέστης μητρὸς ὅδε φονεὺς ἔχει;
[75] Προσφθέγμασιν γὰρ οὐ μιαίνομαι σέθεν,
ἐς Φοῖβον ἀναφέρουσα τὴν ἁμαρτίαν.
Καίτοι στένω γε τὸν Κλυταιμήστρας μόρον,
ἐμῆς ἀδελφῆς, ἥν, ἐπεὶ πρὸς Ἴλιον
ἔπλευσ’ ὅπως ἔπλευσα θεομανεῖ πότμῳ,
[80] οὐκ εἶδον, ἀπολειφθεῖσα δ’ αἰάζω τύχας.

Ἠλέκτρα

[81] Ἑλένη, τί σοι λέγοιμ’ ἂν ἅ γε παροῦσ’ ὁρᾷς;
Ἐν συμφοραῖσι τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος δόμον
ἐγὼ μὲν ἄυπνος πάρεδρος ἀθλίῳ νεκρῷ
νεκρὸς γὰρ οὗτος οὕνεκα σμικρᾶς πνοῆς
[85] θάσσω· τὰ τούτου δ’ οὐκ ὀνειδίζω κακά.
σὺ δ’ εἶ μακαρία μακάριός θ’ ὁ σὸς πόσις.
ἥκετον ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς ἀθλίως πεπραγότας

Ἑλένη

Πόσον χρόνον δ’ ἐν δεμνίοις πέπτωχ’ ὅδε;

Ἠλέκτρα

Ἐξ οὗπερ αἷμα γενέθλιον κατήνυσεν.

Ἑλένη

[90] Ὢ μέλεος· ἡ τεκοῦσά θ’, ὡς διώλετο.

Ἠλέκτρα

Οὕτως ἔχει τάδ’, ὥστ’ ἀπείρηκεν κακοῖς.

Ἑλένη

Πρὸς θεῶν, πίθοι’ ἂν δῆτά μοί τι, παρθένε;

Ἠλέκτρα

Ὡς ἄσχολός γε συγγόνου προσεδρίᾳ.

Ἑλένη

Βούλῃ τάφον μοι πρὸς κασιγνήτης μολεῖν;

Ἠλέκτρα

[95] Μητρὸς κελεύεις τῆς ἐμῆς; Τίνος χάριν;

Ἑλένη

Κόμης ἀπαρχὰς καὶ χοὰς φέρουσ’ ἐμάς.

Ἠλέκτρα

Σοὶ δ’ οὐχὶ θεμιτὸν πρὸς φίλων στείχειν τάφον;

Ἑλένη

Δεῖξαι γὰρ Ἀργείοισι σῶμ’ αἰσχύνομαι.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ὀψέ γε φρονεῖς εὖ, τότε λιποῦσ’ αἰσχρῶς δόμους.

Ἑλένη

[100] Ὀρθῶς ἔλεξας, οὐ φίλως δ’ ἐμοὶ λέγεις.

Ἠλέκτρα

Αἰδὼς δὲ δὴ τίς σ’ ἐς Μυκηναίους ἔχει;

Ἑλένη

Δέδοικα πατέρας τῶν ὑπ’ Ἰλίῳ νεκρῶν.

Ἠλέκτρα

Δεινὸν γάρ· Ἄργει τ’ ἀναβοᾷ διὰ στόμα.

Ἑλένη

Σύ νυν χάριν μοι τὸν φόβον λύσασα δός.

Ἠλέκτρα

[105] Οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην μητρὸς ἐσβλέψαι τάφον.

Ἑλένη

Αἰσχρόν γε μέντοι προσπόλους φέρειν τάδε.

Ἠλέκτρα

Τί δ’ οὐχὶ θυγατρὸς Ἑρμιόνης πέμπεις δέμας;

Ἑλένη

Ἐς ὄχλον ἕρπειν παρθένοισιν οὐ καλόν.

Ἠλέκτρα

Καὶ μὴν τίνοι γ’ ἂν τῇ τεθνηκυίᾳ τροφάς.

Ἑλένη

[110] Ὀρθῶς ἔλεξας, πείθομαί τέ σοι, κόρη.
Καὶ πέμψομέν γε θυγατέρ’· εὖ γάρ τοι λέγεις.
Ὦ τέκνον, ἔξελθ’, Ἑρμιόνη, δόμων πάρος

καὶ λαβὲ χοὰς τάσδ’ ἐν χεροῖν κόμας τ’ ἐμάς·
Ἐλθοῦσα δ’ ἀμφὶ τὸν Κλυταιμήστρας τάφον
μελίκρατ’ ἄφες γάλακτος οἰνωπόν τ’ ἄχνην,
καὶ στᾶσ’ ἐπ’ ἄκρου χώματος λέξον τάδε·
Ἑλένη σ’ ἀδελφὴ ταῖσδε δωρεῖται χοαῖς,
φόβῳ προσελθεῖν μνῆμα σόν, ταρβοῦσά τε
Ἀργεῖον ὄχλον. Πρευμενῆ δ’ ἄνωγέ νιν
ἐμοί τε καὶ σοὶ καὶ πόσει γνώμην ἔχειν
τοῖν τ’ ἀθλίοιν τοῖνδ’, οὓς ἀπώλεσεν θεός.
Ἃ δ’ εἰς ἀδελφὴν καιρὸς ἐκπονεῖν ἐμέ,
ἅπανθ’ ὑπισχνοῦ νερτέρων δωρήματα.
Ἴθ’, ὦ τέκνον μοι, σπεῦδε καὶ χοὰς τάφῳ
δοῦσ’ ὡς τάχιστα τῆς πάλιν μέμνησ’ ὁδοῦ.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ὦ φύσις, ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ὡς μέγ’ εἶ κακόν,
σωτήριόν τε τοῖς καλῶς κεκτημένοις.
Εἴδετε παρ’ ἄκρας ὡς ἀπέθρισεν τρίχας,
σῴζουσα κάλλος; Ἔστι δ’ ἡ πάλαι γυνή.
Θεοί σε μισήσειαν, ὅς μ’ ἀπώλεσας
καὶ τόνδε πᾶσάν θ’ Ἑλλάδα. Ὦ τάλαιν’ ἐγώ·
αἴδ’ αὖ πάρεισι τοῖς ἐμοῖς θρηνήμασι
φίλαι ξυνῳδοί· τάχα μεταστήσουσ’ ὕπνου
τόνδ’ ἡσυχάζοντ’, ὄμμα δ’ ἐκτήξουσ’ ἐμὸν
δακρύοις, ἀδελφὸν ὅταν ὁρῶ μεμηνότα.

Ὦ φίλταται γυναῖκες, ἡσύχῳ ποδὶ
χωρεῖτε, μὴ ψοφεῖτε, μηδ’ ἔστω κτύπος.
Φιλία γὰρ ἡ σὴ πρευμενὴς μέν, ἀλλ’ ἐμοὶ
τόνδ’ ἐξεγεῖραι συμφορὰ γενήσεται.

Χορός

σῖγα σῖγα, λεπτὸν ἴχνος ἀρβύλης
τίθετε, μὴ κτυπεῖτ’.

Ἠλέκτρα

ἀποπρὸ βᾶτ᾽ ἐκεῖσ᾽, ἀποπρό μοι κοίτας.

Χορός

Ἰδού, πείθομαι.

Ἠλέκτρα

[145] Ἆ ἆ σύριγγος ὅπως πνοὰ
λεπτοῦ δόνακος, ὦ φίλα, φώνει μοι.

Χορός

Ἴδ᾽, ἀτρεμαῖον ὡς ὑπόροφον φέρω
βοάν.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ναί, οὕτως·

Κάταγε κάταγε, πρόσιθ᾽ ἀτρέμας, ἀτρέμας ἴθι·
[150] λόγον ἀπόδος ἐφ᾽ ὅ τι χρέος ἐμόλετέ ποτε.
Χρόνια γὰρ πεσὼν ὅδ᾽ εὐνάζεται.

Χορός

Πῶς ἔχει; Λόγου μετάδος, ὦ φίλα·
τίνα τύχαν εἴπω; Τίνα δὲ συμφοράν;

Ἠλέκτρα

[155] Ἔτι μὲν ἐμπνέει, βραχὺ δ᾽ ἀναστένει.

Χορός

Τί φῄς; ὦ τάλας.

Ἠλέκτρα

[158] Ὀλεῖς, εἰ βλέφαρα κινήσεις
ὕπνου γλυκυτάταν φερομένῳ χάριν.

Χορός

[160] Μέλεος ἐχθίστων θεόθεν ἐργμάτων,
τάλας.

Ἠλέκτρα

[162] Φεῦ μόχθων.
Ἄδικος ἄδικα τότ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἔλακεν ἔλακεν, ἀπό-
φονον ὅτ᾽ ἐπὶ τρίποδι Θέμιδος ἄρ᾽ ἐδίκασε
[165] φόνον ὁ Λοξίας ἐμᾶς ματέρος.

Χορός

Ὁρᾷς; Ἐν πέπλοισι κινεῖ δέμας.

Ἠλέκτρα

Σὺ γάρ νιν, ὦ τάλαινα,
θωύ¨ξασ᾽ ἔβαλες ἐξ ὕπνου.

Χορός

Εὖδειν μὲν οὖν ἔδοξα.

Ἠλέκτρα

[170] Οὐκ ἀφ᾽ ἡμῶν, οὐκ ἀπ᾽ οἴκων
πάλιν ἀνὰ πόδα σὸν εἱλίξεις
μεθεμένα κτύπου;

Χορός

Ὑπνώσσει.

Ἠλέκτρα

[173] Λέγεις εὖ.
πότνια, πότνια νύξ,
[175] ὑπνοδότειρα τῶν πολυπόνων βροτῶν,
[178] ἐρεβόθεν ἴθι, μόλε μόλε κατάπτερος
τὸν Ἀγαμεμνόνιον ἐπὶ δόμον.
[180] Ὑπὸ γὰρ ἀλγέων ὑπό τε συμφορᾶς
διοιχόμεθ', οἰχόμεθα. Κτύπον ἠγάγετ'· οὐχὶ σῖγα
σῖγα φυλασσομένα στόματος
[185] ἄνα κέλαδον ἀπὸ λέχεος ἥ-
συχον ὕπνου χάριν παρέξεις, φίλα;

Χορός

Θρόει τίς κακῶν τελευτὰ μένει.

Ἠλέκτρα

Θανεῖν <θανεῖν>, τί δ' ἄλλο;
Οὐδὲ γὰρ πόθον ἔχει βορᾶς.

Χορός

[190] Πρόδηλος ἦρ' ὁ πότμος.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ἐξέθυσ' ὁ Φοῖβος ἡμᾶς
μέλεον ἀπόφονον αἷμα δοὺς
πατροφόνου ματρός.

Χορός

Δίκᾳ μέν.

Ἠλέκτρα

Καλῶς δ' οὔ.
[195] Ἔκανες ἔθανες, ὦ
τεκομένα με μᾶτερ, ἀπὸ δ' ὤλεσας

πατέρα τέκνα τε τάδε σέθεν ἀφ᾽ αἵματος·
Ὀλόμεθ᾽ ἰσονέκυες, ὀλόμεθα.
Σύ τε γὰρ ἐν νεκροῖς, τό τ᾽ ἐμὸν οἴχεται
βίου τὸ πλέον μέρος ἐν στοναχαῖσί τε καὶ γόοισι
δάκρυσί τ᾽ ἐννυχίοις, ἄγαμος
ἐπὶ δ᾽ ἄτεκνος ἅτε βίοτον ἁ
μέλεος ἐς τὸν αἰὲν ἕλκω χρόνον.

Χορός

Ὅρα παροῦσα, παρθέν᾽ Ἠλέκτρα, πέλας,
μὴ κατθανών σε σύγγονος λέληθ᾽ ὅδε·
οὐ γάρ μ᾽ ἀρέσκει τῷ λίαν παρειμένῳ.

Ὀρέστης

Ὦ φίλον ὕπνου θέλγητρον, ἐπίκουρον νόσου,
ὡς ἡδύ μοι προσῆλθες ἐν δέοντί γε.
Ὦ πότνια Λήθη τῶν κακῶν, ὡς εἶ σοφὴ
καὶ τοῖσι δυστυχοῦσιν εὐκταία θεός.
πόθεν ποτ᾽ ἦλθον δεῦρο; Πῶς δ᾽ ἀφικόμην;
Ἀμνημονῶ γάρ, τῶν πρὶν ἀπολειφθεὶς φρενῶν.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ὦ φίλταθ᾽, ὥς μ᾽ ηὔφρανας εἰς ὕπνον πεσών.
Βούλῃ θίγω σου κἀνακουφίσω δέμας;

Ὀρέστης

Λαβοῦ λαβοῦ δῆτ᾽, ἐκ δ᾽ ὄμορξον ἀθλίου
στόματος ἀφρώδη πέλανον ὀμμάτων τ᾽ ἐμῶν.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ἰδού· τὸ δούλευμ᾽ ἡδύ, κοὐκ ἀναίνομαι
ἀδέλφ᾽ ἀδελφῇ χειρὶ θεραπεύειν μέλη.

Ὀρέστης

Ὑπόβαλε πλευροῖς πλευρά, καὐχμώδη κόμην
ἄφελε προσώπου· λεπτὰ γὰρ λεύσσω κόραις.

Ἠλέκτρα

[225] Ὦ βοστρύχων πινῶδες ἄθλιον κάρα,
ὡς ἠγρίωσαι διὰ μακρᾶς ἀλουσίας.

Ὀρέστης

Κλῖνόν μ᾽ ἐς εὐνὴν αὖθις· ὅταν ἀνῇ νόσος
μανίας, ἄναρθρός εἰμι κἀσθενῶ μέλη.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ἰδού. φίλον τοι τῷ νοσοῦντι δέμνιον,
[230] ἀνιαρὸν ὂν τὸ κτῆμ᾽, ἀναγκαῖον δ᾽ ὅμως.

Ὀρέστης

Αὖθίς μ᾽ ἐς ὀρθὸν στῆσον, ἀνακύκλει δέμας·
Δυσάρεστον οἱ νοσοῦντες ἀπορίας ὕπο.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ἦ κἀπὶ γαίας ἁρμόσαι πόδας θέλεις,
χρόνιον ἴχνος θείς; Μεταβολὴ πάντων γλυκύ.

Ὀρέστης

[235] Μάλιστα· δόξαν γὰρ τόδ᾽ ὑγιείας ἔχει.
Κρεῖσσον δὲ τὸ δοκεῖν, κἂν ἀληθείας ἀπῇ.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ἄκουε δὴ νῦν, ὦ κασίγνητον κάρα,
ἕως ἐῶσιν εὖ φρονεῖν Ἐρινύες.

Ὀρέστης

Λέξεις τι καινόν· κεἰ μὲν εὖ, χάριν φέρεις·
Εἰ δ’ ἐς βλάβην τιν’, ἄλις ἔχω τὸ δυστυχεῖν.

Ἠλέκτρα

Μενέλαος ἥκει, σοῦ κασίγνητος πατρός,
ἐν Ναυπλίᾳ δὲ σέλμαθ’ ὥρμισται νεῶν.

Ὀρέστης

Πῶς εἶπας; Ἥκει φῶς ἐμοῖς καὶ σοῖς κακοῖς
ἀνὴρ ὁμογενὴς καὶ χάριτας ἔχων πατρός;

Ἠλέκτρα

Ἥκει τὸ πιστὸν τόδε λόγων ἐμῶν δέχου
Ἑλένην ἀγόμενος Τρωικῶν ἐκ τειχέων.

Ὀρέστης

Εἰ μόνος ἐσώθη, μᾶλλον ἂν ζηλωτὸς ἦν·
εἰ δ’ ἄλοχον ἄγεται, κακὸν ἔχων ἥκει μέγα.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ἐπίσημον ἔτεκε Τυνδάρεως ἐς τὸν ψόγον
γένος θυγατέρων δυσκλεές τ’ ἀν’ Ἑλλάδα.

Ὀρέστης

Σύ νυν διάφερε τῶν κακῶν· ἔξεστι γάρ·
καὶ μὴ μόνον λέγ’, ἀλλὰ καὶ φρόνει τάδε.

Ἠλέκτρα

Οἴμοι, κασίγνητ’, ὄμμα σὸν ταράσσεται,
ταχὺς δὲ μετέθου λύσσαν, ἄρτι σωφρονῶν.

Ὀρέστης

[255] Ὦ μῆτερ, ἱκετεύω σε, μὴ ‘πίσειέ μοι
τὰς αἱματωποὺς καὶ δρακοντώδεις κόρας.
Αὗται γὰρ αὗται πλησίον θρῴσκουσί μου.

Ἠλέκτρα

Μέν’, ὦ ταλαίπωρ’, ἀτρέμα σοῖς ἐν δεμνίοις·
Ὁρᾷς γὰρ οὐδὲν ὧν δοκεῖς σάφ’ εἰδέναι.

Ὀρέστης

[260] Ὦ Φοῖβ’, ἀποκτενοῦσί μ’ αἱ κυνώπιδες
γοργῶπες, ἐνέρων ἱέρεαι, δειναὶ θεαί.

Ἠλέκτρα

Οὗτοι μεθήσω· χεῖρα δ’ ἐμπλέξασ’ ἐμὴν
σχήσω σε πηδᾶν δυστυχῆ πηδήματα.

Ὀρέστης

Μέθες· μί’ οὖσα τῶν ἐμῶν Ἐρινύων
[265] μέσον μ’ ὀχμάζεις, ὡς βάλῃς ἐς Τάρταρον.

Ἠλέκτρα

Οἳ ‘γὼ τάλαινα, τίν’ ἐπικουρίαν λάβω,
ἐπεὶ τὸ θεῖον δυσμενὲς κεκτήμεθα;

Ὀρέστης

[268] Δὸς τόξα μοι κερουλκά, δῶρα Λοξίου,
Οἷς μ’ εἶπ’ Ἀπόλλων ἐξαμύνασθαι θεάς,
[270] εἴ μ’ ἐκφοβοῖεν μανιάσιν λυσσήμασιν.
Βεβλήσεταί τις θεῶν βροτησίᾳ χερί,
εἰ μὴ ‘ξαμείψει χωρὶς ὀμμάτων ἐμῶν.
Οὐκ εἰσακούετ’; Οὐχ ὁρᾶθ’ ἑκηβόλων
τόξων πτερωτὰς γλυφίδας ἐξορμωμένας;
[274β] Ἆ ἆ·

τί δῆτα μέλλετ’; Ἐξακρίζετ’ αἰθέρα
πτεροῖς· τὰ Φοίβου δ’ αἰτιᾶσθε θέσφατα.
Ἔα·
τί χρῆμ’ ἀλύω, πνεῦμ’ ἀνεὶς ἐκ πλευμόνων;
Ποῖ ποῖ ποθ’ ἡλάμεσθα δεμνίων ἄπο;
Ἐκ κυμάτων γὰρ αὖθις αὖ γαλήν’ ὁρῶ.
Σύγγονε, τί κλαίεις κρᾶτα θεῖσ’ ἔσω πέπλων;
Αἰσχύνομαί σε, μεταδιδοὺς πόνων ἐμῶν
ὄχλον τε παρέχων παρθένῳ νόσοις ἐμαῖς.
Μὴ τῶν ἐμῶν ἕκατι συντήκου κακῶν·
σὺ μὲν γὰρ ἐπένευσας τάδ’, εἴργασται δ’ ἐμοὶ
μητρῷον αἷμα· Λοξίᾳ δὲ μέμφομαι,
ὅστις μ’ ἐπάρας ἔργον ἀνοσιώτατον,
τοῖς μὲν λόγοις ηὔφρανε, τοῖς δ’ ἔργοισιν οὔ.
Οἶμαι δὲ πατέρα τὸν ἐμόν, εἰ κατ’ ὄμματα
ἐξιστόρουν νιν, μητέρ’ εἰ κτεῖναι χρεών,
πολλὰς γενείου τοῦδ’ ἂν ἐκτεῖναι λιτὰς
μήποτε τεκούσης ἐς σφαγὰς ὦσαι ξίφος,
εἰ μήτ’ ἐκεῖνος ἀναλαβεῖν ἔμελλε φῶς,
ἐγώ θ’ ὁ τλήμων τοιάδ’ ἐκπλήσειν κακά.
Καὶ νῦν ἀνακάλυπτ’, ὦ κασιγνήτη, κάρα,
ἐκ δακρύων τ’ ἄπελθε, κεἰ μάλ’ ἀθλίως
ἔχομεν. Ὅταν δὲ τἄμ’ ἀθυμήσαντ’ ἴδῃς,
σύ μου τὸ δεινὸν καὶ διαφθαρὲν φρενῶν
ἴσχναινε παραμυθοῦ θ’· ὅταν δὲ σὺ στένῃς,
ἡμᾶς παρόντας χρή σε νουθετεῖν φίλα·
ἐπικουρίαι γὰρ αἵδε τοῖς φίλοις καλαί.
Ἀλλ’, ὦ τάλαινα, βᾶσα δωμάτων ἔσω
ὕπνῳ τ’ ἄυπνον βλέφαρον ἐκταθεῖσα δός,
σίτων τ’ ὄρεξαι λουτρά τ’ ἐπιβαλοῦ χροΐ¨.
Εἰ γὰρ προλείψεις ἢ προσεδρείᾳ νόσον
κτήσῃ τιν’, οἰχόμεσθα· σὲ γὰρ ἔχω μόνην
ἐπίκουρον, ἄλλων, ὡς ὁρᾷς, ἔρημος ὤν.

Ἠλέκτρα

Οὐκ ἔστι· σὺν σοὶ καὶ θανεῖν αἱρήσομαι
καὶ ζῆν· ἔχει γὰρ ταὐτόν· ἢν σὺ κατθάνῃς,
γυνὴ τί δράσω; Πῶς μόνη σωθήσομαι,
ἀνάδελφος ἀπάτωρ ἄφιλος; Εἰ δὲ σοὶ δοκεῖ,
δρᾶν χρὴ τάδ’. Ἀλλὰ κλῖνον εἰς εὐνὴν δέμας,
καὶ μὴ τὸ ταρβοῦν κἀκφοβοῦν σ’ ἐκ δεμνίων
ἄγαν ἀποδέχου, μένε δ’ ἐπὶ στρωτοῦ λέχους.
Κἂν μὴ νοσῇς γάρ, ἀλλὰ δοξάζῃς νοσεῖν,
κάματος βροτοῖσιν ἀπορία τε γίγνεται.

Χορός

Αἰαῖ,
δρομάδες ᾧ πτεροφόροι
ποτνιάδες θεαί,
ἀβάκχευτον αἳ θίασον ἐλάχετ’ ἐν
δάκρυσι καὶ γόοις,
μελάγχρωτες εὐμενίδες, αἵτε τὸν
ταναὸν αἰθέρ’ ἀμπάλλεσθ’, αἵματος
τινύμεναι δίκαν, τινύμεναι φόνον,
καθικετεύομαι καθικετεύομαι,
τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος
γόνον ἐάσατ’ ἐκλαθέσθαι λύσσας
μανιάδος φοιταλέου. Φεῦ μόχθων,
οἵων, ᾧ τάλας, ὀρεχθεὶς ἔρρεις,
τρίποδος ἄπο φάτιν, ἂν ὁ Φοῖβος ἔλακε, δε-
ξάμενος ἀνὰ δάπεδον,
ἵνα μεσόμφαλοι λέγονται μυχοί.

Ἰὼ Ζεῦ,
τίς ἔλεος, τίς ὅδ’ ἀγὼν
φόνιος ἔρχεται,
θοάζων σε τὸν μέλεον, ᾧ δάκρυα
δάκρυσι συμβάλλει
πορεύων τις ἐς δόμον ἀλαστόρων
ματέρος αἷμα σᾶς, ὅ σ’ ἀναβακχεύει;

[340] Ὁ μέγας ὄλβος οὐ μόνιμος ἐν βροτοῖς·
[339] κατολοφύρομαι κατολοφύρομαι.
[341] Ἀνὰ δὲ λαῖφος ὥς
τις ἀκάτου θοᾶς τινάξας δαίμων
κατέκλυσεν δεινῶν πόνων ὡς πόντου
λάβροις ὀλεθρίοισιν ἐν κύμασιν.
[345] Τίνα γὰρ ἔτι πάρος οἶκον ἕτερον ἢ τὸν ἀπὸ
θεογόνων γάμων,
τὸν ἀπὸ Ταντάλου, σέβεσθαί με χρή;

[348] Καὶ μὴν βασιλεὺς ὅδε δὴ στείχει,
Μενέλαος ἄναξ, πολλῇ ἀβροσύνῃ
[350] δῆλος ὁρᾶσθαι
τῶν Τανταλιδῶν ἐξ αἵματος ὤν.
Ὦ χιλιόναυν στρατὸν ὁρμήσας
ἐς γῆν Ἀσίαν,
χαῖρ', εὐτυχίᾳ δ' αὐτὸς ὁμιλεῖς,
[355] θεόθεν πράξας ἅπερ ηὔχου.

Μενέλαος

[356] Ὦ δῶμα, τῇ μέν σ' ἡδέως προσδέρκομαι
Τροίαθεν ἐλθών, τῇ δ' ἰδὼν καταστένω·
κύκλῳ γὰρ εἰλιχθεῖσαν ἀθλίως κακοῖς
οὐπώποτ' ἄλλην μᾶλλον εἶδον ἑστίαν.
[360] Ἀγαμέμνονος μὲν γὰρ τύχας ἠπιστάμην
καὶ θάνατον, οἵῳ πρὸς δάμαρτος ὤλετο,
Μαλέᾳ προσίσχων πρῷραν· ἐκ δὲ κυμάτων
ὁ ναυτίλοισι μάντις ἐξήγγειλέ μοι
Νηρέως προφήτης Γλαῦκος, ἀψευδὴς θεός,
[365] ὅς μοι τόδ' εἶπεν ἐμφανῶς κατασταθείς·
Μενέλαε, κεῖται σὸς κασίγνητος θανών,
λουτροῖσιν ἀλόχου περιπεσὼν πανυστάτοις.
Δακρύων δ' ἔπλησεν ἐμέ τε καὶ ναύτας ἐμοὺς
πολλῶν. Ἐπεὶ δὲ Ναυπλίας ψαύω χθονός,
[370] ἤδη δάμαρτος ἐνθάδ' ἐξορμωμένης,
δοκῶν Ὀρέστην παῖδα τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος

φίλαισι χερσὶ περιβαλεῖν καὶ μητέρα,
ὡς εὐτυχοῦντας, ἔκλυον ἁλιτύπων τινὸς
τῆς Τυνδαρείας παιδὸς ἀνόσιον φόνον.
Καὶ νῦν ὅπου ‘στὶν εἴπατ’, ὦ νεάνιδες,
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖς, ὃς τὰ δείν’ ἔτλη κακά.
Βρέφος γὰρ ἦν τότ’ ἐν Κλυταιμήστρας χεροῖν,
ὅτ’ ἐξέλειπον μέλαθρον ἐς Τροίαν ἰών,
ὥστ’ οὐκ ἂν αὐτὸν γνωρίσαιμ’ ἂν εἰσιδών.

Ὀρέστης

Ὧδ’ εἶμ’ Ὀρέστης, Μενέλεως, ὃν ἱστορεῖς.
Ἑκὼν ἐγώ σοι τἀμὰ μηνύσω κακά.
Τῶν σῶν δὲ γονάτων πρωτόλεια θιγγάνω
ἱκέτης, ἀφύλλου στόματος ἐξάπτων λιτάς·
σῷσόν μ’· ἀφῖξαι δ’ αὐτὸς ἐς καιρὸν κακῶν.

Μενέλαος

Ὦ θεοί, τί λεύσσω; Τίνα δέδορκα νερτέρων;

Ὀρέστης

Εὖ γ’ εἶπας· οὐ γὰρ ζῶ κακοῖς, φάος δ’ ὁρῶ.

Μενέλαος

Ὡς ἠγρίωσαι πλόκαμον αὐχμηρόν, τάλας.

Ὀρέστης

Οὐχ ἡ πρόσοψίς μ’, ἀλλὰ τἄργ’ αἰκίζεται.

Μενέλαος

Δεινὸν δὲ λεύσσεις ὀμμάτων ξηραῖς κόραις.

Ὀρέστης

[390] Τὸ σῶμα φροῦδον· τὸ δ’ ὄνομ’ οὐ λέλοιπέ μοι.

Μενέλαος

Ὦ παρὰ λόγον μοι σὴ φανεῖσ’ ἀμορφία.

Ὀρέστης

Ὅδ’ εἰμὶ μητρὸς τῆς ταλαιπώρου φονεύς.

Μενέλαος

Ἤκουσα, φείδου δ’· ὀλιγάκις λέγειν κακά.

Ὀρέστης

Φειδόμεθ’· ὁ δαίμων δ’ ἐς ἐμὲ πλούσιος κακῶν.

Μενέλαος

[395] Τί χρῆμα πάσχεις; Τίς σ’ ἀπόλλυσιν νόσος;

Ὀρέστης

Ἡ σύνεσις, ὅτι σύνοιδα δείν’ εἰργασμένος.

Μενέλαος

Πῶς φῄς; Σοφόν τοι τὸ σαφές, οὐ τὸ μὴ σαφές.

Ὀρέστης

Λύπη μάλιστά γ’ ἡ διαφθείρουσά με

Μενέλαος

Δεινὴ γὰρ ἡ θεός, ἀλλ’ ὅμως ἰάσιμος.

Ὀρέστης

[400] Μανίαι τε, μητρὸς αἵματος τιμωρίαι.

Μενέλαος

Ἤρξω δὲ λύσσης πότε; Τίς ἡμέρα τότ᾽ ἦν;

Ὀρέστης

Ἐν ᾗ τάλαιναν μητέρ᾽ ἐξώγκουν τάφῳ.

Μενέλαος

Πότερα κατ᾽ οἴκους ἢ προσεδρεύων πυρᾷ;

Ὀρέστης

Νυκτὸς φυλάσσων ὀστέων ἀναίρεσιν.

Μενέλαος

[405] Παρῆν τις ἄλλος, ὃς σὸν ὤρθευεν δέμας;

Ὀρέστης

Πυλάδης, ὁ συνδρῶν αἷμα καὶ μητρὸς φόνον.

Μενέλαος

Ἐκ φασμάτων δὲ τάδε νοσεῖς· ποίων ὕπο;

Ὀρέστης

Ἔδοξ᾽ ἰδεῖν τρεῖς νυκτὶ προσφερεῖς κόρας.

Μενέλαος

Οἶδ᾽ ἃς ἔλεξας, ὀνομάσαι δ᾽ οὐ βούλομαι.

Ὀρέστης

[410] Σεμναὶ γάρ· εὐπαίδευτα δ’ ἀπετρέπου λέγειν.

Μενέλαος

Αὗταί σε βακχεύουσι συγγενῆ φόνον;

Ὀρέστης

Οἴμοι διωγμῶν, οἷς ἐλαύνομαι τάλας.

Μενέλαος

Οὐ δεινὰ πάσχειν δεινὰ τοὺς εἰργασμένους.

Ὀρέστης

Ἀλλ’ ἔστιν ἡμῖν ἀναφορὰ τῆς συμφορᾶς.

Μενέλαος

[415] Μὴ θάνατον εἴπῃς· τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ οὐ σοφόν.

Ὀρέστης

Φοῖβος, κελεύσας μητρὸς ἐκπρᾶξαι φόνον.

Μενέλαος

Ἀμαθέστερός γ’ ὢν τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ τῆς δίκης.

Ὀρέστης

Δουλεύομεν θεοῖς, ὅ τι ποτ’ εἰσὶν οἱ θεοί.

Μενέλαος

Κᾆτ’ οὐκ ἀμύνει Λοξίας τοῖς σοῖς κακοῖς;

Ὀρέστης

[420] Μέλλει· τὸ θεῖον δ’ ἐστὶ τοιοῦτον φύσει.

Μενέλαος

Πόσον χρόνον δὲ μητρὸς οἴχονται πνοαί;

Ὀρέστης

Ἕκτον τόδ’ ἦμαρ· ἔτι πυρὰ θερμὴ τάφου.

Μενέλαος

Ὡς ταχὺ μετῆλθόν σ’ αἷμα μητέρος θεαί.

Ὀρέστης

Οὐ σοφός, ἀληθὴς δ’ ἐς φίλους <ἔφυν φίλος.>

Μενέλαος

[425] Πατρὸς δὲ δή τι σ’ ὠφελεῖ τιμωρία;

Ὀρέστης

Οὔπω· τὸ μέλλον δ’ ἴσον ἀπραξίᾳ λέγω.

Μενέλαος

Τὰ πρὸς πόλιν δὲ πῶς ἔχεις δράσας τάδε;

Ὀρέστης

Μισούμεθ’ οὕτως ὥστε μὴ προσεννέπειν.

Μενέλαος

Οὐδ’ ἤγνισαι σὸν αἷμα κατὰ νόμον χεροῖν;

Ὀρέστης

[430] Ἐκκλήομαι γὰρ δωμάτων ὅποι μόλω.

Μενέλαος

Τίνες πολιτῶν ἐξαμιλλῶνταί σε γῆς;

Ὀρέστης

Οἵαξ, τὸ Τροίας μῖσος ἀναφέρων πατρί.

Μενέλαος

Συνῆκα· Παλαμήδους σε τιμωρεῖ φόνου.

Ὀρέστης

Οὗ γ’ οὐ μετῆν μοι· διὰ τριῶν δ’ ἀπόλλυμαι.

Μενέλαος

[435] Τίς δ’ ἄλλος; Ἦ που τῶν ἀπ’ Αἰγίσθου φίλων;

Ὀρέστης

Οὗτοί μ’ ὑβρίζουσ’, ὧν πόλις τὰ νῦν κλύει.

Μενέλαος

Ἀγαμέμνονος δὲ σκῆπτρ’ ἐᾷ σ’ ἔχειν πόλις;

Ὀρέστης

Πῶς, οἵτινες ζῆν οὐκ ἐῶσ’ ἡμᾶς ἔτι;

Μενέλαος

Τί δρῶντες ὅ τι καὶ σαφὲς ἔχεις εἰπεῖν ἐμοί;

Ὀρέστης

Ψῆφος καθ᾽ ἡμῶν οἴσεται τῇδ᾽ ἡμέρᾳ.

Μενέλαος

Φεύγειν πόλιν τήνδ᾽; Ἢ θανεῖν ἢ μὴ θανεῖν;

Ὀρέστης

Θανεῖν ὑπ᾽ ἀστῶν λευσίμῳ πετρώματι.

Μενέλαος

Κᾆτ᾽ οὐχὶ φεύγεις γῆς ὑπερβαλὼν ὅρους;

Ὀρέστης

Κύκλῳ γὰρ εἱλισσόμεθα παγχάλκοις ὅπλοις.

Μενέλαος

Ἰδίᾳ πρὸς ἐχθρῶν ἢ πρὸς Ἀργείας χερός;

Ὀρέστης

Πάντων πρὸς ἀστῶν, ὡς θάνω· βραχὺς λόγος.

Μενέλαος

Ὦ μέλεος, ἥκεις συμφορᾶς ἐς τοὔσχατον.

Ὀρέστης

Ἐς σὲ ἐλπὶς ἡμὴ καταφυγὰς ἔχει κακῶν.
Ἀλλ᾽ ἀθλίως πράσσουσιν εὐτυχὴς μολὼν
μετάδος φίλοισι σοῖσι σῆς εὐπραξίας,
καὶ μὴ μόνος τὸ χρηστὸν ἀπολαβὼν ἔχε,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀντιλάζου καὶ πόνων ἐν τῷ μέρει,
χάριτας πατρῴας ἐκτίνων ἐς οὕς σε δεῖ.

Ὄνομα γάρ, ἔργον δ’ οὐκ ἔχουσιν οἱ φίλοι
οἱ μὴ ‘πὶ ταῖσι συμφοραῖς ὄντες φίλοι.

Χορός

Καὶ μὴν γέροντι δεῦρ’ ἀμιλλᾶται ποδὶ
ὁ Σπαρτιάτης Τυνδάρεως, μελάμπεπλος
κουρᾷ τε θυγατρὸς πενθίμῳ κεκαρμένος.

Ὀρέστης

Ἀπωλόμην, Μενέλαε· Τυνδάρεως ὅδε
στείχει πρὸς ἡμᾶς, οὗ μάλιστ’ αἰδώς μ’ ἔχει
ἐς ὄμματ’ ἐλθεῖν τοῖσιν ἐξειργασμένοις.
Καὶ γάρ μ’ ἔθρεψε σμικρὸν ὄντα, πολλὰ δὲ
φιλήματ’ ἐξέπλησε, τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος
παῖδ’ ἀγκάλαισι περιφέρων, Λήδα θ’ ἅμα,
τιμῶντέ μ’ οὐδὲν ἧσσον ἢ Διοσκόρω·
οἷς, ὦ τάλαινα καρδία ψυχή τ’ ἐμή,
ἀπέδωκ’ ἀμοιβὰς οὐ καλάς. Τίνα σκότον
λάβω προσώπῳ; Ποῖον ἐπίπροσθεν νέφος
θῶμαι, γέροντος ὀμμάτων φεύγων κόρας;

Τυνδάρεως

Ποῦ ποῦ θυγατρὸς τῆς ἐμῆς ἴδω πόσιν,
Μενέλαον; Ἐπὶ γὰρ τῷ Κλυταιμήστρας τάφῳ
χοὰς χεόμενος ἔκλυον ὡς ἐς Ναυπλίαν
ἥκοι σὺν ἀλόχῳ πολυετὴς σεσῳσμένος.
Ἄγετέ με· πρὸς γὰρ δεξιὰν αὐτοῦ θέλω
στὰς ἀσπάσασθαι, χρόνιος εἰσιδὼν φίλον.

Μενέλαος

Ὦ πρέσβυ, χαῖρε, Ζηνὸς ὁμόλεκτρον κάρα.

Τυνδάρεως

Ὦ χαῖρε καὶ σύ, Μενέλεως, κήδευμ᾽ ἐμόν.
ἔα· τὸ μέλλον ὡς κακὸν τὸ μὴ εἰδέναι.
Ὁ μητροφόντης ὅδε πρὸ δωμάτων δράκων
στίλβει νοσώδεις ἀστραπάς, στύγημ᾽ ἐμόν.
Μενέλαε, προσφθέγγῃ νιν, ἀνόσιον κάρα;

Μενέλαος

Τί γάρ; Φίλου μοι πατρός ἐστιν ἔκγονος.

Τυνδάρεως

Κείνου γὰρ ὅδε πέφυκε, τοιοῦτος γεγώς;

Μενέλαος

Πέφυκεν· εἰ δὲ δυστυχεῖ, τιμητέος.

Τυνδάρεως

Βεβαρβάρωσαι, χρόνιος ὢν ἐν βαρβάροις.

Μενέλαος

Ἑλληνικόν τοι τὸν ὁμόθεν τιμᾶν ἀεί.

Τυνδάρεως

Καὶ τῶν νόμων γε μὴ πρότερον εἶναι θέλειν.

Μενέλαος

Πᾶν τοὐξ ἀνάγκης δοῦλόν ἐστ᾽ ἐν τοῖς σοφοῖς.

Τυνδάρεως

Κέκτησό νυν σὺ τοῦτ᾽, ἐγὼ δ᾽ οὐ κτήσομαι.

Μενέλαος

[490] Ὀργὴ γὰρ ἅμα σου καὶ τὸ γῆρας οὐ σοφόν.

Τυνδάρεως

[491] Πρὸς τόνδ’ ἀγὼν τίς ἀσοφίας ἥκει πέρι;
Εἰ τὰ καλὰ πᾶσι φανερὰ καὶ τὰ μὴ καλά,
τούτου τίς ἀνδρῶν ἐγένετ’ ἀσυνετώτερος,
ὅστις τὸ μὲν δίκαιον οὐκ ἐσκέψατο
[495] οὐδ’ ἦλθεν ἐπὶ τὸν κοινὸν Ἑλλήνων νόμον;
Ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἐξέπνευσεν Ἀγαμέμνων βίον
πληγεὶς θυγατρὸς τῆς ἐμῆς ὑπὲρ κάρα ,
[499] αἴσχιστον ἔργον οὐ γὰρ αἰνέσω ποτέ
[500] χρῆν αὐτὸν ἐπιθεῖναι μὲν αἵματος δίκην,
ὁσίαν διώκοντ’, ἐκβαλεῖν τε δωμάτων
μητέρα· τὸ σῶφρόν τ’ ἔλαβεν ἀντὶ συμφορᾶς
καὶ τοῦ νόμου τ’ ἂν εἶχετ’ εὐσεβής τ’ ἂν ἦν.
Νῦν δ’ ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν δαίμον’ ἦλθε μητέρι.
[505] Κακὴν γὰρ αὐτὴν ἐνδίκως ἡγούμενος,
αὐτὸς κακίων μητέρ’ ἐγένετο κτανών.
Ἐρήσομαι δέ, Μενέλεως, τοσόνδε σε·
εἰ τόνδ’ ἀποκτείνειεν ὁμόλεκτρος γυνή,
χὡ τοῦδε παῖς αὖ μητέρ’ ἀνταποκτενεῖ,
[510] κἄπειθ’ ὁ κείνου γενόμενος φόνῳ φόνον
λύσει, πέρας δὴ ποῖ κακῶν προβήσεται;
Καλῶς ἔθεντο ταῦτα πατέρες οἱ πάλαι·
ἐς ὀμμάτων μὲν ὄψιν οὐκ εἴων περᾶν
οὐδ’ εἰς ἀπάντημ’, ὅστις αἷμ’ ἔχων κυροῖ,
[515] φυγαῖσι δ’ ὁσιοῦν, ἀνταποκτείνειν δὲ μή.
Αἰεὶ γὰρ εἷς ἔμελλ’ ἐνέξεσθαι φόνῳ,
τὸ λοίσθιον μίασμα λαμβάνων χεροῖν.
Ἐγὼ δὲ μισῶ μὲν γυναῖκας ἀνοσίους,
πρώτην δὲ θυγατέρ’, ἣ πόσιν κατέκτανεν·
[520] Ἑλένην τε, τὴν σὴν ἄλοχον, οὔποτ’ αἰνέσω
οὐδ’ ἂν προσείποιμ’· οὐδὲ σὲ ζηλῶ, κακῆς
γυναικὸς ἐλθόνθ’ οὕνεκ’ ἐς Τροίας πέδον.
Ἀμυνῶ δ’, ὅσονπερ δυνατός εἰμι, τῷ νόμῳ,
τὸ θηριῶδες τοῦτο καὶ μιαιφόνον

παύων, ὃ καὶ γῆν καὶ πόλεις ὄλλυσ᾽ ἀεί.
Ἐπεὶ τίν᾽ εἶχες, ὦ τάλας, ψυχὴν τότε,
ὅτ᾽ ἐξέβαλλε μαστὸν ἱκετεύουσά σε
μήτηρ; Ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἰδὼν τἀκεῖ κακά,
δακρύοις γέροντ᾽ ὀφθαλμὸν ἐκτήκω τάλας.
Ἓν <δ᾽> οὖν λόγοισι τοῖς ἐμοῖς ὁμορροθεῖ·
μισῇ γε πρὸς θεῶν καὶ τίνεις μητρὸς δίκας,
μανίαις ἀλαίνων καὶ φόβοις. Τί μαρτύρων
ἄλλων ἀκούειν δεῖ μ᾽, ἅ γ᾽ εἰσορᾶν πάρα;
Ὡς οὖν ἂν εἰδῇς, Μενέλεως, τοῖσιν θεοῖς
μὴ πρᾶσσ᾽ ἐναντί᾽, ὠφελεῖν τοῦτον θέλων,
ἔα δ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἀστῶν καταφονευθῆναι πέτροις,
ἢ μὴ ‘πίβαινε Σπαρτιάτιδος χθονός.
Θυγάτηρ δ᾽ ἐμὴ θανοῦσ᾽ ἔπραξεν ἔνδικα·
ἀλλ᾽ οὐχὶ πρὸς τοῦτ᾽ εἰκὸς ἦν αὐτὴν θανεῖν.
Ἐγὼ δὲ τἄλλα μακάριος πέφυκ᾽ ἀνήρ,
πλὴν ἐς θυγατέρας· τοῦτο δ᾽ οὐκ εὐδαιμονῶ.

Χορός

Ζηλωτὸς ὅστις εὐτύχησεν ἐς τέκνα
καὶ μὴ ‘πισήμους συμφορὰς ἐκτήσατο.

Ὀρέστης

Ὦ γέρον, ἐγώ τοι πρὸς σὲ δειμαίνω λέγειν,
ὅπου σὲ μέλλω σήν τε λυπήσειν φρένα.
Ἐγῷδ᾽, ἀνόσιός εἰμι μητέρα κτανών,
ὅσιος δέ γ᾽ ἕτερον ὄνομα, τιμωρῶν πατρί.
Ἀπελθέτω δὴ τοῖς λόγοισιν ἐκποδὼν
τὸ γῆρας ἡμῖν τὸ σόν, ὅ μ᾽ ἐκπλήσσει λόγου,
καὶ καθ᾽ ὁδὸν εἶμι· νῦν δὲ σὴν ταρβῶ τρίχα.
Τί χρῆν με δρᾶσαι; Δύο γὰρ ἀντίθες δυοῖν·
πατὴρ μὲν ἐφύτευσέν με, σὴ δ᾽ ἔτικτε παῖς,
τὸ σπέρμ᾽ ἄρουρα παραλαβοῦσ᾽ ἄλλου πάρα·
ἄνευ δὲ πατρὸς τέκνον οὐκ εἴη ποτ᾽ ἄν.
Ἐλογισάμην οὖν τῷ γένους ἀρχηγέτῃ
μᾶλλόν με φῦναι τῆς ὑποστάσης τροφάς.

Ἡ σὴ δὲ θυγάτηρ μητέρ᾽ αἰδοῦμαι λέγειν
ἰδίοισιν ὑμεναίοισι κοὐχὶ σώφροσιν
ἐς ἀνδρὸς ᾔει λέκτρ᾽· ἐμαυτόν, ἢν λέγω
κακῶς ἐκείνην, ἐξερῶ· λέξω δ᾽ ὅμως.
Αἴγισθος ἦν ὁ κρυπτὸς ἐν δόμοις πόσις.
Τοῦτον κατέκτειν᾽, ἐπὶ δ᾽ ἔθυσα μητέρα,
ἀνόσια μὲν δρῶν, ἀλλὰ τιμωρῶν πατρί.
Ἐφ᾽ οἷς δ᾽ ἀπειλεῖς ὡς πετρωθῆναί με χρή,
ἄκουσον ὡς ἅπασαν Ἑλλάδ᾽ ὠφελῶ.
Εἰ γὰρ γυναῖκες ἐς τόδ᾽ ἥξουσιν θράσους,
ἄνδρας φονεύειν, καταφυγὰς ποιούμεναι
ἐς τέκνα, μαστοῖς τὸν ἔλεον θηρώμεναι,
παρ᾽ οὐδὲν αὐταῖς ἦν ἂν ὀλλύναι πόσεις
ἐπίκλημ᾽ ἐχούσαις ὅ τι τύχοι. Δράσας δ᾽ ἐγὼ
δείν᾽, ὡς σὺ κομπεῖς, τόνδ᾽ ἔπαυσα τὸν νόμον.
Μισῶν δὲ μητέρ᾽ ἐνδίκως ἀπώλεσα,
ἥτις μεθ᾽ ὅπλων ἄνδρ᾽ ἀπόντ᾽ ἐκ δωμάτων
πάσης ὑπὲρ γῆς Ἑλλάδος στρατηλάτην
προύδωκε κοὐκ ἔσῳσ᾽ ἀκήρατον λέχος·
Ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἁμαρτοῦσ᾽ ᾔσθετ᾽, οὐχ αὑτῇ δίκην
ἐπέθηκεν, ἀλλ᾽, ὡς μὴ δίκην δοίη πόσει,
ἐζημίωσε πατέρα κἀπέκτειν᾽ ἐμόν.
Πρὸς θεῶν ἐν οὐ καλῷ μὲν ἐμνήσθην θεῶν,
φόνον δικάζων· εἰ δὲ δὴ τὰ μητέρος
σιγῶν ἐπῄνουν, τί μ᾽ ἂν ἔδρασ᾽ ὁ κατθανών;
Οὐκ ἄν με μισῶν ἀνεχόρευ᾽ Ἐρινύσιν;
Ἢ μητρὶ μὲν πάρεισι σύμμαχοι θεαί,
τῷ δ᾽ οὐ πάρεισι, μᾶλλον ἠδικημένῳ;
Σύ τοι φυτεύσας θυγατέρ᾽, ὦ γέρον, κακὴν
ἀπώλεσάς με· διὰ τὸ γὰρ κείνης θράσος
πατρὸς στερηθεὶς ἐγενόμην μητροκτόνος.
Ὁρᾷς, Ὀδυσσέως ἄλοχον οὐ κατέκτανε
Τηλέμαχος· οὐ γὰρ ἐπεγάμει πόσει πόσιν,
μένει δ᾽ ἐν οἴκοις ὑγιὲς εὐνατήριον.
Ὁρᾷς δ᾽ Ἀπόλλων᾽, ὃς μεσομφάλους ἕδρας
ναίων βροτοῖσι στόμα νέμει σαφέστατον,
ᾧ πειθόμεσθα πάνθ᾽ ὅσ᾽ ἂν κεῖνος λέγῃ·

τούτῳ πιθόμενος τὴν τεκοῦσαν ἔκτανον.
Ἐκεῖνον ἡγεῖσθ᾽ ἀνόσιον καὶ κτείνετε·
ἐκεῖνος ἥμαρτ᾽, οὐκ ἐγώ. Τί χρῆν με δρᾶν;
Ἦ οὐκ ἀξιόχρεως ὁ θεὸς ἀναφέροντί μοι
μίασμα λῦσαι; Ποῖ τις οὖν ἔτ᾽ ἂν φύγοι,
εἰ μὴ ὁ κελεύσας ῥύσεταί με μὴ θανεῖν;
Ἀλλ᾽ ὡς μὲν οὐκ εὖ μὴ λέγ᾽ εἴργασται τάδε,
ἡμῖν δὲ τοῖς δράσασιν οὐκ εὐδαιμόνως.
Γάμοι δ᾽ ὅσοις μὲν εὖ καθεστᾶσιν βροτῶν,
μακάριος αἰών· οἷς δὲ μὴ πίπτουσιν εὖ,
τά τ᾽ ἔνδον εἰσὶ τά τε θύραζε δυστυχεῖς.

Χορός

Αἰεὶ γυναῖκες ἐμποδὼν ταῖς συμφοραῖς
ἔφυσαν ἀνδρῶν πρὸς τὸ δυστυχέστερον.

Τυνδάρεως

Ἐπεὶ θρασύνῃ κοὐχ ὑποστέλλῃ λόγῳ,
οὕτω δ᾽ ἀμείβῃ μ᾽ ὥστε μ᾽ ἀλγῆσαι φρένα,
μᾶλλόν μ᾽ ἀνάξεις ἐπὶ σὸν ἐξελθεῖν φόνον·
καλὸν πάρεργον δ᾽ αὐτὸ θήσομαι πόνων
ὧν εἵνεκ᾽ ἦλθον θυγατρὶ κοσμήσων τάφον.
Μολὼν γὰρ εἰς ἔκκλητον Ἀργείων ὄχλον
ἑκοῦσαν οὐχ ἑκοῦσαν ἐπισείσω πόλιν
σοὶ σῇ τ᾽ ἀδελφῇ, λεύσιμον δοῦναι δίκην.
Μᾶλλον δ᾽ ἐκείνη σοῦ θανεῖν ἐστ᾽ ἀξία,
ἣ τῇ τεκούσῃ σ᾽ ἠγρίωσ᾽, ἐς οὓς ἀεὶ
πέμπουσα μύθους ἐπὶ τὸ δυσμενέστερον,
ὀνείρατ᾽ ἀγγέλλουσα τὰ Ἀγαμέμνονος,
καὶ τοῦθ᾽ ὃ μισήσειαν Αἰγίσθου λέχος
οἱ νέρτεροι θεοί· καὶ γὰρ ἐνθάδ᾽ ἦν πικρόν·
ἕως ὑφῆψε δῶμ᾽ ἀνηφαίστῳ πυρί.
Μενέλαε, σοὶ δὲ τάδε λέγω δράσω τε πρός·
εἰ τοὐμὸν ἔχθος ἐναριθμῇ κῆδός τ᾽ ἐμόν,
μὴ τῷδ᾽ ἀμύνειν φόνον ἐναντίον θεοῖς·
ἔα δ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἀστῶν καταφονευθῆναι πέτροις,

ἢ μὴ ‘πίβαινε Σπαρτιάτιδος χθονός.
Τοσαῦτ’ ἀκούσας ἴσθι, μηδὲ δυσσεβεῖς
ἕλῃ, παρώσας εὐσεβεστέρους φίλους·
ἡμᾶς δ’ ἀπ’ οἴκων ἄγετε τῶνδε, πρόσπολοι.

Ὀρέστης

[630] Στεῖχ’, ὡς ἀθορύβως οὐπιὼν ἡμῖν λόγος
πρὸς τόνδ’ ἵκηται, γῆρας ἀποφυγὼν τὸ σόν.
Μενέλαε, ποῖ σὸν πόδ’ ἐπὶ συννοίᾳ κυκλεῖς,
διπλῆς μερίμνης διπτύχους ἰὼν ὁδούς;

Μενέλαος

Ἔασον· ἐν ἐμαυτῷ τι συννοούμενος
[635] ὅποι τράπωμαι τῆς τύχης ἀμηχανῶ.

Ὀρέστης

Μή νυν πέραινε τὴν δόκησιν, ἀλλ’ ἐμοὺς
λόγους ἀκούσας πρόσθε, βουλεύου τότε.

Μενέλαος

Λέγ’· εὖ γὰρ εἶπας· ἔστι δ’ οὖ σιγὴ λόγου
κρείσσων γένοιτ’ ἄν. Ἔστι δ’ οὖ σιγῆς λόγος.

Ὀρέστης

[640] Λέγοιμ’ ἂν ἤδη. Τὰ μακρὰ τῶν σμικρῶν λόγων
ἐπίπροσθέν ἐστι καὶ σαφῆ μᾶλλον κλύειν.
Ἐμοὶ σὺ τῶν σῶν, Μενέλεως, μηδὲν δίδου,
ἃ δ’ ἔλαβες ἀπόδος πατρὸς ἐμοῦ λαβὼν πάρα.
Οὐ χρήματ’ εἶπον· χρήματ’, ἢν ψυχὴν ἐμὴν
[645] σῴσῃς, ἅπερ μοι φίλτατ’ ἐστὶ τῶν ἐμῶν.
Ἀδικῶ· λαβεῖν χρή μ’ ἀντὶ τοῦδε τοῦ κακοῦ
ἄδικόν τι παρὰ σοῦ· καὶ γὰρ Ἀγαμέμνων πατὴρ
ἀδίκως ἀθροίσας Ἑλλάδ’ ἦλθ’ ὑπ’ Ἴλιον,

οὐκ ἐξαμαρτὼν αὐτός, ἀλλ᾽ ἁμαρτίαν
τῆς σῆς γυναικὸς ἀδικίαν τ᾽ ἰώμενος.
Ἓν μὲν τόδ᾽ ἡμῖν ἀνθ᾽ ἑνὸς δοῦναί σε χρή.
Ἀπέδοτο δ᾽, ὡς χρὴ τοῖς φίλοισι τοὺς φίλους,
τὸ σῶμ᾽ ἀληθῶς, σοὶ παρ᾽ ἀσπίδ᾽ ἐκπονῶν,
ὅπως σὺ τὴν σὴν ἀπολάβοις ξυνάορον.
Ἀπότεισον οὖν μοι ταὐτὸ τοῦτ᾽ ἐκεῖ λαβών,
μίαν πονήσας ἡμέραν, ἡμῶν ὕπερ
σωτήριος στάς, μὴ δέκ᾽ ἐκπλήσας ἔτη.
Ἃ δ᾽ Αὐλὶς ἔλαβε σφάγι᾽ ἐμῆς ὁμοσπόρου,
ἐῶ σ᾽ ἔχειν ταῦθ᾽· Ἑρμιόνην μὴ κτεῖνε σύ.
Δεῖ γὰρ σ᾽ ἐμοῦ πράσσοντος ὡς πράσσω τὰ νῦν
πλέον φέρεσθαι, κἀμὲ συγγνώμην ἔχειν.
Ψυχὴν δ᾽ ἐμὴν δὸς τῷ ταλαιπώρῳ πατρὶ
κἀμῆς ἀδελφῆς, παρθένου μακρὸν χρόνον·
θανὼν γὰρ οἶκον ὀρφανὸν λείψω πατρός.
Ἐρεῖς· ἀδύνατον. Αὐτὸ τοῦτο· τοὺς φίλους
ἐν τοῖς κακοῖς χρὴ τοῖς φίλοισιν ὠφελεῖν·
ὅταν δ᾽ ὁ δαίμων εὖ διδῷ, τί δεῖ φίλων;
Ἀρκεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς ὠφελεῖν θέλων.
Φιλεῖν δάμαρτα πᾶσιν Ἕλλησιν δοκεῖς·
κοὐχ ὑποτρέχων σε τοῦτο θωπείᾳ λέγω·
ταύτης ἱκνοῦμαί σ᾽ ᾗ μέλεος ἐμῶν κακῶν,
ἐς οἷον ἥκω. Τί δέ; Ταλαιπωρεῖν με δεῖ·
ὑπὲρ γὰρ οἴκου παντὸς ἱκετεύω τάδε.
Ὦ πατρὸς ὅμαιμε θεῖε, τὸν κατὰ χθονὸς
θανόντ᾽ ἀκούειν τάδε δόκει, ποτωμένην
ψυχὴν ὑπὲρ σοῦ, καὶ λέγειν ἃ ἐγὼ λέγω,
ταὔτ᾽ ἔς τε δάκρυα καὶ γόους καὶ συμφοράς.
Εἴρηκα κἀπῄτηκα τὴν σωτηρίαν,
θηρῶν ὃ πάντες κοὐκ ἐγὼ ζητῶ μόνος.

Χορός

Κἀγώ σ᾽ ἱκνοῦμαι καὶ γυνή περ οὖσ᾽ ὅμως
τοῖς δεομένοισιν ὠφελεῖν· οἷός τε δ᾽ εἶ.

Μενέλαος

Ὀρέστ’, ἐγώ τοι σὸν καταιδοῦμαι κάρα
καὶ ξυμπονῆσαι σοῖς κακοῖσι βούλομαι·
καὶ χρὴ γὰρ οὕτω τῶν ὁμαιμόνων κακὰ
ξυνεκκομίζειν, δύναμιν ἣν διδῷ θεός,
θνῄσκοντα καὶ κτείνοντα τοὺς ἐναντίους·
τὸ δ’ αὖ δύνασθαι πρὸς θεῶν χρῄζω τυχεῖν.
Ἥκω γὰρ ἀνδρῶν συμμάχων κενὸν δόρυ
ἔχων, πόνοισι μυρίοις ἀλώμενος,
σμικρᾷ σὺν ἀλκῇ τῶν λελειμμένων φίλων.
Μάχῃ μὲν οὖν ἂν οὐχ ὑπερβαλοίμεθα
Πελασγὸν Ἄργος· εἰ δὲ μαλθακοῖς λόγοις
δυναίμεθ’, ἐνταῦθ’ ἐλπίδος προσήκομεν.
Σμικροῖσι μὲν γὰρ μεγάλα πῶς ἕλοι τις ἄν;
Πόνοισιν; Ἀμαθὲς καὶ τὸ βούλεσθαι τάδε.
Ὅταν γὰρ ἡβᾷ δῆμος εἰς ὀργὴν πεσών,
ὅμοιον ὥστε πῦρ κατασβέσαι λάβρον·
Εἰ δ’ ἡσύχως τις αὐτὸν ἐντείνοντι μὲν
χαλῶν ὑπείκοι καιρὸν εὐλαβούμενος,
ἴσως ἂν ἐκπνεύσειεν· ἢν δ’ ἀνῇ πνοάς,
τύχοις ἂν αὐτοῦ ῥᾳδίως ὅσον θέλεις.
Ἔνεστι δ’ οἶκτος, ἔνι δὲ καὶ θυμὸς μέγας,
καραδοκοῦντι κτῆμα τιμιώτατον.
Ἐλθὼν δὲ Τυνδάρεών τέ σοι πειράσομαι
πόλιν τε πεῖσαι τῷ λίαν χρῆσθαι καλῶς.
Καὶ ναῦς γὰρ ἐνταθεῖσα πρὸς βίαν ποδὶ
ἔβαψεν, ἔστη δ’ αὖθις, ἢν χαλᾷ πόδα.
Μισεῖ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τὰς ἄγαν προθυμίας,
μισοῦσι δ’ ἀστοί· δεῖ δέ μ’ οὐκ ἄλλως λέγω
σῴζειν σε σοφίᾳ, μὴ βίᾳ τῶν κρεισσόνων.
Ἀλκῇ δέ σ’ οὐκ ἄν, ᾗ σὺ δοξάζεις ἴσως,
σῴσαιμ’ ἄν· οὐ γὰρ ῥᾴδιον λόγχῃ μιᾷ
στῆσαι τροπαῖα τῶν κακῶν ἅ σοι πάρα.
Οὐ γάρ ποτ’ Ἄργους γαῖαν ἐς τὸ μαλθακὸν
προσηγόμεσθα· νῦν δ’ ἀναγκαίως ἔχει.
Δούλοισιν εἶναι τοῖς σοφοῖσι τῆς τύχης

Ὀρέστης

[718] Ὦ πλὴν γυναικὸς οὕνεκα στρατηλατεῖν
τἄλλ’ οὐδέν, ὦ κάκιστε τιμωρεῖν φίλοις,
[720] φεύγεις ἀποστραφείς με, τὰ δ’ Ἀγαμέμνονος
φροῦδ’; Ἄφιλος ἦσθ’ ἄρ’, ὦ πάτερ, πράσσων κακῶς.
Οἴμοι, προδέδομαι, κοὐκέτ’ εἰσὶν ἐλπίδες,
ὅποι τραπόμενος θάνατον Ἀργείων φύγω·
οὗτος γὰρ ἦν μοι καταφυγὴ σωτηρίας.
[725] Ἀλλ’ εἰσορῶ γὰρ τόνδε φίλτατον βροτῶν
Πυλάδην δρόμῳ στείχοντα Φωκέων ἄπο,
ἡδεῖαν ὄψιν· πιστὸς ἐν κακοῖς ἀνὴρ
κρείσσων γαλήνης ναυτίλοισιν εἰσορᾶν.

Πυλάδης

[729] Θᾶσσον ᾗ με χρῆν προβαίνων ἱκόμην δι’ ἄστεως,
[730] σύλλογον πόλεως ἀκούσας, τὸν δ’ ἰδὼν αὐτὸς σαφῶς,
ἐπὶ σὲ σύγγονόν τε τὴν σήν, ὡς κτενοῦντας αὐτίκα.
Τί τάδε; Πῶς ἔχεις; Τί πράσσεις, φίλταθ’ ἡλίκων ἐμοὶ
καὶ φίλων καὶ συγγενείας; Πάντα γὰρ τάδ’ εἶ σύ μοι.

Ὀρέστης

Οἰχόμεσθ’, ὡς ἐν βραχεῖ σοι τἀμὰ δηλώσω κακά.

Πυλάδης

[735] Συγκατασκάπτοις ἂν ἡμᾶς· κοινὰ γὰρ τὰ τῶν φίλων.

Ὀρέστης

Μενέλεως κάκιστος ἐς ἐμὲ καὶ κασιγνήτην ἐμήν.

Πυλάδης

Εἰκότως, κακῆς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα γίγνεσθαι κακόν.

Ὀρέστης

Ὥσπερ οὐκ ἐλθὼν ἔμοιγε ταὐτὸν ἀπέδωκεν μολών.

Πυλάδης

Ἦ γάρ ἐστιν ὡς ἀληθῶς τήνδ’ ἀφιγμένος χθόνα;

Ὀρέστης

Χρόνιος· ἀλλ’ ὅμως τάχιστα κακὸς ἐφωράθη φίλοις.

Πυλάδης

Καὶ δάμαρτα τὴν κακίστην ναυστολῶν ἐλήλυθεν;

Ὀρέστης

Οὐκ ἐκεῖνος, ἀλλ’ ἐκείνη κεῖνον ἐνθάδ’ ἤγαγεν.

Πυλάδης

Ποῦ ‘στιν ἣ πλείστους Ἀχαιῶν ὤλεσεν γυνὴ μία;

Ὀρέστης

Ἐν δόμοις ἐμοῖσιν, εἰ δὴ τούσδ’ ἐμοὺς καλεῖν χρεών.

Πυλάδης

Σὺ δὲ τίνας λόγους ἔλεξας σοῦ κασιγνήτῳ πατρός;

Ὀρέστης

Μή μ’ ἰδεῖν θανόνθ’ ὑπ’ ἀστῶν καὶ κασιγνήτην ἐμήν.

Πυλάδης

Πρὸς θεῶν, τί πρὸς τάδ’ εἶπε; Τόδε γὰρ εἰδέναι θέλω.

Ὀρέστης

Εὐλαβεῖθ’, ὃ τοῖς φίλοισι δρῶσιν οἱ κακοὶ φίλοι.

Πυλάδης

Σκῆψιν ἐς ποίαν προβαίνων; Τοῦτο πάντ’ ἔχω μαθών.

Ὀρέστης

[750] Οὗτος ἦλθ’, ὁ τὰς ἀρίστας θυγατέρας σπείρας πατήρ.

Πυλάδης

Τυνδάρεων λέγεις· ἴσως σοι θυγατέρος θυμούμενος;

Ὀρέστης

Αἰσθάνῃ. τὸ τοῦδε κῆδος μᾶλλον εἵλετ’ ἢ πατρός.

Πυλάδης

Κοὐκ ἐτόλμησεν πόνων σῶν ἀντιλάζυσθαι παρών;

Ὀρέστης

Οὐ γὰρ αἰχμητὴς πέφυκεν, ἐν γυναιξὶ δ’ ἄλκιμος.

Πυλάδης

[755] Ἐν κακοῖς ἄρ’ εἶ μεγίστοις· καί σ’ ἀναγκαῖον θανεῖν;

Ὀρέστης

Ψῆφον ἀμφ’ ἡμῶν πολίτας ἐπὶ φόνῳ θέσθαι χρεών.

Πυλάδης

Ἢ κρινεῖ τί χρῆμα; Λέξον· διὰ φόβου γὰρ ἔρχομαι.

Ὀρέστης

Ἢ θανεῖν ἢ ζῆν· ὁ μῦθος οὐ μακρὸς μακρῶν πέρι.

Πυλάδης

Φεῦγέ νυν λιπὼν μέλαθρα σὺν κασιγνήτῃ σέθεν.

Ὀρέστης

[760] Οὐχ ὁρᾷς; Φυλασσόμεσθα φρουρίοισι πανταχῇ.

Πυλάδης

Εἶδον ἄστεως ἀγυιὰς τεύχεσιν πεφραγμένας.

Ὀρέστης

Ὡσπερεὶ πόλις πρὸς ἐχθρῶν σῶμα πυργηρούμεθα.

Πυλάδης

Κἀμὲ νῦν ἐροῦ τί πάσχω· καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς οἴχομαι.

Ὀρέστης

Πρὸς τίνος; Τοῦτ᾽ ἂν προσείη τοῖς ἐμοῖς κακοῖς κακόν.

Πυλάδης

[765] Στρόφιος ἤλασέν μ᾽ ἀπ᾽ οἴκων φυγάδα θυμωθεὶς πατήρ.

Ὀρέστης

Ἴδιον ἢ κοινὸν πολίταις ἐπιφέρων ἔγκλημά τι;

Πυλάδης

Ὅτι συνηράμην φόνον σοι μητρός, ἀνόσιον λέγων.

Ὀρέστης

Ὦ τάλας, ἔοικε καὶ σὲ τἀμὰ λυπήσειν κακά.

Πυλάδης

Οὐχὶ Μενέλεω τρόποισι χρώμεθ᾽· οἰστέον τάδε.

Ὀρέστης

Οὐ φοβῇ μή σ᾽ Ἄργος ὥσπερ κἄμ᾽ ἀποκτεῖναι θέλῃ;

Πυλάδης

Οὐ προσήκομεν κολάζειν τοῖσδε, Φωκέων δὲ γῇ.

Ὀρέστης

Δεινὸν οἱ πολλοί, κακούργους ὅταν ἔχωσι προστάτας.

Πυλάδης

Ἀλλ᾽ ὅταν χρηστοὺς λάβωσι, χρηστὰ βουλεύουσ᾽ ἀεί.

Ὀρέστης

Εἶέν. ἐς κοινὸν λέγειν χρή.

Πυλάδης

Τίνος ἀναγκαίου πέρι;

Ὀρέστης

Εἰ λέγοιμ᾽ ἀστοῖσιν ἐλθὼν

Πυλάδης

Ὡς ἔδρασας ἔνδικα;

Ὀρέστης

Πατρὶ τιμωρῶν ἐμαυτοῦ;

Πυλάδης

Μὴ λάβωσί σ’ ἄσμενοι.

Ὀρέστης

Ἀλλ’ ὑποπτήξας σιωπῇ κατθάνω;

Πυλάδης

Δειλὸν τόδε.

Ὀρέστης

Πῶς ἂν οὖν δρῴην;

Πυλάδης

Ἔχεις τιν’, ἢν μένῃς, σωτηρίαν;

Ὀρέστης

Οὐκ ἔχω.

Πυλάδης

Μολόντι δ’ ἐλπίς ἐστι σωθῆναι κακῶν;

Ὀρέστης

[780] Εἰ τύχοι, γένοιτ’ ἄν.

Πυλάδης

Οὐκοῦν τοῦτο κρεῖσσον ἢ μένειν.

Ὀρέστης

Ἀλλὰ δῆτ᾽ ἔλθω.

Πυλάδης

Θανὼν γοῦν ὧδε κάλλιον θανῇ.

Ὀρέστης

[783] Εὖ λέγεις· φεύγω τὸ δειλὸν τῇδε.

Πυλάδης

Μᾶλλον ἢ μένων.

Ὀρέστης

[782] Καὶ τὸ πρᾶγμά γ᾽ ἔνδικόν μοι.

Πυλάδης

Τῷ Δοκεῖν εὔχου μόνον.

Ὀρέστης

[784] Καί τις ἄν γέ μ᾽ οἰκτίσειε . . .

Πυλάδης

Μέγα γὰρ ἡ εὐγένειά σου.

Ὀρέστης

[785] Θάνατον ἀσχάλλων πατρῷον.

Πυλάδης

Πάντα ταῦτ᾽ ἐν ὄμμασιν.

Ὀρέστης

Ἰτέον, ὡς ἄνανδρον ἀκλεῶς κατθανεῖν.

Πυλάδης

Αἰνῶ τάδε.

Ὀρέστης

Ἦ λέγωμεν οὖν ἀδελφῇ ταῦτ᾽ ἐμῇ;

Πυλάδης

Μὴ πρὸς θεῶν.

Ὀρέστης

Δάκρυα γοῦν γένοιτ᾽ ἄν.

Πυλάδης

Οὐκοῦν οὗτος οἰωνὸς μέγας.

Ὀρέστης

Δηλαδὴ σιγᾶν ἄμεινον.

Πυλάδης

Τῷ χρόνῳ δὲ κερδανεῖς.

Ὀρέστης

[790] Κεῖνό μοι μόνον πρόσαντες.

Πυλάδης

Τί τόδε καινὸν αὖ λέγεις;

Ὀρέστης

Μὴ θεαί μ’ οἴστρῳ κατάσχωσι.

Πυλάδης

Ἀλλὰ κηδεύσω σ’ ἐγώ.

Ὀρέστης

Δυσχερὲς ψαύειν νοσοῦντος ἀνδρός.

Πυλάδης

Οὐκ ἔμοιγε σοῦ.

Ὀρέστης

Εὐλαβοῦ λύσσης μετασχεῖν τῆς ἐμῆς.

Πυλάδης

Τόδ’ οὖν ἴτω.

Ὀρέστης

Οὐκ ἄρ’ ὀκνήσεις;

Πυλάδης

Ὄκνος γὰρ τοῖς φίλοις κακὸν μέγα.

Ὀρέστης

[795] Ἕρπε νυν οἵαξ ποδός μοι.

Πυλάδης

Φίλα γ’ ἔχων κηδεύματα.

Ὀρέστης

Καί με πρὸς τύμβον πόρευσον πατρός.

Πυλάδης

Ὡς τί δὴ τόδε;

Ὀρέστης

Ὡς νιν ἱκετεύσω με σῶσαι.

Πυλάδης

Τό γε δίκαιον ὦδ’ ἔχει.

Ὀρέστης

Μητέρος δὲ μηδ’ ἴδοιμι μνῆμα.

Πυλάδης

[788] Πολεμία γὰρ ἦν.
Ἀλλ’ ἔπειγ’, ὡς μή σε πρόσθε ψῆφος Ἀργείων ἕλῃ,
[800] περιβαλὼν πλευροῖς ἐμοῖσι πλευρὰ νωχελῆ νόσῳ·
ὡς ἐγὼ δι’ ἄστεώς σε, σμικρὰ φροντίζων ὄχλου,
οὐδὲν αἰσχυνθεὶς ὀχήσω. Ποῦ γὰρ ἂν δείξω φίλος,
εἴ σε μὴ ‘ν δειναῖσιν ὄντα συμφοραῖς ἐπαρκέσω;

Ὀρέστης

Τοῦτ’ ἐκεῖνο, <κτᾶσθ’ ἑταίρους, μὴ τὸ συγγενὲς μόνον>·
[805] ὡς ἀνὴρ ὅστις τρόποισι συντακῇ, θυραῖος ὢν
μυρίων κρείσσων ὁμαίμων ἀνδρὶ κεκτῆσθαι φίλος.

Χορός

[807] Ὁ μέγας ὄλβος ἅ τ’ ἀρετὰ
μέγα φρονοῦσ’ ἀν’ Ἑλλάδα καὶ
παρὰ Σιμουντίοις ὀχετοῖς
[810] πάλιν ἀνῆλθ’ ἐξ εὐτυχίας Ἀτρείδαις

πάλαι παλαιᾶς ἀπὸ συμφορᾶς δόμων,
ὁπότε χρυσείας ἔρις ἀρνὸς
ἦλυθε Τανταλίδαις,
οἰκτρότατα θοινάματα καὶ
σφάγια γενναίων τεκέων·
ὅθεν φόνῳ φόνος ἐξαμεί-
βων δι᾽ αἵματος οὐ προλεί-
πει δισσοῖσιν Ἀτρείδαις.

Τὸ καλὸν οὐ καλόν, τοκέων
πυριγενεῖ τεμεῖν παλάμᾳ
χρόα μελάνδετον δὲ φόνῳ
ξίφος ἐς αὐγὰς ἀελίοιο δεῖξαι·
τὸ δ᾽ εὖ κακουργεῖν ἀσέβεια ποικίλα
κακοφρόνων τ᾽ ἀνδρῶν παράνοια.
θανάτου γὰρ ἀμφὶ φόβῳ
Τυνδαρὶς ἰάχησε τάλαι-
να· Τέκνον, οὐ τολμᾷς ὅσια
κτείνων σὰν ματέρα· μὴ πατρῴ-
αν τιμῶν χάριν ἐξανά-
ψῃ δύσκλειαν ἐς αἰεί.

Τίς νόσος ἢ τίνα δάκρυα καὶ
τίς ἔλεος μείζων κατὰ γᾶν
ἢ ματροκτόνον αἷμα χειρὶ θέσθαι;
Οἷον ἔργον τελέσας
βεβάκχευται μανίαις,
Εὐμενίσι θήραμα, φόνον
δρομάσι δινεύων βλεφάροις,
Ἀγαμεμνόνιος παῖς.
Ὦ μέλεος, ματρὸς ὅτε
χρυσεοπηνήτων φαρέων
μαστὸν ὑπερτέλλοντ᾽ ἐσιδὼν
σφάγιον ἔθετο ματέρα, πατρῴ-
ων παθέων ἀμοιβάν.

Ἠλέκτρα

Γυναῖκες, ἦ που τῶνδ’ ἀφώρμηται δόμων
τλήμων Ὀρέστης θεομανεῖ λύσσῃ δαμείς;

Χορός

Ἥκιστα· πρὸς δ’ Ἀργεῖον οἴχεται λεών,
ψυχῆς ἀγῶνα τὸν προκείμενον πέρι
δώσων, ἐν ᾧ ζῆν ἢ θανεῖν ὑμᾶς χρεών.

Ἠλέκτρα

Οἴμοι· τί χρῆμ’ ἔδρασε; Τίς δ’ ἔπεισέ νιν;

Χορός

Πυλάδης· ἔοικε δ’ οὐ μακρὰν ὅδ’ ἄγγελος
λέξειν τὰ κεῖθεν σοῦ κασιγνήτου πέρι.

Ἄγγελος

Ὦ τλῆμον, ὦ δύστηνε τοῦ στρατηλάτου
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖ, πότνι’ Ἠλέκτρα, λόγους
ἄκουσον οὕς σοι δυστυχεῖς ἥκω φέρων.

Ἠλέκτρα

Αἰαῖ, διοιχόμεσθα· δῆλος εἶ λόγῳ.
Κακῶν γὰρ ἥκεις, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἄγγελος.

Ἄγγελος

Ψήφῳ Πελασγῶν σὸν κασίγνητον θανεῖν
καὶ σέ, ὦ τάλαιν’, ἔδοξε τῇδ’ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ.

Ἠλέκτρα

Οἴμοι· προσῆλθεν ἐλπίς, ἣν φοβουμένη
πάλαι τὸ μέλλον ἐξετηκόμην γόοις.
Ἀτὰρ τίς ἀγών, τίνες ἐν Ἀργείοις λόγοι

καθεῖλον ἡμᾶς κἀπεκύρωσαν θανεῖν;
Λέγ’, ὦ γεραιέ· πότερα λευσίμῳ χερὶ
ἢ διὰ σιδήρου πνεῦμ’ ἀπορρῆξαί με δεῖ,
[865] κοινὰς ἀδελφῷ συμφορὰς κεκτημένην;

Ἄγγελος

[866] Ἐτύγχανον μὲν ἀγρόθεν πυλῶν ἔσω
βαίνων, πυθέσθαι δεόμενος τά τ’ ἀμφὶ σοῦ
τά τ’ ἀμφ’ Ὀρέστου· σῷ γὰρ εὔνοιαν πατρὶ
ἀεί ποτ’ εἶχον, καί μ’ ἔφερβε σὸς δόμος
[870] πένητα μέν, χρῆσθαι δὲ γενναῖον φίλοις.
Ὁρῶ δ’ ὄχλον στείχοντα καὶ θάσσοντ’ ἄκραν,
οὗ φασι πρῶτον Δαναὸν Αἰγύπτῳ δίκας
διδόντ’ ἀθροῖσαι λαὸν ἐς κοινὰς ἕδρας.
Ἀστῶν δὲ δή τιν’ ἠρόμην ἄθροισμ’ ἰδών·
[875] Τί καινὸν Ἄργει; Μῶν τι πολεμίων πάρα
ἄγγελμ’ ἀνεπτέρωκε Δαναϊ̈δῶν πόλιν;
Ὃ δ’ εἶπ’· Ὀρέστην κεῖνον οὐχ ὁρᾷς πέλας
στείχοντ’, ἀγῶνα θανάσιμον δραμούμενον;
Ὁρῶ δ’ ἄελπτον φάσμ’, ὃ μήποτ’ ὤφελον,
[880] Πυλάδην τε καὶ σὸν σύγγονον στείχονθ’ ὁμοῦ,
τὸν μὲν κατηφῆ καὶ παρειμένον νόσῳ,
τὸν δ’ ὥστ’ ἀδελφὸν ἴσα φίλῳ λυπούμενον,
νόσημα κηδεύοντα παιδαγωγίᾳ.
[884] Ἐπεὶ δὲ πλήρης ἐγένετ’ Ἀργείων ὄχλος,
[885] κῆρυξ ἀναστὰς εἶπε· Τίς χρῄζει λέγειν,
πότερον Ὀρέστην κατθανεῖν ἢ μὴ χρεών,
μητροκτονοῦντα; Κἀπὶ τῷδ’ ἀνίσταται
Ταλθύβιος, ὃς σῷ πατρὶ συνεπόρθει Φρύγας.
Ἔλεξε δ’, ὑπὸ τοῖς δυναμένοισιν ὢν ἀεί,
[890] διχόμυθα, πατέρα μὲν σὸν ἐκπαγλούμενος,
σὸν δ’ οὐκ ἐπαινῶν σύγγονον, καλοὺς κακοὺς
λόγους ἑλίσσων, ὅτι καθισταίη νόμους
ἐς τοὺς τεκόντας οὐ καλούς· τὸ δ’ ὄμμ’ ἀεὶ
φαιδρωπὸν ἐδίδου τοῖσιν Αἰγίσθου φίλοις.
[895] Τὸ γὰρ γένος τοιοῦτον· ἐπὶ τὸν εὐτυχῆ

πηδῶσ᾽ ἀεὶ κήρυκες· ὅδε δ᾽ αὐτοῖς φίλος,
ὃς ἂν δύνηται πόλεος ἔν τ᾽ ἀρχαῖσιν ᾖ.
Ἐπὶ τῷδε δ᾽ ἠγόρευε Διομήδης ἄναξ.
Οὗτος κτανεῖν μὲν οὔτε σὲ οὔτε σύγγονον
εἴα, φυγῇ δὲ ζημιοῦντας εὐσεβεῖν.
Ἐπερρόθησαν δ᾽ οἱ μὲν ὡς καλῶς λέγοι,
οἱ δ᾽ οὐκ ἐπῄνουν. Κἀπὶ τῷδ᾽ ἀνίσταται
ἀνήρ τις ἀθυρόγλωσσος, ἰσχύων θράσει,
Ἀργεῖος οὐκ Ἀργεῖος, ἠναγκασμένος,
θορύβῳ τε πίσυνος κἀμαθεῖ παρρησίᾳ,
πιθανὸς ἔτ᾽ αὐτοὺς περιβαλεῖν κακῷ τινι·
ὅταν γὰρ ἡδύς τις λόγοις φρονῶν κακῶς
πείθῃ τὸ πλῆθος, τῇ πόλει κακὸν μέγα·
ὅσοι δὲ σὺν νῷ χρηστὰ βουλεύουσ᾽ ἀεί,
κἂν μὴ παραυτίκ᾽, αὖθίς εἰσι χρήσιμοι
πόλει. Θεᾶσθαι δ᾽ ὧδε χρὴ τὸν προστάτην
ἰδόνθ᾽· ὅμοιον γὰρ τὸ χρῆμα γίγνεται
τῷ τοὺς λόγους λέγοντι καὶ τιμωμένῳ.
Ὃς εἶπ᾽ Ὀρέστην καὶ σὲ ἀποκτεῖναι πέτροις
βάλλοντας· ὑπὸ δ᾽ ἔτεινε Τυνδάρεως λόγους
τῷ σφὼ κατακτείνοντι τοιούτους λέγειν.
Ἄλλος δ᾽ ἀναστὰς ἔλεγε τῷδ᾽ ἐναντία,
μορφῇ μὲν οὐκ εὐωπός, ἀνδρεῖος δ᾽ ἀνήρ,
ὀλιγάκις ἄστυ κἀγορᾶς χραίνων κύκλον,
αὐτουργός οἵπερ καὶ μόνοι σῴζουσι γῆν
ξυνετὸς δέ, χωρεῖν ὁμόσε τοῖς λόγοις θέλων,
ἀκέραιος, ἀνεπίπληκτον ἠσκηκὼς βίον·
ὃς εἶπ᾽ Ὀρέστην παῖδα τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος
στεφανοῦν, ὃς ἠθέλησε τιμωρεῖν πατρί,
κακὴν γυναῖκα κἄθεον κατακτανών,
ἣ κεῖν᾽ ἀφῄρει, μήθ᾽ ὁπλίζεσθαι χέρα
μήτε στρατεύειν ἐκλιπόντα δώματα,
εἰ τἄνδον οἰκουρήμαθ᾽ οἱ λελειμμένοι
φθείρουσιν, ἀνδρῶν εὔνιδας λωβώμενοι.
Καὶ τοῖς γε χρηστοῖς εὖ λέγειν ἐφαίνετο.
Κοὐδεὶς ἔτ᾽ εἶπε. Σὸς δ᾽ ἐπῆλθε σύγγονος,
ἔλεξε δ᾽· ὦ γῆν Ἰνάχου κεκτημένοι,

πάλαι Πελασγοί, Δαναΐ¨δαι δεύτερον,
ὑμῖν ἀμύνων οὐδὲν ἧσσον ἢ πατρὶ
[935] ἔκτεινα μητέρ’. Εἰ γὰρ ἀρσένων φόνος
ἔσται γυναιξὶν ὅσιος, οὐ φθάνοιτ’ ἔτ’ ἂν
θνῄσκοντες, ἢ γυναιξὶ δουλεύειν χρεών·
τοὐναντίον δὲ δράσετ’ ἢ δρᾶσαι χρεών.
Νῦν μὲν γὰρ ἡ προδοῦσα λέκτρ’ ἐμοῦ πατρὸς
[940] τέθνηκεν· εἰ δὲ δὴ κατακτενεῖτ’ ἐμέ,
ὁ νόμος ἀνεῖται, κοὐ φθάνοι θνῄσκων τις ἄν·
ὡς τῆς γε τόλμης οὐ σπάνις γενήσεται.
Ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἔπειθ’ ὅμιλον, εὖ δοκῶν λέγειν.
Νικᾷ δ’ ἐκεῖνος ὁ κακὸς ἐν πλήθει λέγων,
[945] ὃς ἠγόρευσε σύγγονον σέ τε κτανεῖν.
Μόλις δ’ ἔπεισε μὴ πετρουμένους θανεῖν
τλήμων Ὀρέστης· αὐτόχειρι δὲ σφαγῇ
ὑπέσχετ’ ἐν τῇδ’ ἡμέρᾳ λείψειν βίον
σὺν σοί. Πορεύει δ’ αὐτὸν ἐκκλήτων ἄπο
[950] Πυλάδης δακρύων· σὺν δ’ ὁμαρτοῦσιν φίλοι
κλαίοντες, οἰκτίροντες· ἔρχεται δέ σοι
πικρὸν θέαμα καὶ πρόσοψις ἀθλία.
Ἀλλ’ εὐτρέπιζε φάσγαν’ ἢ βρόχον δέρῃ·
ὡς δεῖ λιπεῖν σε φέγγος· ἡ εὐγένεια δὲ
[955] οὐδέν σ’ ἐπωφέλησεν, οὐδ’ ὁ Πύθιος
τρίποδα καθίζων Φοῖβος, ἀλλ’ ἀπώλεσεν.

Χορός

Ὦ δυστάλαινα παρθέν’, ὡς ξυνηρεφὲς
πρόσωπον εἰς γῆν σὸν βαλοῦσ’ ἄφθογγος εἶ,
ὡς εἰς στεναγμοὺς καὶ γόους δραμουμένη.

Ἠλέκτρα

[960] Κατάρχομαι στεναγμόν, ὦ Πελασγία,
τιθεῖσα λευκὸν ὄνυχα διὰ παρηίδων,
αἱματηρὸν ἄταν,
κτύπον τε κρατός, ὃν ἔλαχ’ ἁ κατὰ χθονὸς
νερτέρων Περσέφασσα καλλίπαις θεά.

[965] Ἰαχείτω δὲ γᾶ Κυκλωπία,
σίδαρον ἐπὶ κάρα τιθεῖσα κούριμον,
πήματ᾽ οἴκων.
Ἔλεος ἔλεος ὅδ᾽ ἔρχεται
τῶν θανουμένων ὕπερ,
[970] στρατηλατᾶν Ἑλλάδος ποτ᾽ ὄντων.

[971] Βέβακε γὰρ βέβακεν, οἴχεται τέκνων
πρόπασα γέννα Πέλοπος ὅ τ᾽ ἐπὶ μακαρίοις
ζῆλος ὢν ποτ᾽ οἴκοις·
Φθόνος νιν εἶλε θεόθεν, ἅ τε δυσμενὴς
[975] φοινία ψῆφος ἐν πολίταις.
Ἰὼ ἰώ, πανδάκρυτ᾽ ἐφαμέρων
ἔθνη πολύπονα, λεύσσεθ᾽, ὡς παρ᾽ ἐλπίδας
μοῖρα βαίνει.
Ἕτερα δ᾽ ἕτερος ἀμείβεται
[980] πήματ᾽ ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ·
βροτῶν δ᾽ ὁ πᾶς ἀστάθμητος αἰών.

[982] Μόλοιμι τὰν οὐρανοῦ
μέσον χθονός <τε> τεταμέναν
αἰωρήμασι πέτραν,
ἁλύσεσιν χρυσέαισι φερομέναν δίναισι,
βῶλον ἐξ Ὀλύμπου,
ἵν᾽ ἐν θρήνοισιν ἀναβοάσω
[985] γέροντι πατρὶ Ταντάλῳ
ὃς ἔτεκεν ἔτεκε γενέτορας ἐμέθεν δόμων,
οἳ κατεῖδον ἄτας,
ποτανὸν μὲν δίωγμα πώλων
τεθριπποβάμονι στόλῳ Πέλοψ ὅτε
[990] πελάγεσι διεδίφρευσε, Μυρτίλου φόνον
δικὼν ἐς οἶδμα πόντου,
λευκοκύμοσιν
πρὸς Γεραιστίαις
ποντίων σάλων
ᾐόσιν ἁρματεύσας.
[995] Ὅθεν δόμοισι τοῖς ἐμοῖς

ἦλθ’ ἀρὰ πολύστονος,
λόχευμα ποιμνίοισι Μαιάδος τόκου,
τὸ χρυσόμαλλον ἀρνὸς ὁπότ’
ἐγένετο τέρας ὀλοὸν ὀλοὸν
Ἀτρέος ἱπποβώτα·
ὅθεν Ἔρις τό τε πτερωτὸν
ἁλίου μετέβαλεν ἅρμα,
τὰν πρὸς ἑσπέραν κέλευθον
οὐρανοῦ προσαρμόσα-
σα μονόπωλον ἐς Ἀῶ,
ἐπταπόρου τε δράμημα Πελειάδος
εἰς ὁδὸν ἄλλαν Ζεὺς μεταβάλλει,
τῶνδέ τ’ ἀμείβει . . . θανάτους θανά-
των τά τ’ ἐπώνυμα δεῖπνα Θυέστου
λέκτρα τε Κρήσσας Ἀερόπας δολί-
ας δολίοισι γάμοις· τὰ πανύστατα δ’
εἰς ἐμὲ καὶ γενέταν ἐμὸν ἦλυθε
δόμων πολυπόνοις ἀνάγκαις.

Χορός

Καὶ μὴν ὅδε σὸς σύγγονος ἕρπει
ψήφῳ θανάτου κατακυρωθείς,
ὅ τε πιστότατος πάντων Πυλάδης,
ἰσάδελφος ἀνήρ, ἰθύνων
νοσερὸν κῶλον Ὀρέστου,
ποδὶ κηδοσύνῳ παράσειρος.

Ἠλέκτρα

Οἳ ἐγώ· πρὸ τύμβου γάρ σ’ ὁρῶσ’ ἀναστένω,
ἀδελφέ, καὶ πάροιθε νερτέρου πυρᾶς.
Οἳ ἐγὼ μάλ’ αὖθις· ὥς σ’ ἰδοῦσ’ ἐν ὄμμασιν
πανυστάτην πρόσοψιν ἐξέστην φρενῶν.

Ὀρέστης

Οὐ σῖγ’ ἀφεῖσα τοὺς γυναικείους γόους
στέρξεις τὰ κρανθέντ’; Οἰκτρὰ μὲν τάδ’, ἀλλ’ ὅμως
φέρειν σ’ ἀνάγκη τὰς παρεστώσας τύχας.

Ἠλέκτρα

Καὶ πῶς σιωπῶ; Φέγγος εἰσορᾶν θεοῦ
τόδ’ οὐκέθ’ ἡμῖν τοῖς ταλαιπώροις μέτα.

Ὀρέστης

Σὺ μή μ’ ἀπόκτειν’· ἅλις ὑπ’ Ἀργείας χερὸς
τέθνηχ’ ὁ τλήμων· τὰ δὲ παρόντ’ ἔα κακά.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ὦ μέλεος ἦβης σῆς, Ὀρέστα, καὶ πότμου
θανάτου τ’ ἀώρου. ζῆν ἐχρῆν σ’, ὅτ’ οὐκέτ’ εἶ.

Ὀρέστης

Μὴ πρὸς θεῶν μοι περιβάλῃς ἀνανδρίαν,
ἐς δάκρυα πορθμεύουσ’ ὑπομνήσει κακῶν.

Ἠλέκτρα

Θανούμεθ’· οὐχ οἷόν τε μὴ στένειν κακά.
Πᾶσιν γὰρ οἰκτρὸν ἡ φίλη ψυχὴ βροτοῖς.

Ὀρέστης

Τόδ’ ἦμαρ ἡμῖν κύριον· δεῖ δ’ ἢ βρόχους
ἅπτειν κρεμαστοὺς ἢ ξίφος θήγειν χερί.

Ἠλέκτρα

Σύ νύν μ’, ἀδελφέ, μή τις Ἀργείων κτάνῃ
ὕβρισμα θέμενος τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος γόνον.

Ὀρέστης

Ἅλις τὸ μητρὸς αἶμ’ ἔχω· σὲ δ’ οὐ κτενῶ,
ἀλλ’ αὐτόχειρι θνῇσχ’ ὅτῳ βούλῃ τρόπῳ.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ἔσται τάδ’· οὐδὲν σοῦ ξίφους λελείψομαι.
ἀλλ’ ἀμφιθεῖναι σῇ δέρῃ θέλω χέρας.

Ὀρέστης

Τέρπου κενὴν ὄνησιν, εἰ τερπνὸν τόδε
θανάτου πέλας βεβῶσι, περιβαλεῖν χέρας.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ὦ φίλτατ’, ὦ ποθεινὸν ἥδιστόν τ’ ἔχων
τῆς σῆς ἀδελφῆς ὄνομα καὶ ψυχὴν μίαν.

Ὀρέστης

Ἔκ τοί με τήξεις· καί σ’ ἀμείψασθαι θέλω
φιλότητι χειρῶν. Τί γὰρ ἔτ’ αἰδοῦμαι τάλας;
Ὦ στέρν’ ἀδελφῆς, ὦ φίλον πρόσπτυγμ’ ἐμόν,
τάδ’ ἀντὶ παίδων καὶ γαμηλίου λέχους
προσφθέγματ’ ἀμφοῖν τοῖς ταλαιπώροις πάρα.

Ἠλέκτρα

Φεῦ·
πῶς ἂν ξίφος νὼ ταὐτόν, εἰ θέμις, κτάνοι
καὶ μνῆμα δέξαιθ’ ἕν, κέδρου τεχνάσματα;

Ὀρέστης

Ἥδιστ’ ἂν εἴη ταῦθ’· ὁρᾷς δὲ δὴ φίλων
ὡς ἐσπανίσμεθ’, ὥστε κοινωνεῖν τάφου.

Ἠλέκτρα

Οὐδ’ εἶφ’ ὑπὲρ σοῦ, μὴ θανεῖν σπουδὴν ἔχων,
Μενέλαος ὁ κακός, ὁ προδότης τοὐμοῦ πατρός;

Ὀρέστης

Οὐδ’ ὄμμ’ ἔδειξεν, ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ σκήπτροις ἔχων
τὴν ἐλπίδ’, εὐλαβεῖτο μὴ σῴζειν φίλους.
Ἀλλ’ εἶ’ ὅπως γενναῖα καὶ Ἀγαμέμνονος
δράσαντε κατθανούμεθ’ ἀξιώτατα.
Κἀγὼ μὲν εὐγένειαν ἀποδείξω πόλει,
παίσας πρὸς ἦπαρ φασγάνῳ· σὲ δ’ αὖ χρεὼν
ὅμοια πράσσειν τοῖς ἐμοῖς τολμήμασιν.
Πυλάδη, σὺ δ’ ἡμῖν τοῦ φόνου γενοῦ βραβεύς,
καὶ κατθανόντοιν εὖ περίστειλον δέμας
θάψον τε κοινῇ πρὸς πατρὸς τύμβον φέρων.
Καὶ χαῖρ’· ἐπ’ ἔργον δ’, ὡς ὁρᾷς, πορεύομαι.

Πυλάδης

Ἐπίσχες. ἓν μὲν πρῶτά σοι μομφὴν ἔχω,
εἰ ζῆν με χρῄζειν σοῦ θανόντος ἤλπισας.

Ὀρέστης

Τί γὰρ προσήκει κατθανεῖν σ’ ἐμοῦ μέτα;

Πυλάδης

Ἥρου; Τί δὲ ζῆν σῆς ἑταιρίας ἄτερ;

Ὀρέστης

Οὐκ ἔκτανες σὴν μητέρ’, ὡς ἐγὼ τάλας.

Πυλάδης

Σὺν σοί γε κοινῇ· ταὐτὰ καὶ πάσχειν με δεῖ.

Ὀρέστης

Ἀπόδος τὸ σῶμα πατρί, μὴ σύνθνῃσκέ μοι.
Σοὶ μὲν γὰρ ἔστι πόλις, ἐμοὶ δ' οὐκ ἔστι δή,
καὶ δῶμα πατρὸς καὶ μέγας πλούτου λιμήν.
Γάμων δὲ τῆς μὲν δυσπότμου τῆσδ' ἐσφάλης,
ἥν σοι κατηγγύησ' ἑταιρίαν σέβων·
σὺ δ' ἄλλο λέκτρον παιδοποίησαι λαβών,
κῆδος δὲ τοὐμὸν καὶ σὸν οὐκέτ' ἔστι δή.
Ἀλλ', ὦ ποθεινὸν ὄμμ' ὁμιλίας ἐμῆς,
χαῖρ'· οὐ γὰρ ἡμῖν ἔστι τοῦτο, σοί γε μήν·
οἱ γὰρ θανόντες χαρμάτων τητώμεθα.

Πυλάδης

Ἦ πολὺ λέλειψαι τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων.
Μήθ' αἷμά μου δέξαιτο κάρπιμον πέδον,
μὴ λαμπρὸς αἰθήρ, εἴ σ' ἐγὼ προδούς ποτε
ἐλευθερώσας τοὐμὸν ἀπολίποιμι σέ.
Καὶ συγκατέκτανον γάρ, οὐκ ἀρνήσομαι,
καὶ πάντ' ἐβούλευσ' ὧν σὺ νῦν τίνεις δίκας·
καὶ ξυνθανεῖν οὖν δεῖ με σοὶ καὶ τῇδ' ὁμοῦ.
Ἐμὴν γὰρ αὐτήν, ἧς <γε> λέχος ἐπήνεσα,
κρίνω δάμαρτα· τί γὰρ ἐρῶ κἀγώ ποτε
γῆν Δελφίδ' ἐλθὼν Φωκέων ἀκρόπτολιν,
ὃς πρὶν μὲν ὑμᾶς δυστυχεῖν φίλος παρῆ,
νῦν δ' οὐκέτ' εἰμὶ δυστυχοῦντί σοι φίλος;
Οὐκ ἔστιν. Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν κἀμοὶ μέλει·
ἐπεὶ δὲ κατθανούμεθ', ἐς κοινοὺς λόγους
ἔλθωμεν, ὡς ἂν Μενέλεως συνδυστυχῇ.

Ὀρέστης

Ὦ φίλτατ', εἰ γὰρ τοῦτο κατθάνοιμ' ἰδών.

Πυλάδης

Πιθοῦ νυν, ἄμμεινόν τε φασγάνου τομάς.

Ὀρέστης

Μενῶ, τὸν ἐχθρὸν εἴ τι τιμωρήσομαι.

Πυλάδης

Σίγα νυν· ὡς γυναιξὶ πιστεύω βραχύ.

Ὀρέστης

Μηδὲν τρέσῃς τάσδ'· ὡς πάρεισ' ἡμῖν φίλαι.

Πυλάδης

[1105] Ἑλένην κτάνωμεν, Μενέλεῳ λύπην πικράν.

Ὀρέστης

Πῶς; Τὸ γὰρ ἕτοιμον ἔστιν, εἴ γ' ἔσται καλῶς.

Πυλάδης

Σφάξαντες. ἐν δόμοις δὲ κρύπτεται σέθεν.

Ὀρέστης

Μάλιστα· καὶ δὴ πάντ' ἀποσφραγίζεται.

Πυλάδης

Ἀλλ' οὐκέθ', Ἅιδην νυμφίον κεκτημένη.

Ὀρέστης

[1110] Καὶ πῶς; Ἔχει γὰρ βαρβάρους ὀπάονας.

Πυλάδης

Τίνας; Φρυγῶν γὰρ οὐδέν' ἂν τρέσαιμ' ἐγώ.

Ὀρέστης

Οἵους ἐνόπτρων καὶ μύρων ἐπιστάτας.

Πυλάδης

Τρυφὰς γὰρ ἥκει δεῦρ’ ἔχουσα Τρωικάς;

Ὀρέστης

Ὥσθ’ Ἑλλὰς αὐτῇ σμικρὸν οἰκητήριον.

Πυλάδης

[1115] Οὐδὲν τὸ δοῦλον πρὸς τὸ μὴ δοῦλον γένος.

Ὀρέστης

Καὶ μὴν τόδ’ ἔρξας δὶς θανεῖν οὐχ ἅζομαι.

Πυλάδης

Ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ ἐγὼ μήν, σοί γε τιμωρούμενος.

Ὀρέστης

Τὸ πρᾶγμα δήλου καὶ πέραιν’, ὅπως λέγεις.

Πυλάδης

Ἔσιμεν ἐς οἴκους δῆθεν ὡς θανούμενοι.

Ὀρέστης

[1120] Ἔχω τοσοῦτον, τἀπίλοιπα δ’ οὐκ ἔχω.

Πυλάδης

Γόους πρὸς αὐτὴν θησόμεσθ’ ἃ πάσχομεν.

Ὀρέστης

Ὥστ᾽ ἐκδακρῦσαί γ᾽ ἔνδοθεν κεχαρμένην.

Πυλάδης

Καὶ νῷν παρέσται ταῦθ᾽ ἅπερ κείνῃ τότε.

Ὀρέστης

Ἔπειτ᾽ ἀγῶνα πῶς ἀγωνιούμεθα;

Πυλάδης

[1125] Κρύπτ᾽ ἐν πέπλοισι τοισίδ᾽ ἔξομεν ξίφη.

Ὀρέστης

Πρόσθεν δ᾽ ὀπαδῶν τίς ὄλεθρος γενήσεται;

Πυλάδης

Ἐκκλῄσομεν σφᾶς ἄλλον ἄλλοσε στέγης.

Ὀρέστης

Καὶ τόν γε μὴ σιγῶντ᾽ ἀποκτείνειν χρεών.

Πυλάδης

Εἶτ᾽ αὐτὸ δηλοῖ τοὔργον οἷ τείνειν χρεών.

Ὀρέστης

[1130] Ἑλένην φονεύειν· μανθάνω τὸ σύμβολον.

Πυλάδης

[1131] Ἔγνως· ἄκουσον δ᾽ ὡς καλῶς βουλεύομαι.
Εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἐς γυναῖκα σωφρονεστέραν

ξίφος μεθεῖμεν, δυσκλεὴς ἂν ἦν φόνος·
νῦν δ' ὑπὲρ ἁπάσης Ἑλλάδος δώσει δίκην,
ὧν πατέρας ἔκτειν', ὧν δ' ἀπώλεσεν τέκνα,
νύμφας τ' ἔθηκεν ὀρφανὰς ξυναόρων.
Ὀλολυγμὸς ἔσται, πῦρ τ' ἀνάψουσιν θεοῖς,
σοὶ πολλὰ κἀμοὶ κέδν' ἀρώμενοι τυχεῖν,
κακῆς γυναικὸς οὕνεχ' αἷμ' ἐπράξαμεν.
Ὁ μητροφόντης δ' οὐ καλῇ ταύτην κτανών,
ἀλλ' ἀπολιπὼν τοῦτ' ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον πεσῇ,
Ἑλένης λεγόμενος τῆς πολυκτόνου φονεύς.
Οὐ δεῖ ποτ', οὐ δεῖ, Μενέλεων μὲν εὐτυχεῖν,
τὸν σὸν δὲ πατέρα καὶ σὲ κἀδελφὴν θανεῖν,
μητέρα τε ἐῶ τοῦτ'· οὐ γὰρ εὐπρεπὲς λέγειν
δόμους δ' ἔχειν σοὺς δι' Ἀγαμέμνονος δόρυ
λαβόντα νύμφην· μὴ γὰρ οὖν ζῴην ἔτι,
ἢν μὴ 'π' ἐκείνῃ φάσγανον σπασώμεθα.
Ἦν δ' οὖν τὸν Ἑλένης μὴ κατάσχωμεν φόνον,
πρήσαντες οἴκους τούσδε κατθανούμεθα.
Ἑνὸς γὰρ οὐ σφαλέντες ἕξομεν κλέος,
καλῶς θανόντες ἢ καλῶς σεσῳσμένοι.

Χορός

Πάσαις γυναιξὶν ἀξία στυγεῖν ἔφυ
ἡ Τυνδαρὶς παῖς, ἣ κατῄσχυνεν γένος.

Ὀρέστης

Φεῦ·
οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν κρεῖσσον ἢ φίλος σαφής,
οὐ πλοῦτος, οὐ τυραννίς· ἀλόγιστον δέ τι
τὸ πλῆθος ἀντάλλαγμα γενναίου φίλου.
Σὺ γὰρ τά τ' εἰς Αἴγισθον ἐξηῦρες κακὰ
καὶ πλησίον παρῆσθα κινδύνων ἐμοί,
νῦν τ' αὖ δίδως μοι πολεμίων τιμωρίαν
κοὐκ ἐκποδὼν εἶ παύσομαί σ' αἰνῶν, ἐπεὶ
βάρος τι κἀν τῷδ' ἐστίν, αἰνεῖσθαι λίαν.
Ἐγὼ δὲ πάντως ἐκπνέων ψυχὴν ἐμὴν

δράσας τι χρῄζω τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἐχθροὺς θανεῖν,
ἵν’ ἀνταναλώσω μὲν οἵ με προύδοσαν,
στένωσι δ’ οἵπερ κἄμ’ ἔθηκαν ἄθλιον.
Ἀγαμέμνονός τοι παῖς πέφυχ’, ὃς Ἑλλάδος
ἦρξ’ ἀξιωθείς, οὐ τύραννος, ἀλλ’ ὅμως
ῥώμην θεοῦ τιν’ ἔσχε· ὃν οὐ καταισχυνῶ
δοῦλον παρασχὼν θάνατον, ἀλλ’ ἐλευθέρως
ψυχὴν ἀφήσω, Μενέλεων δὲ τείσομαι.
Ἑνὸς γὰρ εἰ λαβοίμεθ’, εὐτυχοῖμεν ἄν,
εἴ ποθεν ἄελπτος παραπέσοι σωτηρία
κτανοῦσι μὴ θανοῦσιν· εὔχομαι τάδε.
Ὃ βούλομαι γάρ, ἡδὺ καὶ διὰ στόμα
πτηνοῖσι μύθοις ἀδαπάνως τέρψαι φρένα.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ἐγώ, κασίγνητ’, αὐτὸ τοῦτ’ ἔχειν δοκῶ,
σωτηρίαν σοὶ τῷδέ τ’ ἐκ τρίτων τ’ ἐμοί.

Ὀρέστης

Θεοῦ λέγεις πρόνοιαν. ἀλλὰ ποῦ τόδε;
Ἐπεὶ τὸ συνετόν γ’ οἶδα σῇ ψυχῇ παρόν.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ἄκουε δή νυν· καὶ σὺ δεῦρο νοῦν ἔχε.

Ὀρέστης

Λέγ’· ὡς τὸ μέλλειν ἀγάθ’ ἔχει τιν’ ἡδονήν.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ἑλένης κάτοισθα θυγατέρ’; Εἰδότ’ ἠρόμην.

Ὀρέστης

Οἶδ’, ἣν ἔθρεψεν Ἑρμιόνην μήτηρ ἐμή.

Ἠλέκτρα

[1185] Αὕτη βέβηκε πρὸς Κλυταιμήστρας τάφον.

Ὀρέστης

Τί χρῆμα δράσουσ’; Ὑποτίθης τίν’ ἐλπίδα;

Ἠλέκτρα

Χοὰς κατασπείσουσ’ ὑπὲρ μητρὸς τάφῳ.

Ὀρέστης

Καὶ δὴ τί μοι τοῦτ’ εἶπας ἐς σωτηρίαν;

Ἠλέκτρα

Ξυλλάβεθ’ ὅμηρον τήνδ’, ὅταν στείχῃ πάλιν.

Ὀρέστης

[1190] Τίνος τόδ’ εἶπας φάρμακον τρισσοῖς φίλοις;

Ἠλέκτρα

[1191] Ἑλένης θανούσης, ἤν τι Μενέλεώς σε δρᾷ
ἢ τόνδε κἀμέ πᾶν γὰρ ἓν φίλον τόδε
λέγ’ ὡς φονεύσεις Ἑρμιόνην· ξίφος δὲ χρὴ
δέρῃ πρὸς αὐτῇ παρθένου σπάσαντ’ ἔχειν.
[1195] Κἂν μέν σε σῴζῃ μὴ θανεῖν χρῄζων κόρην
Ἑλένης Μενέλεως πτῶμ’ ἰδὼν ἐν αἵματι,
μέθες πεπᾶσθαι πατρὶ παρθένου δέμας·
ἢν δ’ ὀξυθύμου μὴ κρατῶν φρονήματος
κτείνῃ σε, καὶ σὺ σφάζε παρθένου δέρην.
[1200] Καί νιν δοκῶ, τὸ πρῶτον ἢν πολὺς παρῇ,
χρόνῳ μαλάξειν σπλάγχνον· οὔτε γὰρ θρασὺς
οὔτ’ ἄλκιμος πέφυκε. Τήνδ’ ἡμῖν ἔχω
σωτηρίας ἔπαλξιν. Εἴρηται λόγος.

Ὀρέστης

[1204] Ὦ τὰς φρένας μὲν ἄρσενας κεκτημένη,
[1205] τὸ σῶμα δ’ ἐν γυναιξὶ θηλείαις πρέπον,
ὡς ἀξία ζῆν μᾶλλον ἢ θανεῖν ἔφυς.
Πυλάδη, τοιαύτης ἆρ’ ἁμαρτήσῃ τάλας
γυναικὸς ἢ ζῶν μακάριον κτήσῃ λέχος.

Πυλάδης

Εἰ γὰρ γένοιτο, Φωκέων δ’ ἔλθοι πόλιν
[1210] καλοῖσιν ὑμεναίοισιν ἀξιουμένη.

Ὀρέστης

Ἥξει δ’ ἐς οἴκους Ἑρμιόνη τίνος χρόνου;
Ὡς τἄλλα γ’ εἶπας, εἴπερ εὐτυχήσομεν,
κάλλισθ’, ἑλόντες σκύμνον ἀνοσίου πατρός.

Ἠλέκτρα

Καὶ δὴ πέλας νιν δωμάτων εἶναι δοκῶ·
[1215] τοῦ γὰρ χρόνου τὸ μῆκος αὐτὸ συντρέχει.

Ὀρέστης

[1216] Καλῶς· σὺ μέν νυν, σύγγον’ Ἠλέκτρα, δόμων
πάρος μένουσα παρθένου δέχου πόδα,
φύλασσε δ’ ἤν τις, πρὶν τελευτηθῇ φόνος,
ἢ ξύμμαχός τις ἢ κασίγνητος πατρός,
[1220] ἐλθὼν ἐς οἴκους φθῇ, γέγωνέ τ’ ἐς δόμους,
ἢ σανίδα παίσας’ ἢ λόγους πέμψας’ ἔσω·
ἡμεῖς δ’ ἔσω στείχοντες ἐπὶ τὸν ἔσχατον
ἀγῶν’ ὁπλιζώμεσθα φασγάνῳ χέρας,
Πυλάδη· σὺ γὰρ δὴ συμπονεῖς ἐμοὶ πόνους.
[1225] Ὦ δῶμα ναίων νυκτὸς ὀρφναίας πάτερ,
καλεῖ σ’ Ὀρέστης παῖς σὸς ἐπίκουρον μολεῖν
τοῖς δεομένοισι. διὰ σὲ γὰρ πάσχω τάλας

ἀδίκως· προδέδομαι δ’ ὑπὸ κασιγνήτου σέθεν,
δίκαια πράξας· οὗ θέλω δάμαρθ’ ἑλὼν
[1230] κτεῖναι· σὺ δ’ ἡμῖν τοῦδε συλλήπτωρ γενοῦ.

Ἠλέκτρα

[1231] Ὦ πάτερ, ἰκοῦ δῆτ’, εἰ κλύεις ἔσω χθονὸς
τέκνων καλούντων, οἳ σέθεν θνήσκουσ’ ὕπερ.

Πυλάδης

Ὦ συγγένεια πατρὸς ἐμοῦ, κἀμὰς λιτάς,
Ἀγάμεμνον, εἰσάκουσον· ἔκσῳσον τέκνα.

Ὀρέστης

[1235] Ἔκτεινα μητέρα

Ἠλέκτρα

Ἠψάμην δ’ ἐγὼ ξίφους

Πυλάδης

Ἐγὼ δ’ ἐπεβούλευσα κἀπέλυσ’ ὄκνου

Ὀρέστης

Σοί, πάτερ, ἀρήγων.

Ἠλέκτρα

Οὐδ’ ἐγὼ προύδωκά σε.

Πυλάδης

Οὔκουν ὀνείδη τάδε κλύων ῥύσῃ τέκνα;

Ὀρέστης

Δακρύοις κατασπένδω σε.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ἐγὼ δ’ οἴκτοισί γε.

Πυλάδης

[1240] Παύσασθε, καὶ πρὸς ἔργον ἐξορμώμεθα.
Εἴπερ γὰρ εἴσω γῆς ἀκοντίζουσ’ ἀραί,
κλύει. Σὺ δ’, ὦ Ζεῦ πρόγονε καὶ Δίκης σέβας,
δότ’ εὐτυχῆσαι τῷδ’ ἐμοί τε τῇδέ τε·
τρισσοῖς φίλοις γὰρ εἷς ἀγών, δίκη μία,
[1245] ἢ ζῆν ἅπασιν ἢ θανεῖν ὀφείλεται.

Ἠλέκτρα

Μυκηνίδες ὦ φίλαι,
τὰ πρῶτα κατὰ Πελασγὸν ἔδος Ἀργείων.

Χορός

[1249] Τίνα θροεῖς αὐδάν, πότνια; Παραμένει
[1250] γὰρ ἔτι σοι τόδ’ ἐν Δαναϊ̈δῶν πόλει.

Ἠλέκτρα

Στῆθ’ αἳ μὲν ὑμῶν τόνδ’ ἀμαξήρη τρίβον,
αἳ δ’ ἐνθάδ’ ἄλλον οἶμον ἐς φρουρὰν δόμων.

Χορός

Τί δέ με τόδε χρέος ἀπύεις;
Ἔνεπέ μοι, φίλα.

Ἠλέκτρα

[1255] Φόβος ἔχει με μή τις ἐπὶ δώμασι
σταθεὶς ἐπὶ φοίνιον αἷμα

πήματα πήμασιν ἐξεύρῃ.

Ἡμίχορος

Χωρεῖτ’, ἐπειγώμεσθ’· ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν τρίβον
τόνδ’ ἐκφυλάξω, τὸν πρὸς ἡλίου βολάς.

Ἡμίχορος

Καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ τόνδ’, ὃς πρὸς ἑσπέραν φέρει.

Ἠλέκτρα

Δόχμιά νυν κόρας διάφερ’ ὀμμάτων.

Χορός

Ἐκεῖθεν ἐνθάδ’, εἶτα παλινσκοπιὰν
ἔχομεν, ὡς θροεῖς.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ἐλίσσετέ νυν βλέφαρα,
κόραισι δίδοτε πάντα διὰ βοστρύχων.

Ἡμίχορος

Ὅδε τις ἐν τρίβῳ προσέρχεται. Τίς ὅδ’ ἄρ’ ἀμ-
φὶ μέλαθρον πολεῖ σὸν ἀγρότας ἀνήρ;

Ἠλέκτρα

Ἀπωλόμεσθ’ ἄρ’, ὦ φίλαι· κεκρυμμένους
θῆρας ξιφήρεις αὐτίκ’ ἐχθροῖσιν φανεῖ.

Ἡμίχορος

Ἄφοβος ἔχε· κενός, ὦ φίλα,
στίβος ὃν οὐ δοκεῖς.

Ἠλέκτρα

Τί δέ; Τὸ σὸν βέβαιον ἔτι μοι μένει;
Δὸς ἀγγελίαν ἀγαθάν τιν’,
εἰ τάδ’ ἔρημα τὰ πρόσθ’ αὐλᾶς.

Ἡμίχορος

Καλῶς τά γ’ ἐνθένδ’. Ἀλλὰ τἀπὶ σοῦ σκόπει·
ὡς οὔτις ἡμῖν Δαναϊ̈δῶν πελάζεται.

Ἡμίχορος

Ἐς ταὐτὸν ἥκεις· καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ τῇδ’ ὄχλος.

Ἠλέκτρα

Φέρε νυν ἐν πύλαισιν ἀκοὰν βάλω.

Χορός

Τί μέλλεθ’ οἱ κατ’ οἶκον ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ
σφάγια φοινίσσειν;

Ἠλέκτρα

Οὐκ εἰσακούουσ’· ὦ τάλαιν’ ἐγὼ κακῶν.
Ἆρ’ ἐς τὸ κάλλος ἐκκεκώφηται ξίφη;
Τάχα τις Ἀργείων ἔνοπλος ὁρμήσας
ποδὶ βοηδρόμῳ μέλαθρα προσμείξει.
Σκέψασθέ νυν ἄμεινον· οὐχ ἕδρας ἀγών·
ἀλλ’ αἳ μὲν ἐνθάδ’, αἳ δ’ ἐκεῖσ’ ἐλίσσετε.

Χορός

Ἀμείβω κέλευθον σκοποῦσα πάντῃ.

Ἑλένη

Ἰὼ Πελασγὸν Ἄργος, ὄλλυμαι κακῶς.

Χορός

Ἠκούσαθ’; Ἄνδρες χεῖρ’ ἔχουσιν ἐν φόνῳ.
Ἑλένης τὸ κώκυμ’ ἐστίν, ὡς ἀπεικάσαι.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ὦ Διός, ὦ Διὸς ἀέναον κράτος,
[1300] ἔλθ’ ἐπίκουρος ἐμοῖς φίλοισι πάντως.

Ἑλένη

[1301] Μενέλαε, θνῄσκω· σὺ δὲ παρών μ’ οὐκ ὠφελεῖς.

Ἠλέκτρα

Φονεύετε, καίνετε,
ὄλλυτε, δίπτυχα δίστομα φάσγανα
ἐκ χερὸς ἱέμενοι
[1305] τὰν λιποπάτορα λιπόγαμον, ἃ
πλείστους ἔκανεν Ἑλλάνων
δορὶ παρὰ ποταμὸν ὀλομένους,
ὅθι δάκρυα δάκρυσιν ἔπεσεν
σιδαρέοισι βέλεσιν ἀμ-
[1310] φὶ τὰς Σκαμάνδρου δίνας.

Χορός

Σιγᾶτε σιγᾶτ’· ἠσθόμην κτύπου τινὸς
κέλευθον ἐσπεσόντος ἀμφὶ δώματα.

Ἠλέκτρα

[1313] Ὦ φίλταται γυναῖκες, ἐς μέσον φόνον
ἥδ’ Ἑρμιόνη πάρεστι· παύσωμεν βοήν.
[1315] Στείχει γὰρ ἐσπεσοῦσα δικτύων βρόχους.
Καλὸν τὸ θήραμ’, ἢν ἁλῷ, γενήσεται.

Πάλιν κατάστηθ’ ἡσύχῳ μὲν ὄμματι,
χρόᾳ δ’ ἀδήλῳ τῶν δεδραμένων πέρι·
κἀγὼ σκυθρωποὺς ὀμμάτων ἔξω κόρας,
ὡς δῆθεν οὐκ εἰδυῖα τἀξειργασμένα.
Ὦ παρθέν’, ἥκεις τὸν Κλυταιμήστρας τάφον
στέψασα καὶ σπείσασα νερτέροις χοάς;

Ἑρμιονη

Ἥκω, λαβοῦσα πρευμένειαν. ἀλλά μοι
φόβος τις εἰσελήλυθ’, ἥντιν’ ἐν δόμοις
τηλουρὸς οὖσα δωμάτων κλύω βοήν.

Ἠλέκτρα

Τί δ’; Ἄξι’ ἡμῖν τυγχάνει στεναγμάτων.

Ἑρμιονη

Εὔφημος ἴσθι· τί δὲ νεώτερον λέγεις;

Ἠλέκτρα

Θανεῖν Ὀρέστην κἄμ’ ἔδοξε τῇδε γῇ.

Ἑρμιονη

Μὴ δῆτ’, ἐμοῦ γε συγγενεῖς πεφυκότας.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ἄραρ’· ἀνάγκης δ’ ἐς ζυγὸν καθέσταμεν.

Ἑρμιονη

Ἦ τοῦδ’ ἕκατι καὶ βοὴ κατὰ στέγας;

Ἠλέκτρα

Ἱκέτης γὰρ Ἑλένης γόνασι προσπεσὼν βοᾷ

Ἑρμιονη

Τίς; Οὐδὲν οἶδα μᾶλλον, ἢν σὺ μὴ λέγῃς.

Ἠλέκτρα

Τλήμων Ὀρέστης· μὴ θανεῖν, ἐμοῦ θ’ ὕπερ.

Ἑρμιονη

[1335] Ἐπ’ ἀξίοισί τἄρ’ ἀνευφημεῖ δόμος.

Ἠλέκτρα

[1336] Περὶ τοῦ γὰρ ἄλλου μᾶλλον ἂν φθέγξαιτό τις;
Ἀλλ’ ἐλθὲ καὶ μετάσχες ἱκεσίας φίλοις,
σῇ μητρὶ προσπεσοῦσα τῇ μέγ’ ὀλβίᾳ,
Μενέλαον ἡμᾶς μὴ θανόντας εἰσιδεῖν.
[1340] Ἀλλ’, ὦ τραφεῖσα μητρὸς ἐν χεροῖν ἐμῆς,
οἴκτιρον ἡμᾶς κἀπικούφισον κακῶν.
Ἴθ’ εἰς ἀγῶνα δεῦρ’, ἐγὼ δ’ ἡγήσομαι·
σωτηρίας γὰρ τέρμ’ ἔχεις ἡμῖν μόνη.

Ἑρμιονη

Δδού, διώκω τὸν ἐμὸν ἐς δόμους πόδα.
[1345] σώθηθ’ ὅσον γε τοὐπ’ ἐμέ.

Ἠλέκτρα

Ὦ κατὰ στέγας
φίλοι ξιφήρεις, οὐχὶ συλλήψεσθ’ ἄγραν;

Ἑρμιονη

Οἵ ἐγώ· τίνας τούσδ’ εἰσορῶ;

Ὀρέστης

Σιγᾶν χρεών·
ἡμῖν γὰρ ἥκεις, οὐχὶ σοί, σωτηρία.

Ἠλέκτρα

[1349] Ἔχεσθ’ ἔχεσθε· φάσγανον δὲ πρὸς δέρῃ
[1350] βάλλοντες ἡσυχάζεθ’, ὡς εἰδῇ τόδε
Μενέλαος, οὕνεκ’ ἄνδρας, οὐ Φρύγας κακούς,
εὑρὼν ἔπραξεν οἷα χρὴ πράσσειν κακούς.

Χορός

Ἰὼ ἰὼ φίλαι,
κτύπον ἐγείρετε, κτύπον καὶ βοὰν
πρὸ μελάθρων, ὅπως ὁ πραχθεὶς φόνος
[1355] μὴ δεινὸν Ἀργείοισιν ἐμβάλῃ φόβον,
βοηδρομῆσαι πρὸς δόμους τυραννικούς,
πρὶν ἐτύμως ἴδω τὸν Ἑλένας φόνον
καθαιμακτὸν ἐν δόμοις κείμενον,
ἢ καὶ λόγον του προσπόλων πυθώμεθα·
[1360] τὰ μὲν γὰρ οἶδα συμφορᾶς, τὰ δ’ οὐ σαφῶς.

Χορός

Διὰ δίκας ἔβα θεῶν
νέμεσις ἐς Ἑλέναν.
Δακρύοισι γὰρ Ἑλλάδ’ ἅπασαν ἔπλησε,
διὰ τὸν ὀλόμενον ὀλόμενον Ἰδαῖον
[1365] Πάριν, ὃς ἄγαγ’ Ἑλλάδ’ εἰς Ἴλιον.
Ἀλλὰ κτυπεῖ γὰρ κλῆθρα βασιλείων δόμων,
σιγήσατ’· ἔξω γάρ τις ἐκβαίνει Φρυγῶν,
οὗ πευσόμεσθα τἀν δόμοις ὅπως ἔχει.

Φρύξ

[1369] Ἀργέι¨ον ξίφος ἐκ θανάτου πέφευγα
[1370] βαρβάροις ἐν εὐμάρι-
σιν, κεδρωτὰ παστάδων ὑπὲρ τέραμνα
Δωρικάς τε τριγλύφους,
φροῦδα φροῦδα, γᾶ γᾶ,
βαρβάροισι δρασμοῖς.
[1375] Αἰαῖ·
πᾷ φύγω, ξέναι, πολιὸν αἰθέρ᾽ ἀμ-
πτάμενος ἢ πόντον, Ὠκεανὸς ὃν
ταυρόκρανος ἀγκάλαις
ἑλίσσων κυκλοῖ χθόνα;

Χορός

[1380] Τί δ᾽ ἔστιν, Ἑλένης πρόσπολ᾽. Ἰδαῖον κάρα;

Φρύξ

Ἴλιον Ἴλιον, ὤμοι μοι,
Φρύγιον ἄστυ καὶ καλλίβωλον Ἴ-
δας ὄρος ἱερόν, ὥς σ᾽ ὀλόμενον στένω
ἁρμάτειον ἁρμάτειον μέλος
[1385] βαρβάρῳ βοᾷ δι᾽ ὀρνιθόγονον
ὄμμα κυκνοπτέρου καλλοσύνας, Λήδας
σκύμνου, δυσελένας
δυσελένας,
ξεστῶν περγάμων Ἀπολλωνίων
ἐρινύν· ὀττοτοῖ·
[1390] ἰαλέμων ἰαλέμων
Δαρδανία τλᾶμον Γανυμήδεος
ἱπποσύνᾳ, Διὸς εὐνέτα.

Χορός

Σαφῶς λέγ᾽ ἡμῖν αὖθ᾽ ἕκαστα τἀν δόμοις.
Τὰ γὰρ πρὶν οὐκ εὔγνωστα συμβαλοῦσ᾽ ἔχω.

Φρύξ

[1395] Αἴλινον αἴλινον ἀρχὰν θανάτου
βάρβαροι λέγουσιν, αἰαῖ,
Ἀσιάδι φωνᾷ, βασιλέων
ὅταν αἷμα χυθῇ κατὰ γᾶν ξίφεσιν
σιδαρέοισιν Ἅιδα.
[1400] Ἦλθον ἐς δόμους, ἵν’ αὖθ’ ἕ-
καστά σοι λέγω, λέοντες
Ἕλλανες δύο διδύμω·
τῷ μὲν ὁ στρατηλάτας πατὴρ ἐκλήζεθ’,
ὃ δὲ παῖς Στροφίου, κακόμητις ἀνήρ,
οἷος Ὀδυσσεύς, σιγᾷ δόλιος,
[1405] πιστὸς δὲ φίλοις, θρασὺς εἰς ἀλκάν,
ξυνετὸς πολέμου, φόνιός τε δράκων.
Ἔρροι τᾶς ἡσύχου
προνοίας κακοῦργος ὤν.
Οἳ δὲ πρὸς θρόνους ἔσω
μολόντες ἃς ἔγημ’ ὁ τοξότας Πάρις
[1410] γυναικός, ὄμμα δακρύοις
πεφυρμένοι, ταπεινοὶ
ἕζονθ’, ὃ μὲν τὸ κεῖθεν, ὃ δὲ
τὸ κεῖθεν, ἄλλος ἄλλοθεν πεφραγμένοι.
Περὶ δὲ γόνυ χέρας ἱκεσίους ἔβαλον ἔβαλον
[1415] Ἑλένας ἄμφω.
Ἀνὰ δὲ δρομάδες ἔθορον ἔθορον
ἀμφίπολοι Φρύγες·
προσεῖπε δ’ ἄλλος ἄλλον ἐν φόβῳ πεσών,
μή τις εἴη δόλος.
[1420] Κἀδόκει τοῖς μὲν οὔ,
τοῖς δ’ ἐς ἀρκυστάταν
μηχανὰν ἐμπλέκειν
παῖδα τὰν Τυνδαρίδ’ ὁ
μητροφόντας δράκων.

Χορός

[1425] Σὺ δ’ ἦσθα ποῦ τότ’; Ἢ πάλαι φεύγεις φόβῳ,

Φρύξ

Φρυγίοις ἔτυχον Φρυγίοισι νόμοις
παρὰ βόστρυχον αὖραν αὖραν
Ἑλένας Ἑλένας εὐπαγεῖ
κύκλῳ πτερίνῳ πρὸ παρηίδος
ἀίσσων βαρβάροις νόμοισιν.
Ἃ δὲ λίνον ἠλακάτᾳ
δακτύλοις ἕλισσεν,
νῆμα δ' ἵετο πέδῳ,
σκύλων Φρυγίων ἐπὶ τύμβον ἀγάλ-
ματα συστολίσαι χρῄζουσα λίνῳ,
φάρεα πορφύρεα, δῶρα Κλυταιμήστρᾳ.
Προσεῖπεν δ' Ὀρέστας
Λάκαιναν κόραν· ὦ
Διὸς παῖ, θὲς ἴχνος
πέδῳ δεῦρ' ἀποστᾶσα κλισμοῦ,
Πέλοπος ἐπὶ προπάτορος ἕδραν
παλαιᾶς ἑστίας,
ἵν' εἰδῇς λόγους ἐμούς.
Ἄγει δ' ἄγει νιν· ἃ δ' ἐφείπετ',
οὐ πρόμαντις ὧν ἔμελλεν·
ὁ δὲ συνεργὸς ἄλλ' ἔπρασσ'
ἰὼν κακὸς Φωκεύς·
οὐκ ἐκποδὼν ἴτ'; Ἀλλ' ἀεὶ κακοὶ Φρύγες.
Ἔκλῃσε δ' ἄλλον ἄλλοσ' ἐν
στέγαισι· τοὺς μὲν ἐν σταθμοῖ-
σιν ἱππικοῖσι, τοὺς δ' ἐν ἐξ-
έδραισι, τοὺς δ' ἐκεῖσ' ἐκεῖθεν ἄλλον ἄλ-
λοσε διαρμόσας ἀποπρὸ δεσποίνας.

Χορός

`Τί τοὐπὶ τῷδε συμφορᾶς ἐγίγνετο;

Φρύξ

[1453] Ἰδαία μᾶτερ
μᾶτερ ὀβρίμα ὀβρίμα,
[1455] αἰαὶ φονίων παθέων ἀνόμων
τε κακῶν ἅπερ ἔδρακον ἔδρακον
ἐν δόμοις τυράννων.
Ἀμφιπορφυρέων πέπλων
ὑπὸ σκότου ξίφη σπάσα-
ντες ἄλλος ἄλλοσ᾽ ἐν χεροῖν
δίνασεν ὄμμα, μή τις παρὼν τύχοι.
[1460] Ὡς κάπροι δ᾽ ὀρέστεροι γυ-
ναικὸς ἀντίοι σταθέντες
ἐννέπουσι· Κατθανῇ
κατθανῇ,
κακός σ᾽ ἀποκτείνει πόσις,
κασιγνήτου προδοὺς
ἐν Ἄργει θανεῖν γόνον.
[1465] Ἃ δ᾽ ἀνίαχεν ἴ-
αχεν· Ὤμοι μοι.
Λευκὸν δ᾽ ἐμβαλοῦσα πῆχυν στέρνοις
κτύπησε κρᾶτα μέλεον πλαγᾷ·
φυγᾷ δὲ ποδὶ τὸ χρυσεοσάνδαλον
ἴχνος ἔφερεν ἔφερεν· ἐς
κόμας δὲ δακτύλους δικὼν Ὀρέστας,
[1470] Μυκηνίδ᾽ ἀρβύλαν προβάς,
ὤμοις ἀριστεροῖσιν ἀνακλάσας δέρην,
παίειν λαιμῶν ἔμελ-
[1472β] λεν εἴσω μέλαν ξίφος.

Χορός

Ποῦ δ᾽ ἦτ᾽ ἀμύνειν οἱ κατὰ στέγας Φρύγες;

Φρύξ

[1473] Ἰαχᾷ
δόμων θύρετρα καὶ σταθμοὺς
μοχλοῖσιν ἐκβαλόντες, ἔνθ᾽ ἐμίμνομεν,
[1475] βοηδρομοῦμεν ἄλλος ἄλλοθεν στέγης,

ὃ μὲν πέτρους, ὃ δ’ ἀγκύλας,
ὃ δὲ ξίφος πρόκωπον ἐν χεροῖν ἔχων.
Ἔναντα δ’ ἦλθε Πυλάδης
ἀλίαστος, οἷος οἷος Ἕκ-
[1480] τωρ ὁ Φρύγιος ἢ τρικόρυθος Αἴας,
ὃν εἶδον εἶδον ἐν πύλαις
Πριαμίσι· φασγάνων δ’ ἀκμὰς
συνήψαμεν.
Δὴ τότε διαπρεπεῖς τότ’ ἐγένοντο Φρύγες,
ὅσον Ἄρεως ἀλκὰν
[1485] ἥσσονες Ἑλλάδος ἐγενόμεθ’ αἰχμᾶς,
ὃ μὲν οἰχόμενος φυγάς, ὃ δὲ νέκυς ὤν,
ὃ δὲ τραῦμα φέρων, ὃ δὲ λισσόμενος,
θανάτου προβολάν·
ὑπὸ σκότον δ’ ἐφεύγομεν·
νεκροὶ δ’ ἔπιπτον, οἳ δ’ ἔμελλον, οἳ δ’ ἔκειντ’.
[1490] Ἔμολε δ’ ἁ τάλαιν’ Ἑρμιόνα δόμους
ἐπὶ φόνῳ χαμαιπετεῖ ματρός, ἅ
νιν ἔτεκεν τλάμων.
Ἄθυρσοι δ’
οἷά νιν δραμόντε Βάκχαι
σκύμνον ἐν χεροῖν ὀρείαν
ξυνήρπασαν· πάλιν δὲ τὰν Διὸς κόραν
ἐπὶ σφαγὰν ἔτεινον· ἃ δ’
ἐκ θαλάμων
[1495] ἐγένετο διαπρὸ δωμάτων
ἄφαντος, ὦ Ζεῦ καὶ γᾶ
καὶ φῶς καὶ νύξ,
ἤτοι φαρμάκοισιν ἢ
μάγων τέχναις ἢ θεῶν κλοπαῖς.
Τὰ δ’ ὕστερ’ οὐκέτ’ οἶδα· δρα-
πέτην γὰρ ἐξέκλεπτον ἐκ δόμων πόδα.
[1500] Πολύπονα δὲ πολύπονα πάθεα
Μενέλεως ἀνασχόμενος ἀνόνητον ἀ-
πὸ Τροίας ἔλαβε τὸν Ἑλένας γάμον.

Χορός

[1503] Καὶ μὴν ἀμείβει καινὸν ἐκ καινῶν τόδε·
ξιφηφόρον γὰρ εἰσορῶ πρὸ δωμάτων
[1505] βαίνοντ’ Ὀρέστην ἐπτοημένῳ ποδί.

Ὀρέστης

Ποῦ ‘στιν οὗτος ὃς πέφευγεν ἐκ δόμων τοὐμὸν ξίφος;

Φρύξ

Προσκυνῶ σ’, ἄναξ, νόμοισι βαρβάροισι προσπίτνων.

Ὀρέστης

Οὐκ ἐν Ἰλίῳ τάδ’ ἐστίν, ἀλλ’ ἐν Ἀργείᾳ χθονί.

Φρύξ

Πανταχοῦ ζῆν ἡδὺ μᾶλλον ἢ θανεῖν τοῖς σώφροσιν.

Ὀρέστης

[1510] Οὔτι που κραυγὴν ἔθηκας Μενέλεῳ βοηδρομεῖν;

Φρύξ

Σοὶ μὲν οὖν ἔγωγ’ ἀμύνειν· ἀξιώτερος γὰρ εἶ.

Ὀρέστης

Ἐνδίκως ἡ Τυνδάρειος ἆρα παῖς διώλετο;

Φρύξ

Ἐνδικώτατ’, εἴ γε λαιμοὺς εἶχε τριπτύχους θανεῖν.

Ὀρέστης

Δειλίᾳ γλώσσῃ χαρίζῃ, τἄνδον οὐχ οὕτω φρονῶν.

Φρύξ

Οὐ γάρ, ἥτις Ἑλλάδ᾽ αὐτοῖς Φρυξὶ διελυμήνατο;

Ὀρέστης

Ὅμοσον εἰ δὲ μή, κτενῶ σε μὴ λέγειν ἐμὴν χάριν.

Φρύξ

Τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν κατώμοσ᾽, ἣν ἂν εὐορκοῖμ᾽ ἐγώ.

Ὀρέστης

Ὧδε κἀν Τροίᾳ σίδηρος πᾶσι Φρυξὶν ἦν φόβος;

Φρύξ

Ἄπεχε φάσγανον· πέλας γὰρ δεινὸν ἀνταυγεῖ φόνον.

Ὀρέστης

Μὴ πέτρος γένῃ δέδοικας ὥστε Γοργόν᾽ εἰσιδών;

Φρύξ

Μὴ μὲν οὖν νεκρός· τὸ Γοργοῦς δ᾽ οὐ κάτοιδ᾽ ἐγὼ κάρα.

Ὀρέστης

Δοῦλος ὢν φοβῇ τὸν Ἅιδην, ὅς σ᾽ ἀπαλλάξει κακῶν;

Φρύξ

Πᾶς ἀνήρ, κἂν δοῦλος ᾖ τις, ἥδεται τὸ φῶς ὁρῶν.

Ὀρέστης

Εὖ λέγεις· σῴζει σε σύνεσις. Ἀλλὰ βαῖν᾽ ἔσω δόμων.

Φρύξ

[1525] Οὐκ ἄρα κτενεῖς με;

Ὀρέστης

Ἀφεῖσαι.

Φρύξ

Καλὸν ἔπος λέγεις τόδε.

Ὀρέστης

Ἀλλὰ μεταβουλευσόμεσθα.

Φρύξ

Τοῦτο δ’ οὐ καλῶς λέγεις.

Ὀρέστης

[1527] Μῶρος, εἰ δοκεῖς με τλῆναι σὴν καθαιμάξαι δέρην·
οὔτε γὰρ γυνὴ πέφυκας οὔτ’ ἐν ἀνδράσιν σύ γ’ εἶ.
Τοῦ δὲ μὴ στῆσαί σε κραυγὴν οὕνεκ’ ἐξῆλθον δόμων·
[1530] ὀξὺ γὰρ βοῆς ἀκοῦσαν Ἄργος ἐξεγείρεται.
Μενέλεων δ’ οὐ τάρβος ἡμῖν ἀναλαβεῖν ἔσω ξίφους·
ἀλλ’ ἴτω ξανθοῖς ἐπ’ ὤμων βοστρύχοις γαυρούμενος·
εἰ γὰρ Ἀργείους ἐπάξει τοῖσδε δώμασιν λαβών,
τὸν Ἑλένης φόνον διώκων, κἀμὲ μὴ σῴζειν θέλει
[1535] σύγγονόν τ’ ἐμὴν Πυλάδην τε τὸν τάδε ξυνδρῶντά μοι,
παρθένον τε καὶ δάμαρτα δύο νεκρὼ κατόψεται.

Χορός

[1537] Ἰὼ ἰὼ τύχα,
ἕτερον εἰς ἀγῶν’, ἕτερον αὖ δόμος
φοβερὸν ἀμφὶ τοὺς Ἀτρείδας πίτνει.
Τί δρῶμεν; Ἀγγέλλωμεν ἐς πόλιν τάδε;

[1540] Ἦ σῖγ’ ἔχωμεν; Ἀσφαλέστερον, φίλαι.
Ἴδε πρὸ δωμάτων ἴδε προκηρύσσει
θοάζων ὅδ’ αἰθέρος ἄνω καπνός.
Ἅπτουσι πεύκας, ὡς πυρώσοντες δόμους
τοὺς Τανταλείους, οὐδ’ ἀφίστανται φόνου.
[1545] Τέλος ἔχει δαίμων βροτοῖς,
[1545β] τέλος ὅπᾳ θέλῃ.
Μεγάλα δέ τις ἁ δύναμις δι’ ἀλαστόρων
ἔπεσ’ ἔπεσε μέλαθρα τάδε δι’ αἱμάτων
διὰ τὸ Μυρτίλου πέσημ’ ἐκ δίφρου.

Χορός

Ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ τόνδε λεύσσω Μενέλεων δόμων πέλας
[1550] ὀξύπουν, ᾐσθημένον που τὴν τύχην ἣ νῦν πάρα.
Οὐκέτ’ ἂν φθάνοιτε κλῇθρα συμπεραίνοντες μοχλοῖς,
ὦ κατὰ στέγας Ἀτρεῖδαι. Δεινὸν εὐτυχῶν ἀνὴρ
πρὸς κακῶς πράσσοντας, ὡς σὺ νῦν, Ὀρέστα, δυστυχεῖς.

Μενέλαος

[1554] Ἥκω κλύων τὰ δεινὰ καὶ δραστήρια
[1555] δισσοῖν λεόντοιν· οὐ γὰρ ἄνδρ’ αὐτὼ καλῶ.
Ἤκουσα γὰρ δὴ τὴν ἐμὴν ξυνάορον
ὡς οὐ τέθνηκεν, ἀλλ’ ἄφαντος οἴχεται
κενὴν ἀκούσας βάξιν, ἣν φόβῳ σφαλεὶς
ἤγγειλέ μοί τις. Ἀλλὰ τοῦ μητροκτόνου
[1560] τεχνάσματ’ ἐστὶ ταῦτα καὶ πολὺς γέλως.
Ἀνοιγέτω τις δῶμα· προσπόλοις λέγω
ὠθεῖν πύλας τάσδ’, ὡς ἂν ἀλλὰ παῖδ’ ἐμὴν
ῥυσώμεθ’ ἀνδρῶν ἐκ χερῶν μιαιφόνων,
καὶ τὴν τάλαιναν ἀθλίαν δάμαρτ’ ἐμὴν
[1565] λάβωμεν, ᾗ δεῖ ξυνθανεῖν ἐμῇ χερὶ
τοὺς διολέσαντας τὴν ἐμὴν ξυνάορον.

Ὀρέστης

Οὗτος σύ, κλῄθρων τῶνδε μὴ ψαύσῃς χερί·
Μενέλαον εἶπον, ὃς πεπύργωσαι θράσει·
ἢ τῷδε θριγκῷ κρᾶτα συνθραύσω σέθεν,
[1570] ῥήξας παλαιὰ γεῖσα, τεκτόνων πόνον.
Μοχλοῖς δ’ ἄραρε κλῇθρα, σῆς βοηδρόμου
σπουδῆς ἅ σ’ εἴρξει, μὴ δόμων ἔσω περᾶν.

Μενέλαος

[1573] Ἔα, τί χρῆμα; Λαμπάδων ὁρῶ σέλας,
δόμων δ’ ἐπ’ ἄκρων τούσδε πυργηρουμένους,
[1575] ξίφος δ’ ἐμῆς θυγατρὸς ἐπίφρουρον δέρῃ.

Ὀρέστης

Πότερον ἐρωτᾶν ἢ κλύειν ἐμοῦ θέλεις;

Μενέλαος

Οὐδέτερ’· ἀνάγκη δ’, ὡς ἔοικε, σου κλύειν.

Ὀρέστης

Μέλλω κτενεῖν σου θυγατέρ’, εἰ βούλῃ μαθεῖν.

Μενέλαος

Ἑλένην φονεύσας ἐπὶ φόνῳ πράσσεις φόνον;

Ὀρέστης

[1580] Εἰ γὰρ κατέσχον μὴ θεῶν κλεφθεὶς ὕπο.

Μενέλαος

Ἀρνῇ κατακτὰς κἀφ’ ὕβρει λέγεις τάδε;

Ὀρέστης

Λυπράν γε τὴν ἄρνησιν· εἰ γὰρ ὤφελον

Μενέλαος

Τί χρῆμα δρᾶσαι; παρακαλεῖς γὰρ ἐς φόβον.

Ὀρέστης

Τὴν Ἑλλάδος μιάστορ’ εἰς Ἅιδου βαλεῖν.

Μενέλαος

[1585] Ἀπόδος δάμαρτος νέκυν, ὅπως χώσω τάφῳ.

Ὀρέστης

Θοὺς ἀπαίτει. παῖδα δὲ κτενῶ σέθεν.

Μενέλαος

Ὁ μητροφόντης ἐπὶ φόνῳ πράσσει φόνον;

Ὀρέστης

Ὁ πατρὸς ἀμύντωρ, ὃν σὺ προύδωκας θανεῖν.

Μενέλαος

Οὐκ ἤρκεσέν σοι τὸ παρὸν αἷμα μητέρος;

Ὀρέστης

[1590] Οὐκ ἂν κάμοιμι τὰς κακὰς κτείνων ἀεί.

Μενέλαος

Ἦ καὶ σύ, Πυλάδη, τοῦδε κοινωνεῖς φόνου;

Ὀρέστης

Φησὶν σιωπῶν· ἀρκέσω δ’ ἐγὼ λέγων.

Μενέλαος

Ἀλλ’ οὔτι χαίρων, ἤν γε μὴ φύγῃς πτεροῖς.

Ὀρέστης

Οὐ φευξόμεσθα· πυρὶ δ’ ἀνάψομεν δόμους.

Μενέλαος

[1595] Ἦ γὰρ πατρῷον δῶμα πορθήσεις τόδε;

Ὀρέστης

Ὡς μή γ’ ἔχῃς σύ, τήνδ’ ἐπισφάξας πυρί.

Μενέλαος

Κτεῖν’· ὡς κτανών γε τῶνδέ μοι δώσεις δίκην.

Ὀρέστης

Ἔσται τάδε.

Μενέλαος

Ἆ ἆ, μηδαμῶς δράσῃς τάδε.

Ὀρέστης

Σίγα νυν, ἀνέχου δ’ ἐνδίκως πράσσων κακῶς.

Μενέλαος

[1600] Ἦ γὰρ δίκαιον ζῆν σε;

Ὀρέστης

Καὶ κρατεῖν γε γῆς.

Μενέλαος

Ποίας;

Ὀρέστης

Ἐν Ἄργει τῷδε τῷ Πελασγικῷ.

Μενέλαος

Εὖ γοῦν θίγοις ἂν χερνίβων

Ὀρέστης

Τί δὴ γὰρ οὔ;

Μενέλαος

Καὶ σφάγια πρὸ δορὸς καταβάλοις.

Ὀρέστης

Σὺ δ’ ἂν καλῶς;

Μενέλαος

Ἁγνὸς γάρ εἰμι χεῖρας.

Ὀρέστης

Ἀλλ’ οὐ τὰς φρένας.

Μενέλαος

[1605] Τίς δ’ ἂν προσείποι σέ;

Ὀρέστης

Ὅστις ἐστὶ φιλοπάτωρ.

Μενέλαος

Ὅστις δὲ τιμᾷ μητέρα;

Ὀρέστης

Εὐδαίμων ἔφυ.

Μενέλαος

Οὔκουν σύ γε.

Ὀρέστης

Οὐ γὰρ ἀνδάνουσιν αἱ κακαί.

Μενέλαος

Ἄπαιρε θυγατρὸς φάσγανον.

Ὀρέστης

Ψευδὴς ἔφυς.

Μενέλαος

Ἀλλὰ κτενεῖς μου θυγατέρα;

Ὀρέστης

Οὐ ψευδὴς ἔτ᾽ εἶ.

Μενέλαος

[1610] Οἴμοι, τί δράσω;

Ὀρέστης

Πεῖθ’ ἐς Ἀργείους μολὼν

Μενέλαος

Πειθὼ τίνα;

Ὀρέστης

Ἡμᾶς μὴ θανεῖν· αἰτοῦ πόλιν.

Μενέλαος

Ἢ παῖδά μου φονεύσετε;

Ὀρέστης

Ὧδ’ ἔχει τάδε.

Μενέλαος

Ὦ τλῆμον Ἑλένη

Ὀρέστης

Τἀμὰ δ’ οὐχὶ τλήμονα;

Μενέλαος

Σὲ σφάγιον ἐκόμισ’ ἐκ Φρυγῶν

Ὀρέστης

Εἰ γὰρ τόδ’ ἦν.

Μενέλαος

[1615] Πόνους πονήσας μυρίους.

Ὀρέστης

Πλήν γ’ εἰς ἐμέ.

Μενέλαος

Πέπονθα δεινά.

Ὀρέστης

Τότε γὰρ ἦσθ’ ἀνωφελής.

Μενέλαος

Ἔχεις με.

Ὀρέστης

Σαυτὸν σύ γ’ ἔλαβες κακὸς γεγώς.
Ἀλλ’ εἶ’, ὕφαπτε δώματ’, Ἠλέκτρα, τάδε·
σύ τ’, ὦ φίλων μοι τῶν ἐμῶν σαφέστατε,
[1620] Πυλάδη, κάταιθε γεῖσα τειχέων τάδε.

Μενέλαος

Ὦ γαῖα Δαναῶν ἱππίου τ’ Ἄργους κτίται,
οὐκ εἶ’ ἐνόπλῳ ποδὶ βοηδρομήσετε;
Πᾶσαν γὰρ ὑμῶν ὅδε βιάζεται πόλιν
ζῆν, αἷμα μητρὸς μυσαρὸν ἐξειργασμένος.

Ἀπόλλων

[1625] Μενέλαε, παῦσαι λῆμ’ ἔχων τεθηγμένον·
Φοῖβός σ’ ὁ Λητοῦς παῖς ὅδ’ ἐγγὺς ὢν καλῶ·
σύ θ’ ὃς ξιφήρης τῇδ’ ἐφεδρεύεις κόρῃ,
Ὀρέσθ’, ἵν’ εἰδῇς οὓς φέρων ἥκω λόγους.
Ἑλένην μὲν ἣν σὺ διολέσαι πρόθυμος ὢν
[1630] ἥμαρτες, ὀργὴν Μενέλεῳ ποιούμενος,
ἥδ’ ἐστίν, ἣν ὁρᾶτ’ ἐν αἰθέρος πτυχαῖς,
σεσῳσμένη τε κοὐ θανοῦσα πρὸς σέθεν.
Ἐγώ νιν ἐξέσῳσα κἀπὸ φασγάνου

τοῦ σοῦ κελευσθεὶς ἥρπασ᾽ ἐκ Διὸς πατρός.
Ζηνὸς γὰρ οὖσαν ζῆν νιν ἄφθιτον χρεών,
Κάστορί τε Πολυδεύκει τ᾽ ἐν αἰθέρος πτυχαῖς
σύνθακος ἔσται, ναυτίλοις σωτήριος.
Ἄλλην δὲ νύμφην ἐς δόμους κτῆσαι λαβών,
ἐπεὶ θεοὶ τῷ τῆσδε καλλιστεύματι
Ἕλληνας εἰς ἓν καὶ Φρύγας συνήγαγον,
θανάτους τ᾽ ἔθηκαν, ὡς ἀπαντλοῖεν χθονὸς
ὕβρισμα θνητῶν ἀφθόνου πληρώματος.
Τὰ μὲν καθ᾽ Ἑλένην ὧδ᾽ ἔχει· σὲ δ᾽ αὖ χρεών,
Ὀρέστα, γαίας τῆσδ᾽ ὑπερβαλόνθ᾽ ὅρους
Παρράσιον οἰκεῖν δάπεδον ἐνιαυτοῦ κύκλον.
Κεκλήσεται δὲ σῆς φυγῆς ἐπώνυμον
Ἀζᾶσιν Ἀρκάσιν τ᾽ Ὀρέστειον καλεῖν.
Ἐνθένδε δ᾽ ἐλθὼν τὴν Ἀθηναίων πόλιν
δίκην ὑπόσχες αἵματος μητροκτόνου
Εὐμενίσι τρισσαῖς· θεοὶ δέ σοι δίκης βραβῆς
πάγοισιν ἐν Ἀρείοισιν εὐσεβεστάτην
ψῆφον διοίσουσ᾽, ἔνθα νικῆσαί σε χρή.
Ἐφ᾽ ἧς δ᾽ ἔχεις, Ὀρέστα, φάσγανον δέρῃ,
γῆμαι πέπρωταί σ᾽ Ἑρμιόνην· ὃς δ᾽ οἴεται
Νεοπτόλεμος γαμεῖν νιν, οὐ γαμεῖ ποτε.
Θανεῖν γὰρ αὐτῷ μοῖρα Δελφικῷ ξίφει,
δίκας Ἀχιλλέως πατρὸς ἐξαιτοῦντά με.
Πυλάδῃ δ᾽ ἀδελφῆς λέκτρον, ὥς ποτ᾽ ᾔνεσας,
δός· ὁ δ᾽ ἐπιών νιν βίοτος εὐδαίμων μένει.
Ἄργους δ᾽ Ὀρέστην, Μενέλεως, ἔα κρατεῖν,
ἐλθὼν δ᾽ ἄνασσε Σπαρτιάτιδος χθονός,
φερνὰς ἔχων δάμαρτος, ἥ σε μυρίοις
πόνοις διδοῦσα δεῦρ᾽ ἀεὶ διήνυσεν.
Τὰ πρὸς πόλιν δὲ τῷδ᾽ ἐγὼ θήσω καλῶς,
ὅς νιν φονεῦσαι μητέρ᾽ ἐξηνάγκασα.

Ὀρέστης

Ὦ Λοξία μαντεῖε, σῶν θεσπισμάτων.
Οὐ ψευδόμαντις ἦσθ᾽ ἄρ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἐτήτυμος.

Καίτοι μ’ ἐσῄει δεῖμα, μή τινος κλύων
ἀλαστόρων δόξαιμι σὴν κλύειν ὄπα.
Ἀλλ’ εὖ τελεῖται, πείσομαι δὲ σοῖς λόγοις.
Ἰδού, μεθίημ’ Ἑρμιόνην ἀπὸ σφαγῆς,
καὶ λέκτρ’ ἐπῄνεσ’, ἡνίκ’ ἂν διδῷ πατήρ.

Μενέλαος

Ὦ Ζηνὸς Ἑλένη χαῖρε παῖ· ζηλῶ δέ σε
θεῶν κατοικήσασαν ὄλβιον δόμον.
Ὀρέστα, σοὶ δὲ παῖδ’ ἐγὼ κατεγγυῶ,
Φοίβου λέγοντος· εὐγενὴς δ’ ἀπ’ εὐγενοῦς
γήμας ὄναιο καὶ σὺ χὠ διδοὺς ἐγώ.

Ἀπόλλων

Χωρεῖτέ νυν ἕκαστος οἷ προστάσσομεν,
νείκας τε διαλύεσθε.

Μενέλαος

Πείθεσθαι χρεών.

Ὀρέστης

Κἀγὼ τοιοῦτος· σπένδομαι δὲ συμφοραῖς,
Μενέλαε, καὶ σοῖς, Λοξία, θεσπίσμασιν.

Ἀπόλλων

Ἴτε νυν καθ’ ὁδόν, τὴν καλλίστην
θεῶν Εἰρήνην τιμῶντες· ἐγὼ δ’
Ἑλένην Δίοις μελάθροις πελάσω,
λαμπρῶν ἄστρων πόλον ἐξανύσας,
ἔνθα παρ’ Ἥρᾳ τῇ θ’ Ἡρακλέους
Ἥβῃ πάρεδρος θεὸς ἀνθρώποις
ἔσται σπονδαῖς ἔντιμος ἀεί,

σὺν Τυνδαρίδαις, τοῖς Διὸς υἱοῖς,
[1690] ναύταις μεδέουσα θαλάσσης.

Χορός

Ὦ μέγα σεμνὴ Νίκη, τὸν ἐμὸν
βίοτον κατέχοις
καὶ μὴ λήγοις στεφανοῦσα.

BACCHAE

Διόνυσος

ἥκω Διὸς παῖς τήνδε Θηβαίων χθόνα
Διόνυσος, ὃν τίκτει ποθ᾽ ἡ Κάδμου κόρη
Σεμέλη λοχευθεῖσ᾽ ἀστραπηφόρῳ πυρί·
μορφὴν δ᾽ ἀμείψας ἐκ θεοῦ βροτησίαν
πάρειμι Δίρκης νάματ᾽ Ἰσμηνοῦ θ᾽ ὕδωρ.
ὁρῶ δὲ μητρὸς μνῆμα τῆς κεραυνίας
τόδ᾽ ἐγγὺς οἴκων καὶ δόμων ἐρείπια
τυφόμενα Δίου πυρὸς ἔτι ζῶσαν φλόγα,
ἀθάνατον Ἥρας μητέρ᾽ εἰς ἐμὴν ὕβριν.
αἰνῶ δὲ Κάδμον, ἄβατον ὃς πέδον τόδε
τίθησι, θυγατρὸς σηκόν· ἀμπέλου δέ νιν
πέριξ ἐγὼ ᾽κάλυψα βοτρυώδει χλόῃ.
λιπὼν δὲ Λυδῶν τοὺς πολυχρύσους γύας
Φρυγῶν τε, Περσῶν θ᾽ ἡλιοβλήτους πλάκας
Βάκτριά τε τείχη τήν τε δύσχιμον χθόνα
Μήδων ἐπελθὼν Ἀραβίαν τ᾽ εὐδαίμονα
Ἀσίαν τε πᾶσαν, ἣ παρ᾽ ἁλμυρὰν ἅλα
κεῖται μιγάσιν Ἕλλησι βαρβάροις θ᾽ ὁμοῦ
πλήρεις ἔχουσα καλλιπυργώτους πόλεις,
ἐς τήνδε πρῶτον ἦλθον Ἑλλήνων πόλιν,
τἀκεῖ χορεύσας καὶ καταστήσας ἐμὰς
τελετάς, ἵν᾽ εἴην ἐμφανὴς δαίμων βροτοῖς.
πρώτας δὲ Θήβας τῆσδε γῆς Ἑλληνίδος
ἀνωλόλυξα, νεβρίδ᾽ ἐξάψας χροὸς
θύρσον τε δοὺς ἐς χεῖρα, κίσσινον βέλος·
ἐπεί μ᾽ ἀδελφαὶ μητρός, ἃς ἥκιστα χρῆν,
Διόνυσον οὐκ ἔφασκον ἐκφῦναι Διός,
Σεμέλην δὲ νυμφευθεῖσαν ἐκ θνητοῦ τινος
ἐς Ζῆν᾽ ἀναφέρειν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν λέχους,
Κάδμου σοφίσμαθ᾽, ὧν νιν οὕνεκα κτανεῖν
Ζῆν᾽ ἐξεκαυχῶνθ᾽, ὅτι γάμους ἐψεύσατο.
τοιγάρ νιν αὐτὰς ἐκ δόμων ᾤστρησ᾽ ἐγὼ
μανίαις, ὄρος δ᾽ οἰκοῦσι παράκοποι φρενῶν·

σκευήν τ᾽ ἔχειν ἠνάγκασ᾽ ὀργίων ἐμῶν,
καὶ πᾶν τὸ θῆλυ σπέρμα Καδμείων, ὅσαι
γυναῖκες ἦσαν, ἐξέμηνα δωμάτων·
ὁμοῦ δὲ Κάδμου παισὶν ἀναμεμειγμέναι
χλωραῖς ὑπ᾽ ἐλάταις ἀνορόφοις ἧνται πέτραις.
δεῖ γὰρ πόλιν τήνδ᾽ ἐκμαθεῖν, κεἰ μὴ θέλει,
ἀτέλεστον οὖσαν τῶν ἐμῶν βακχευμάτων,
Σεμέλης τε μητρὸς ἀπολογήσασθαί μ᾽ ὕπερ
φανέντα θνητοῖς δαίμον᾽ ὃν τίκτει Διί.

Διόνυσος
Κάδμος μὲν οὖν γέρας τε καὶ τυραννίδα
Πενθεῖ δίδωσι θυγατρὸς ἐκπεφυκότι,
ὃς θεομαχεῖ τὰ κατ᾽ ἐμὲ καὶ σπονδῶν ἄπο
ὠθεῖ μ᾽, ἐν εὐχαῖς τ᾽ οὐδαμοῦ μνείαν ἔχει.
ὧν οὕνεκ᾽ αὐτῷ θεὸς γεγὼς ἐνδείξομαι
πᾶσίν τε Θηβαίοισιν. ἐς δ᾽ ἄλλην χθόνα,
τἀνθένδε θέμενος εὖ, μεταστήσω πόδα,
δεικνὺς ἐμαυτόν· ἢν δὲ Θηβαίων πόλις
ὀργῇ σὺν ὅπλοις ἐξ ὄρους βάκχας ἄγειν
ζητῇ, ξυνάψω μαινάσι στρατηλατῶν.
ὧν οὕνεκ᾽ εἶδος θνητὸν ἀλλάξας ἔχω
μορφήν τ᾽ ἐμὴν μετέβαλον εἰς ἀνδρὸς φύσιν.
ἀλλ᾽, ὦ λιποῦσαι Τμῶλον ἔρυμα Λυδίας,
θίασος ἐμός, γυναῖκες, ἃς ἐκ βαρβάρων
ἐκόμισα παρέδρους καὶ ξυνεμπόρους ἐμοί,
αἴρεσθε τἀπιχώρι᾽ ἐν πόλει Φρυγῶν
τύμπανα, ῾Ρέας τε μητρὸς ἐμά θ᾽ εὑρήματα,
βασίλειά τ᾽ ἀμφὶ δώματ᾽ ἐλθοῦσαι τάδε
κτυπεῖτε Πενθέως, ὡς ὁρᾷ Κάδμου πόλις.
ἐγὼ δὲ βάκχαις, ἐς Κιθαιρῶνος πτυχὰς
ἐλθὼν ἵν᾽ εἰσί, συμμετασχήσω χορῶν.

Χορός
Ἀσίας ἀπὸ γᾶς
ἱερὸν Τμῶλον ἀμείψασα θοάζω
Βρομίῳ πόνον ἡδὺν

κάματόν τ᾽ εὐκάματον, Βάκ-
χιον εὐαζομένα.

τίς ὁδῷ τίς ὁδῷ; τίς;
μελάθροις ἔκτοπος ἔστω, στόμα τ᾽ εὔφη-
μον ἅπας ἐξοσιούσθω·
τὰ νομισθέντα γὰρ αἰεὶ
Διόνυσον ὑμνήσω.

ὦ
μάκαρ, ὅστις εὐδαίμων
τελετὰς θεῶν εἰδὼς
βιοτὰν ἁγιστεύει καὶ
θιασεύεται ψυχὰν
ἐν ὄρεσσι βακχεύων
ὁσίοις καθαρμοῖσιν,
τά τε ματρὸς μεγάλας ὄρ-
για Κυβέλας θεμιτεύων,
ἀνὰ θύρσον τε τινάσσων,
κισσῷ τε στεφανωθεὶς
Διόνυσον θεραπεύει.
ἴτε βάκχαι, ἴτε βάκχαι,
Βρόμιον παῖδα θεὸν θεοῦ
Διόνυσον κατάγουσαι
Φρυγίων ἐξ ὀρέων Ἑλ-
λάδος εἰς εὐρυχόρους ἀ-
γυιάς, τὸν Βρόμιον·

ὅν
ποτ᾽ ἔχουσ᾽ ἐν ὠδίνων
λοχίαις ἀνάγκαισι
πταμένας Διὸς βροντᾶς νη-
δύος ἔκβολον μάτηρ
ἔτεκεν, λιποῦσ᾽ αἰῶ-
να κεραυνίῳ πληγᾷ·
λοχίοις δ᾽ αὐτίκα νιν δέ-
ξατο θαλάμαις Κρονίδας Ζεύς,

κατὰ μηρῷ δὲ καλύψας
χρυσέαισιν συνερείδει
περόναις κρυπτὸν ἀφ᾽ Ἥρας.
ἔτεκεν δ᾽, ἀνίκα Μοῖραι
τέλεσαν, ταυρόκερων θεὸν
στεφάνωσέν τε δρακόντων
στεφάνοις, ἔνθεν ἄγραν θη-
ροτρόφον μαινάδες ἀμφι-
βάλλονται πλοκάμοις.

ὦ Σεμέλας τροφοὶ Θῆ-
βαι, στεφανοῦσθε κισσῷ·
βρύετε βρύετε χλοήρει
μίλακι καλλικάρπῳ
καὶ καταβακχιοῦσθε δρυὸς
ἢ ἐλάτας κλάδοισι,
στικτῶν τ᾽ ἐνδυτὰ νεβρίδων
στέφετε λευκοτρίχων πλοκάμων
μαλλοῖς· ἀμφὶ δὲ νάρθηκας ὑβριστὰς
ὁσιοῦσθ᾽· αὐτίκα γᾶ πᾶσα χορεύσει —
Βρόμιος ὅστις ἄγῃ θιάσους —
εἰς ὄρος εἰς ὄρος, ἔνθα μένει
θηλυγενὴς ὄχλος
ἀφ᾽ ἱστῶν παρὰ κερκίδων τ᾽
οἰστρηθεὶς Διονύσῳ.

ὦ θαλάμευμα Κουρή-
των ζάθεοί τε Κρήτας
Διογενέτορες ἔναυλοι,
ἔνθα τρικόρυθες ἄντροις
βυρσότονον κύκλωμα τόδε
μοι Κορύβαντες ηὗρον·
βακχείᾳ δ᾽ ἀνὰ συντόνῳ
κέρασαν ἁδυβόᾳ Φρυγίων
αὐλῶν πνεύματι ματρός τε ῾Ρέας ἐς
χέρα θῆκαν, κτύπον εὐάσμασι Βακχᾶν·
παρὰ δὲ μαινόμενοι Σάτυροι

ματέρος ἐξανύσαντο θεᾶς,
ἐς δὲ χορεύματα
συνῆψαν τριετηρίδων,
αἷς χαίρει Διόνυσος.

ἡδὺς ἐν ὄρεσιν, ὅταν ἐκ θιάσων δρομαί-
ων πέσῃ πεδόσε, νε-
βρίδος ἔχων ἱερὸν ἐνδυτόν, ἀγρεύων
αἷμα τραγοκτόνον, ὠμοφάγον χάριν, ἱέμε-
νος ἐς ὄρεα Φρύγια, Λύδι᾽, ὁ δ᾽ ἔξαρχος Βρόμιος,
εὐοῖ.
ῥεῖ δὲ γάλακτι πέδον, ῥεῖ δ᾽ οἴνῳ, ῥεῖ δὲ μελισσᾶν
νέκταρι.
Συρίας δ᾽ ὡς λιβάνου κα-
πνὸν ὁ Βακχεὺς ἀνέχων
πυρσώδη φλόγα πεύκας
ἐκ νάρθηκος ἀίσσει
δρόμῳ καὶ χοροῖσιν
πλανάτας ἐρεθίζων
ἰαχαῖς τ᾽ ἀναπάλλων,
τρυφερόν <τε> πλόκαμον εἰς αἰθέρα ῥίπτων.
ἅμα δ᾽ εὐάσμασι τοιάδ᾽ ἐπιβρέμει·
Ὦ ἴτε βάκχαι,
[ὦ] ἴτε βάκχαι,
Τμώλου χρυσορόου χλιδᾷ
μέλπετε τὸν Διόνυσον
βαρυβρόμων ὑπὸ τυμπάνων,
εὔια τὸν εὔιον ἀγαλλόμεναι θεὸν
ἐν Φρυγίαισι βοαῖς ἐνοπαῖσί τε,
λωτὸς ὅταν εὐκέλαδος
ἱερὸς ἱερὰ παίγματα βρέμῃ, σύνοχα
φοιτάσιν εἰς ὄρος εἰς ὄρος· ἡδομέ-
να δ᾽ ἄρα, πῶλος ὅπως ἅμα ματέρι
φορβάδι, κῶλον ἄγει ταχύπουν σκιρτήμασι βάκχα.

Τειρεσίας
τίς ἐν πύλαισι; Κάδμον ἐκκάλει δόμων,

Ἀγήνορος παῖδ᾽, ὃς πόλιν Σιδωνίαν
λιπὼν ἐπύργωσ᾽ ἄστυ Θηβαίων τόδε.
ἴτω τις, εἰσάγγελλε Τειρεσίας ὅτι
ζητεῖ νιν· οἶδε δ᾽ αὐτὸς ὧν ἥκω πέρι
ἅ τε ξυνεθέμην πρέσβυς ὢν γεραιτέρῳ,
θύρσους ἀνάπτειν καὶ νεβρῶν δορὰς ἔχειν
στεφανοῦν τε κρᾶτα κισσίνοις βλαστήμασιν.

Κάδμος
ὦ φίλταθ᾽, ὡς σὴν γῆρυν ᾐσθόμην κλύων
σοφὴν σοφοῦ παρ᾽ ἀνδρός, ἐν δόμοισιν ὤν·
ἥκω δ᾽ ἕτοιμος τήνδ᾽ ἔχων σκευὴν θεοῦ·
δεῖ γάρ νιν ὄντα παῖδα θυγατρὸς ἐξ ἐμῆς
[Διόνυσον ὃς πέφηνεν ἀνθρώποις θεὸς]
ὅσον καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς δυνατὸν αὔξεσθαι μέγαν.
ποῖ δεῖ χορεύειν, ποῖ καθιστάναι πόδα
καὶ κρᾶτα σείσαι πολιόν; ἐξήγου σύ μοι
γέρων γέροντι, Τειρεσία· σὺ γὰρ σοφός.
ὡς οὐ κάμοιμ᾽ ἂν οὔτε νύκτ᾽ οὔθ᾽ ἡμέραν
θύρσῳ κροτῶν γῆν· ἐπιλελήσμεθ᾽ ἡδέως
γέροντες ὄντες.

Τειρεσίας
ταὔτ᾽ ἐμοὶ πάσχεις ἄρα·
κἀγὼ γὰρ ἡβῶ κἀπιχειρήσω χοροῖς.

Κάδμος
οὐκοῦν ὄχοισιν εἰς ὄρος περάσομεν;

Τειρεσίας
ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ ὁμοίως ἂν ὁ θεὸς τιμὴν ἔχοι.

Κάδμος
γέρων γέροντα παιδαγωγήσω σ᾽ ἐγώ.

Τειρεσίας
ὁ θεὸς ἀμοχθὶ κεῖσε νῷν ἡγήσεται.

Κάδμος
μόνοι δὲ πόλεως Βακχίῳ χορεύσομεν;

Τειρεσίας
μόνοι γὰρ εὖ φρονοῦμεν, οἱ δ᾽ ἄλλοι κακῶς.

Κάδμος
μακρὸν τὸ μέλλειν· ἀλλ᾽ ἐμῆς ἔχου χερός.

Τειρεσίας
ἰδού, ξύναπτε καὶ ξυνωρίζου χέρα.

Κάδμος
οὐ καταφρονῶ ᾽γὼ τῶν θεῶν θνητὸς γεγώς.

Τειρεσίας
οὐδὲν σοφιζόμεσθα τοῖσι δαίμοσιν.
πατρίους παραδοχάς, ἅς θ᾽ ὁμήλικας χρόνῳ
κεκτήμεθ᾽, οὐδεὶς αὐτὰ καταβαλεῖ λόγος,
οὐδ᾽ εἰ δι᾽ ἄκρων τὸ σοφὸν ηὕρηται φρενῶν.
ἐρεῖ τις ὡς τὸ γῆρας οὐκ αἰσχύνομαι,
μέλλων χορεύειν κρᾶτα κισσώσας ἐμόν;
οὐ γὰρ διῄρηχ᾽ ὁ θεός, οὔτε τὸν νέον
εἰ χρὴ χορεύειν οὔτε τὸν γεραίτερον,
ἀλλ᾽ ἐξ ἁπάντων βούλεται τιμὰς ἔχειν
κοινάς, διαριθμῶν δ᾽ οὐδέν᾽ αὔξεσθαι θέλει.

Κάδμος
ἐπεὶ σὺ φέγγος, Τειρεσία, τόδ᾽ οὐχ ὁρᾷς,
ἐγὼ προφήτης σοι λόγων γενήσομαι.
Πενθεὺς πρὸς οἴκους ὅδε διὰ σπουδῆς περᾷ,
Ἐχίονος παῖς, ᾧ κράτος δίδωμι γῆς.
ὡς ἐπτόηται· τί ποτ᾽ ἐρεῖ νεώτερον;

Πενθεύς
ἔκδημος ὢν μὲν τῆσδ᾽ ἐτύγχανον χθονός,
κλύω δὲ νεοχμὰ τήνδ᾽ ἀνὰ πτόλιν κακά,
γυναῖκας ἡμῖν δώματ᾽ ἐκλελοιπέναι

πλασταῖσι βακχείαισιν, ἐν δὲ δασκίοις
ὄρεσι θοάζειν, τὸν νεωστὶ δαίμονα
Διόνυσον, ὅστις ἔστι, τιμώσας χοροῖς·
πλήρεις δὲ θιάσοις ἐν μέσοισιν ἑστάναι
κρατῆρας, ἄλλην δ᾽ ἄλλοσ᾽ εἰς ἐρημίαν
πτώσσουσαν εὐναῖς ἀρσένων ὑπηρετεῖν,
πρόφασιν μὲν ὡς δὴ μαινάδας θυοσκόους,
τὴν δ᾽ Ἀφροδίτην πρόσθ᾽ ἄγειν τοῦ Βακχίου.
ὅσας μὲν οὖν εἴληφα, δεσμίους χέρας
σῴζουσι πανδήμοισι πρόσπολοι στέγαις·
ὅσαι δ᾽ ἄπεισιν, ἐξ ὄρους θηράσομαι,
[Ἰνώ τ᾽ Ἀγαύην θ᾽, ἥ μ᾽ ἔτικτ᾽ Ἐχίονι,
Ἀκταίονός τε μητέρ᾽, Αὐτονόην λέγω.]
καὶ σφᾶς σιδηραῖς ἁρμόσας ἐν ἄρκυσιν
παύσω κακούργου τῆσδε βακχείας τάχα.
λέγουσι δ᾽ ὅς τις εἰσελήλυθε ξένος,
γόης ἐπῳδὸς Λυδίας ἀπὸ χθονός,
ξανθοῖσι βοστρύχοισιν εὐοσμῶν κόμην,
οἰνῶπας ὄσσοις χάριτας Ἀφροδίτης ἔχων,
ὃς ἡμέρας τε κεὐφρόνας συγγίγνεται
τελετὰς προτείνων εὐίους νεάνισιν.
εἰ δ᾽ αὐτὸν εἴσω τῆσδε λήψομαι στέγης,
παύσω κτυποῦντα θύρσον ἀνασείοντά τε
κόμας, τράχηλον σώματος χωρὶς τεμών.
ἐκεῖνος εἶναί φησι Διόνυσον θεόν,
ἐκεῖνος ἐν μηρῷ ποτ᾽ ἐρράφθαι Διός,
ὃς ἐκπυροῦται λαμπάσιν κεραυνίαις
σὺν μητρί, Δίους ὅτι γάμους ἐψεύσατο.
ταῦτ᾽ οὐχὶ δεινῆς ἀγχόνης ἔστ᾽ ἄξια,
ὕβρεις ὑβρίζειν, ὅστις ἔστιν ὁ ξένος;
ἀτὰρ τόδ᾽ ἄλλο θαῦμα, τὸν τερασκόπον
ἐν ποικίλαισι νεβρίσι Τειρεσίαν ὁρῶ
πατέρα τε μητρὸς τῆς ἐμῆς — πολὺν γέλων —
νάρθηκι βακχεύοντ᾽· ἀναίνομαι, πάτερ,
τὸ γῆρας ὑμῶν εἰσορῶν νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον.
οὐκ ἀποτινάξεις κισσόν; οὐκ ἐλευθέραν
θύρσου μεθήσεις χεῖρ᾽, ἐμῆς μητρὸς πάτερ;

σὺ ταῦτ᾽ ἔπεισας, Τειρεσία· τόνδ᾽ αὖ θέλεις
τὸν δαίμον᾽ ἀνθρώποισιν ἐσφέρων νέον
σκοπεῖν πτερωτοὺς κἀμπύρων μισθοὺς φέρειν.
εἰ μή σε γῆρας πολιὸν ἐξερρύετο,
καθῆσ᾽ ἂν ἐν βάκχαισι δέσμιος μέσαις,
τελετὰς πονηρὰς εἰσάγων· γυναιξὶ γὰρ
ὅπου βότρυος ἐν δαιτὶ γίγνεται γάνος,
οὐχ ὑγιὲς οὐδὲν ἔτι λέγω τῶν ὀργίων.

Χορός
τῆς δυσσεβείας. ὦ ξέν᾽, οὐκ αἰδῇ θεοὺς
Κάδμον τε τὸν σπείραντα γηγενῆ στάχυν,
Ἐχίονος δ᾽ ὢν παῖς καταισχύνεις γένος;

Τειρεσίας
ὅταν λάβῃ τις τῶν λόγων ἀνὴρ σοφὸς
καλὰς ἀφορμάς, οὐ μέγ᾽ ἔργον εὖ λέγειν·
σὺ δ᾽ εὔτροχον μὲν γλῶσσαν ὡς φρονῶν ἔχεις,
ἐν τοῖς λόγοισι δ᾽ οὐκ ἔνεισί σοι φρένες.
θράσει δὲ δυνατὸς καὶ λέγειν οἷός τ᾽ ἀνὴρ
κακὸς πολίτης γίγνεται νοῦν οὐκ ἔχων.
οὗτος δ᾽ ὁ δαίμων ὁ νέος, ὃν σὺ διαγελᾷς,
οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην μέγεθος ἐξειπεῖν ὅσος
καθ᾽ Ἑλλάδ᾽ ἔσται. δύο γάρ, ὦ νεανία,
τὰ πρῶτ᾽ ἐν ἀνθρώποισι· Δημήτηρ θεά —
γῆ δ᾽ ἐστίν, ὄνομα δ᾽ ὁπότερον βούλῃ κάλει·
αὕτη μὲν ἐν ξηροῖσιν ἐκτρέφει βροτούς·
ὃς δ᾽ ἦλθ᾽ ἔπειτ᾽, ἀντίπαλον ὁ Σεμέλης γόνος
βότρυος ὑγρὸν πῶμ᾽ ηὗρε κεἰσηνέγκατο
θνητοῖς, ὃ παύει τοὺς ταλαιπώρους βροτοὺς
λύπης, ὅταν πλησθῶσιν ἀμπέλου ῥοῆς,
ὕπνον τε λήθην τῶν καθ᾽ ἡμέραν κακῶν
δίδωσιν, οὐδ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἄλλο φάρμακον πόνων.
οὗτος θεοῖσι σπένδεται θεὸς γεγώς,
ὥστε διὰ τοῦτον τἀγάθ᾽ ἀνθρώπους ἔχειν.
καὶ καταγελᾷς νιν, ὡς ἐνερράφη Διὸς
μηρῷ; διδάξω σ᾽ ὡς καλῶς ἔχει τόδε.

ἐπεί νιν ἥρπασ᾽ ἐκ πυρὸς κεραυνίου
Ζεύς, ἐς δ᾽ Ὄλυμπον βρέφος ἀνήγαγεν θεόν,
Ἥρα νιν ἤθελ᾽ ἐκβαλεῖν ἀπ᾽ οὐρανοῦ·
Ζεὺς δ᾽ ἀντεμηχανήσαθ᾽ οἷα δὴ θεός.
ῥήξας μέρος τι τοῦ χθόν᾽ ἐγκυκλουμένου
αἰθέρος, ἔθηκε τόνδ᾽ ὅμηρον ἐκδιδούς,
*
Διόνυσον Ἥρας νεικέων· χρόνῳ δέ νιν
βροτοὶ ῥαφῆναί φασιν ἐν μηρῷ Διός,
ὄνομα μεταστήσαντες, ὅτι θεᾷ θεὸς
Ἥρᾳ ποθ᾽ ὡμήρευσε, συνθέντες λόγον.
μάντις δ᾽ ὁ δαίμων ὅδε· τὸ γὰρ βακχεύσιμον
καὶ τὸ μανιῶδες μαντικὴν πολλὴν ἔχει·
ὅταν γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἐς τὸ σῶμ᾽ ἔλθῃ πολύς,
λέγειν τὸ μέλλον τοὺς μεμηνότας ποιεῖ.
Ἄρεώς τε μοῖραν μεταλαβὼν ἔχει τινά·
στρατὸν γὰρ ἐν ὅπλοις ὄντα κἀπὶ τάξεσιν
φόβος διεπτόησε πρὶν λόγχης θιγεῖν.
μανία δὲ καὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἐστὶ Διονύσου πάρα.
ἔτ᾽ αὐτὸν ὄψῃ κἀπὶ Δελφίσιν πέτραις
πηδῶντα σὺν πεύκαισι δικόρυφον πλάκα,
πάλλοντα καὶ σείοντα βακχεῖον κλάδον,
μέγαν τ᾽ ἀν᾽ Ἑλλάδα. ἀλλ᾽ ἐμοί, Πενθεῦ, πιθοῦ·
μὴ τὸ κράτος αὔχει δύναμιν ἀνθρώποις ἔχειν,
μηδ᾽, ἢν δοκῇς μέν, ἡ δὲ δόξα σου νοσῇ,
φρονεῖν δόκει τι· τὸν θεὸν δ᾽ ἐς γῆν δέχου
καὶ σπένδε καὶ βάκχευε καὶ στέφου κάρα.
οὐχ ὁ Διόνυσος σωφρονεῖν ἀναγκάσει
γυναῖκας ἐς τὴν Κύπριν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν τῇ φύσει
[τὸ σωφρονεῖν ἔνεστιν εἰς τὰ πάντ᾽ ἀεί]
τοῦτο σκοπεῖν χρή· καὶ γὰρ ἐν βακχεύμασιν
οὖσ᾽ ἥ γε σώφρων οὐ διαφθαρήσεται.
ὁρᾷς, σὺ χαίρεις, ὅταν ἐφεστῶσιν πύλαις
πολλοί, τὸ Πενθέως δ᾽ ὄνομα μεγαλύνῃ πόλις·
κἀκεῖνος, οἶμαι, τέρπεται τιμώμενος.
ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν καὶ Κάδμος, ὃν σὺ διαγελᾷς,
κισσῷ τ᾽ ἐρεψόμεσθα καὶ χορεύσομεν,

πολιὰ ξυνωρίς, ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως χορευτέον,
κοὐ θεομαχήσω σῶν λόγων πεισθεὶς ὕπο.
μαίνῃ γὰρ ὡς ἄλγιστα, κοὔτε φαρμάκοις
ἄκη λάβοις ἂν οὔτ᾽ ἄνευ τούτων νοσεῖς.

Χορός
ὦ πρέσβυ, Φοῖβόν τ᾽ οὐ καταισχύνεις λόγοις,
τιμῶν τε Βρόμιον σωφρονεῖς, μέγαν θεόν.

Κάδμος
ὦ παῖ, καλῶς σοι Τειρεσίας παρῄνεσεν.
οἴκει μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν, μὴ θύραζε τῶν νόμων.
νῦν γὰρ πέτῃ τε καὶ φρονῶν οὐδὲν φρονεῖς.
κεἰ μὴ γὰρ ἔστιν ὁ θεὸς οὗτος, ὡς σὺ φῄς,
παρὰ σοὶ λεγέσθω· καὶ καταψεύδου καλῶς
ὡς ἔστι, Σεμέλη θ᾽ ἵνα δοκῇ θεὸν τεκεῖν,
ἡμῖν τε τιμὴ παντὶ τῷ γένει προσῇ.
ὁρᾷς τὸν Ἀκτέωνος ἄθλιον μόρον,
ὃν ὠμόσιτοι σκύλακες ἃς ἐθρέψατο
διεσπάσαντο, κρείσσον᾽ ἐν κυναγίαις
Ἀρτέμιδος εἶναι κομπάσαντ᾽, ἐν ὀργάσιν.
ὃ μὴ πάθῃς σύ· δεῦρό σου στέψω κάρα
κισσῷ· μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν τῷ θεῷ τιμὴν δίδου.

Πενθεύς
οὐ μὴ προσοίσεις χεῖρα, βακχεύσεις δ᾽ ἰών,
μηδ᾽ ἐξομόρξῃ μωρίαν τὴν σὴν ἐμοί;
τῆς σῆς <δ᾽> ἀνοίας τόνδε τὸν διδάσκαλον
δίκην μέτειμι. στειχέτω τις ὡς τάχος,
ἐλθὼν δὲ θάκους τοῦδ᾽ ἵν᾽ οἰωνοσκοπεῖ
μοχλοῖς τριαίνου κἀνάτρεψον ἔμπαλιν,
ἄνω κάτω τὰ πάντα συγχέας ὁμοῦ,
καὶ στέμματ᾽ ἀνέμοις καὶ θυέλλαισιν μέθες.
μάλιστα γάρ νιν δήξομαι δράσας τάδε.
οἳ δ᾽ ἀνὰ πόλιν στείχοντες ἐξιχνεύσατε
τὸν θηλύμορφον ξένον, ὃς ἐσφέρει νόσον
καινὴν γυναιξὶ καὶ λέχη λυμαίνεται.

κἄνπερ λάβητε, δέσμιον πορεύσατε
δεῦρ᾽ αὐτόν, ὡς ἂν λευσίμου δίκης τυχὼν
θάνῃ, πικρὰν βάκχευσιν ἐν Θήβαις ἰδών.

Τειρεσίας
ὦ σχέτλι᾽, ὡς οὐκ οἶσθα ποῦ ποτ᾽ εἶ λόγων.
μέμηνας ἤδη· καὶ πρὶν ἐξέστης φρενῶν.
στείχωμεν ἡμεῖς, Κάδμε, κἀξαιτώμεθα
ὑπέρ τε τούτου καίπερ ὄντος ἀγρίου
ὑπέρ τε πόλεως τὸν θεὸν μηδὲν νέον
δρᾶν. ἀλλ᾽ ἕπου μοι κισσίνου βάκτρου μέτα,
πειρῶ δ᾽ ἀνορθοῦν σῶμ᾽ ἐμόν, κἀγὼ τὸ σόν·
γέροντε δ᾽ αἰσχρὸν δύο πεσεῖν· ἴτω δ᾽ ὅμως,
τῷ Βακχίῳ γὰρ τῷ Διὸς δουλευτέον.
Πενθεὺς δ᾽ ὅπως μὴ πένθος εἰσοίσει δόμοις
τοῖς σοῖσι, Κάδμε· μαντικῇ μὲν οὐ λέγω,
τοῖς πράγμασιν δέ· μῶρα γὰρ μῶρος λέγει.

Χορός
Ὁσία πότνα θεῶν,
Ὁσία δ᾽ ἃ κατὰ γᾶν
χρυσέαν πτέρυγα φέρεις,
τάδε Πενθέως ἀίεις;
ἀίεις οὐχ ὁσίαν
ὕβριν ἐς τὸν Βρόμιον, τὸν
Σεμέλας, τὸν παρὰ καλλι-
στεφάνοις εὐφροσύναις δαί-
μονα πρῶτον μακάρων; ὃς τάδ᾽ ἔχει,
θιασεύειν τε χοροῖς
μετά τ᾽ αὐλοῦ γελάσαι
ἀποπαῦσαί τε μερίμνας,
ὁπόταν βότρυος ἔλθῃ
γάνος ἐν δαιτὶ θεῶν, κισ-
σοφόροις δ᾽ ἐν θαλίαις ἀν-
δράσι κρατὴρ ὕπνον ἀμ-
φιβάλλῃ. 385b
ἀχαλίνων στομάτων

ἀνόμου τ᾽ ἀφροσύνας
τὸ τέλος δυστυχία·
ὁ δὲ τᾶς ἡσυχίας
βίοτος καὶ τὸ φρονεῖν
ἀσάλευτόν τε μένει καὶ
συνέχει δώματα· πόρσω
γὰρ ὅμως αἰθέρα ναίον-
τες ὁρῶσιν τὰ βροτῶν οὐρανίδαι.
τὸ σοφὸν δ᾽ οὐ σοφία
τό τε μὴ θνητὰ φρονεῖν.
βραχὺς αἰών· ἐπὶ τούτῳ
δέ τις ἂν μεγάλα διώκων
τὰ παρόντ᾽ οὐχὶ φέροι. μαι-
νομένων οἵδε τρόποι καὶ
κακοβούλων παρ᾽ ἔμοι-
γε φωτῶν. 401b
ἱκοίμαν ποτὶ Κύπρον,
νᾶσον τᾶς Ἀφροδίτας,
ἵν᾽ οἱ θελξίφρονες νέμον-
ται θνατοῖσιν Ἔρωτες,
Πάφον θ᾽ ἂν ἑκατόστομοι
βαρβάρου ποταμοῦ ῥοαὶ
καρπίζουσιν ἄνομβροι.
οὗ δ᾽ ἁ καλλιστευομένα
Πιερία μούσειος ἕδρα,
σεμνὰ κλιτὺς Ὀλύμπου,
ἐκεῖσ᾽ ἄγε με, Βρόμιε Βρόμιε,
πρόβακχ᾽ εὔιε δαῖμον.
ἐκεῖ Χάριτες,
ἐκεῖ δὲ Πόθος· ἐκεῖ δὲ βάκ-
χαις θέμις ὀργιάζειν.
ὁ δαίμων ὁ Διὸς παῖς
χαίρει μὲν θαλίαισιν,
φιλεῖ δ᾽ ὀλβοδότειραν Εἰ-
ρήναν, κουροτρόφον θεάν.
ἴσαν δ᾽ ἔς τε τὸν ὄλβιον
τόν τε χείρονα δῶκ᾽ ἔχειν

οἴνου τέρψιν ἄλυπον·
μισεῖ δ᾽ ᾧ μὴ ταῦτα μέλει,
κατὰ φάος νύκτας τε φίλας
εὐαίωνα διαζῆν,
σοφὰν δ᾽ ἀπέχειν παπίδα φρένα τε
περισσῶν παρὰ φωτῶν·
τὸ πλῆθος ὅ τι
τὸ φαυλότερον ἐνόμισε χρῆ-
ταί τε, τόδ᾽ ἂν δεχοίμαν.

Θεράπων

Πενθεῦ, πάρεσμεν τήνδ᾽ ἄγραν ἠγρευκότες
ἐφ᾽ ἣν ἔπεμψας, οὐδ᾽ ἄκρανθ᾽ ὡρμήσαμεν.
ὁ θὴρ δ᾽ ὅδ᾽ ἡμῖν πρᾶος οὐδ᾽ ὑπέσπασεν
φυγῇ πόδ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἔδωκεν οὐκ ἄκων χέρας
οὐδ᾽ ὠχρός, οὐδ᾽ ἤλλαξεν οἰνωπὸν γένυν,
γελῶν δὲ καὶ δεῖν κἀπάγειν ἐφίετο
ἔμενέ τε, τοὐμὸν εὐτρεπὲς ποιούμενος.
κἀγὼ δι᾽ αἰδοῦς εἶπον· Ὦ ξέν᾽, οὐχ ἑκὼν
ἄγω σε, Πενθέως δ᾽ ὅς μ᾽ ἔπεμψ᾽ ἐπιστολαῖς.
ἃς δ᾽ αὖ σὺ βάκχας εἶρξας, ἃς συνήρπασας
κἄδησας ἐν δεσμοῖσι πανδήμου στέγης,
φροῦδαί γ᾽ ἐκεῖναι λελυμέναι πρὸς ὀργάδας
σκιρτῶσι Βρόμιον ἀνακαλούμεναι θεόν·
αὐτόματα δ᾽ αὐταῖς δεσμὰ διελύθη ποδῶν
κλῆδές τ᾽ ἀνῆκαν θύρετρ᾽ ἄνευ θνητῆς χερός.
πολλῶν δ᾽ ὅδ᾽ ἀνὴρ θαυμάτων ἥκει πλέως
ἐς τάσδε Θήβας. σοὶ δὲ τἄλλα χρὴ μέλειν.

Πενθεύς

μέθεσθε χειρῶν τοῦδ᾽· ἐν ἄρκυσιν γὰρ ὢν
οὐκ ἔστιν οὕτως ὠκὺς ὥστε μ᾽ ἐκφυγεῖν.
ἀτὰρ τὸ μὲν σῶμ᾽ οὐκ ἄμορφος εἶ, ξένε,
ὡς ἐς γυναῖκας, ἐφ᾽ ὅπερ ἐς Θήβας πάρει·
πλόκαμός τε γάρ σου ταναός, οὐ πάλης ὕπο,
γένυν παρ᾽ αὐτὴν κεχυμένος, πόθου πλέως·
λευκὴν δὲ χροιὰν ἐκ παρασκευῆς ἔχεις,

οὐχ ἡλίου βολαῖσιν, ἀλλ᾽ ὑπὸ σκιᾶς,
τὴν Ἀφροδίτην καλλονῇ θηρώμενος.
πρῶτον μὲν οὖν μοι λέξον ὅστις εἶ γένος.

Διόνυσος
οὐ κόμπος οὐδείς· ῥᾴδιον δ᾽ εἰπεῖν τόδε.
τὸν ἀνθεμώδη Τμῶλον οἶσθά που κλύων.

Πενθεύς
οἶδ᾽, ὃς τὸ Σάρδεων ἄστυ περιβάλλει κύκλῳ.

Διόνυσος
ἐντεῦθέν εἰμι, Λυδία δέ μοι πατρίς.

Πενθεύς
πόθεν δὲ τελετὰς τάσδ᾽ ἄγεις ἐς Ἑλλάδα;

Διόνυσος
Διόνυσος ἡμᾶς εἰσέβησ᾽, ὁ τοῦ Διός.

Πενθεύς
Ζεὺς δ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐκεῖ τις, ὃς νέους τίκτει θεούς;

Διόνυσος
οὔκ, ἀλλ᾽ ὁ Σεμέλην ἐνθάδε ζεύξας γάμοις.

Πενθεύς
πότερα δὲ νύκτωρ σ᾽ ἢ κατ᾽ ὄμμ᾽ ἠνάγκασεν;

Διόνυσος
ὁρῶν ὁρῶντα, καὶ δίδωσιν ὄργια.

Πενθεύς
τὰ δ᾽ ὄργι᾽ ἐστὶ τίν᾽ ἰδέαν ἔχοντά σοι;

Διόνυσος
ἄρρητ᾽ ἀβακχεύτοισιν εἰδέναι βροτῶν.

Πενθεύς
ἔχει δ᾽ ὄνησιν τοῖσι θύουσιν τίνα;

Διόνυσος
οὐ θέμις ἀκοῦσαί σ᾽, ἔστι δ᾽ ἄξι᾽ εἰδέναι.

Πενθεύς
εὖ τοῦτ᾽ ἐκιβδήλευσας, ἵν᾽ ἀκοῦσαι θέλω.

Διόνυσος
ἀσέβειαν ἀσκοῦντ᾽ ὄργι᾽ ἐχθαίρει θεοῦ.

Πενθεύς
τὸν θεὸν ὁρᾶν γὰρ φῂς σαφῶς, ποῖός τις ἦν;

Διόνυσος
ὁποῖος ἤθελ᾽· οὐκ ἐγὼ ᾽τασσον τόδε.

Πενθεύς
τοῦτ᾽ αὖ παρωχέτευσας εὖ κοὐδὲν λέγων.

Διόνυσος
δόξει τις ἀμαθεῖ σοφὰ λέγων οὐκ εὖ φρονεῖν.

Πενθεύς
ἦλθες δὲ πρῶτα δεῦρ᾽ ἄγων τὸν δαίμονα;

Διόνυσος
πᾶς ἀναχορεύει βαρβάρων τάδ᾽ ὄργια.

Πενθεύς
φρονοῦσι γὰρ κάκιον Ἑλλήνων πολύ.

Διόνυσος
τάδ᾽ εὖ γε μᾶλλον· οἱ νόμοι δὲ διάφοροι.

Πενθεύς
τὰ δ᾽ ἱερὰ νύκτωρ ἢ μεθ᾽ ἡμέραν τελεῖς;

Διόνυσος
νύκτωρ τὰ πολλά· σεμνότητ᾽ ἔχει σκότος.

Πενθεύς
τοῦτ᾽ ἐς γυναῖκας δόλιόν ἐστι καὶ σαθρόν.

Διόνυσος
κἀν ἡμέρᾳ τό γ᾽ αἰσχρὸν ἐξεύροι τις ἄν.

Πενθεύς
δίκην σε δοῦναι δεῖ σοφισμάτων κακῶν.

Διόνυσος
σὲ δ᾽ ἀμαθίας γε κἀσεβοῦντ᾽ ἐς τὸν θεόν.

Πενθεύς
ὡς θρασὺς ὁ βάκχος κοὐκ ἀγύμναστος λόγων.

Διόνυσος
εἴφ᾽ ὅ τι παθεῖν δεῖ· τί με τὸ δεινὸν ἐργάσῃ;

Πενθεύς
πρῶτον μὲν ἁβρὸν βόστρυχον τεμῶ σέθεν.

Διόνυσος
ἱερὸς ὁ πλόκαμος· τῷ θεῷ δ᾽ αὐτὸν τρέφω.

Πενθεύς
ἔπειτα θύρσον τόνδε παράδος ἐκ χεροῖν.

Διόνυσος
αὐτός μ᾽ ἀφαιροῦ· τόνδε Διονύσου φορῶ.

Πενθεύς
εἱρκταῖσί τ᾽ ἔνδον σῶμα σὸν φυλάξομεν.

Διόνυσος
λύσει μ᾽ ὁ δαίμων αὐτός, ὅταν ἐγὼ θέλω.

Πενθεύς
ὅταν γε καλέσῃς αὐτὸν ἐν βάκχαις σταθείς.

Διόνυσος
καὶ νῦν ἃ πάσχω πλησίον παρὼν ὁρᾷ.

Πενθεύς
καὶ ποῦ ᾽στιν; οὐ γὰρ φανερὸς ὄμμασίν γ᾽ ἐμοῖς.

Διόνυσος
παρ᾽ ἐμοί· σὺ δ᾽ ἀσεβὴς αὐτὸς ὢν οὐκ εἰσορᾷς.

Πενθεύς
λάζυσθε· καταφρονεῖ με καὶ Θήβας ὅδε.

Διόνυσος
αὐδῶ με μὴ δεῖν σωφρονῶν οὐ σώφροσιν.

Πενθεύς
ἐγὼ δὲ δεῖν γε, κυριώτερος σέθεν.

Διόνυσος
οὐκ οἶσθ᾽ ὅ τι ζῇς, οὐδ᾽ ὃ δρᾷς, οὐδ᾽ ὅστις εἶ.

Πενθεύς
Πενθεύς, Ἀγαύης παῖς, πατρὸς δ᾽ Ἐχίονος.

Διόνυσος
ἐνδυστυχῆσαι τοὔνομ᾽ ἐπιτήδειος εἶ.

Πενθεύς
χώρει· καθείρξατ᾽ αὐτὸν ἱππικαῖς πέλας
φάτναισιν, ὡς ἂν σκότιον εἰσορᾷ κνέφας.
ἐκεῖ χόρευε· τάσδε δ᾽ ἃς ἄγων πάρει
κακῶν συνεργοὺς ἢ διεμπολήσομεν
ἢ χεῖρα δούπου τοῦδε καὶ βύρσης κτύπου
παύσας, ἐφ᾽ ἱστοῖς δμωίδας κεκτήσομαι.

Διόνυσος
στείχοιμ᾽ ἄν· ὅ τι γὰρ μὴ χρεών, οὔτοι χρεὼν
παθεῖν. ἀτάρ τοι τῶνδ᾽ ἄποιν᾽ ὑβρισμάτων
μέτεισι Διόνυσός σ᾽, ὃν οὐκ εἶναι λέγεις·
ἡμᾶς γὰρ ἀδικῶν κεῖνον εἰς δεσμοὺς ἄγεις.

Χορός
Ἀχελῴου θύγατερ,
πότνι᾽ εὐπάρθενε Δίρκα,
σὺ γὰρ ἐν σαῖς ποτε παγαῖς
τὸ Διὸς βρέφος ἔλαβες,
ὅτε μηρῷ πυρὸς ἐξ ἀ-
θανάτου Ζεὺς ὁ τεκὼν ἥρ-
πασέ νιν, τάδ᾽ ἀναβοάσας·
Ἴθι, Διθύραμβ᾽, ἐμὰν ἄρ-
σενα τάνδε βᾶθι νηδύν·
ἀναφαίνω σε τόδ᾽, ὦ Βάκ-
χιε, Θήβαις ὀνομάζειν.
σὺ δέ μ᾽, ὦ μάκαιρα Δίρκα,
στεφανηφόρους ἀπωθῇ
θιάσους ἔχουσαν ἐν σοί.
τί μ᾽ ἀναίνῃ; τί με φεύγεις;
ἔτι ναὶ τὰν βοτρυώδη
Διονύσου χάριν οἴνας,
ἔτι σοι τοῦ Βρομίου μελήσει.
οἵαν οἵαν ὀργὰν
ἀναφαίνει χθόνιον
γένος ἐκφύς τε δράκοντός
ποτε Πενθεύς, ὃν Ἐχίων
ἐφύτευσε χθόνιος,
ἀγριωπὸν τέρας, οὐ φῶ-
τα βρότειον, φόνιον δ᾽ ὥσ-
τε γίγαντ᾽ ἀντίπαλον θεοῖς·
ὃς ἀμ᾽ ἐν βρόχοισι τὰν τοῦ
Βρομίου τάχα ξυνάψει,
τὸν ἐμὸν δ᾽ ἐντὸς ἀχει δώ-
ματος ἤδη θιασώταν

σκοτίαις κρυπτὸν ἐν εἱρκταῖς.
ἐσορᾷς τάδ᾽, ὦ Διὸς παῖ
Διόνυσε, σοὺς προφάτας
ἐν ἀμίλλαισιν ἀνάγκας;
μόλε, χρυσῶπα τινάσσων,
ἄνα, θύρσον κατ᾽ Ὄλυμπον,
φονίου δ᾽ ἀνδρὸς ὕβριν κατάσχες.
πόθι Νύσας ἄρα τᾶς θη-
ροτρόφου θυρσοφορεῖς
θιάσους, ὦ Διόνυσ᾽, ἢ
κορυφαῖς Κωρυκίαις;
τάχα δ᾽ ἐν ταῖς πολυδένδρεσ-
σιν Ὀλύμπου θαλάμαις, ἔν-
θα ποτ᾽ Ὀρφεὺς κιθαρίζων
σύναγεν δένδρεα μούσαις,
σύναγεν θῆρας ἀγρώτας.
μάκαρ ὦ Πιερία,
σέβεταί σ᾽ Εὔιος, ἥξει
τε χορεύσων ἅμα βακχεύ-
μασι, τόν τ᾽ ὠκυρόαν
διαβὰς Ἀξιὸν εἰλισ-
σομένας Μαινάδας ἄξει,
Λυδίαν πατέρα τε, τὸν
τᾶς εὐδαιμονίας βροτοῖς
ὀλβοδόταν, τὸν ἔκλυον
εὔιππον χώραν ὕδασιν
καλλίστοισι λιπαίνειν.

Διόνυσος
ἰώ,
κλύετ᾽ ἐμᾶς κλύετ᾽ αὐδᾶς,
ἰὼ βάκχαι, ἰὼ βάκχαι.

Χορός
τίς ὅδε, τίς <ὅδε> πόθεν ὁ κέλαδος
ἀνά μ᾽ ἐκάλεσεν Εὐίου;

Διόνυσος
ἰὼ ἰώ, πάλιν αὐδῶ,
ὁ Σεμέλας, ὁ Διὸς παῖς.

Χορός
ἰὼ ἰὼ δέσποτα δέσποτα,
μόλε νυν ἡμέτερον ἐς
θίασον, ὦ Βρόμιε Βρόμιε.

Διόνυσος
<σεῖε> πέδον χθονὸς Ἔννοσι πότνια.

Χορός
ἆ ἆ,
τάχα τὰ Πενθέως μέλαθρα διατι-
νάξεται πεσήμασιν.
— ὁ Διόνυσος ἀνὰ μέλαθρα·
σέβετέ νιν.
— σέβομεν ὤ.
— εἴδετε λάινα κίοσιν ἔμβολα
διάδρομα τάδε; Βρόμιος <ὅδ᾽> ἀλα-
λάζεται στέγας ἔσω.

Διόνυσος
ἅπτε κεραύνιον αἴθοπα λαμπάδα·
σύμφλεγε σύμφλεγε δώματα Πενθέος.

Χορός
ἆ ἆ,
πῦρ οὐ λεύσσεις, οὐδ᾽ αὐγάζῃ,
Σεμέλας ἱερὸν ἀμφὶ τάφον, ἄν
ποτε κεραυνόβολος ἔλιπε φλόγα
Δίου βροντᾶς;
δίκετε πεδόσε τρομερὰ σώματα
δίκετε, Μαινάδες· ὁ γὰρ ἄναξ
ἄνω κάτω τιθεὶς ἔπεισι
μέλαθρα τάδε Διὸς γόνος.

Διόνυσος
βάρβαροι γυναῖκες, οὕτως ἐκπεπληγμέναι φόβῳ
πρὸς πέδῳ πεπτώκατ᾽; ᾔσθησθ᾽, ὡς ἔοικε, Βακχίου
διατινάξαντος ‘δῶμα Πενθέως· ἀλλ᾽ ἐξανίστατε’
σῶμα καὶ θαρσεῖτε σαρκὸς ἐξαμείψασαι τρόμον.

Χορός
ὦ φάος μέγιστον ἡμῖν εὐίου βακχεύματος,
ὡς ἐσεῖδον ἀσμένη σε, μονάδ᾽ ἔχουσ᾽ ἐρημίαν.

Διόνυσος
εἰς ἀθυμίαν ἀφίκεσθ᾽, ἡνίκ᾽ εἰσεπεμπόμην,
Πενθέως ὡς ἐς σκοτεινὰς ὁρκάνας πεσούμενος;

Χορός
πῶς γὰρ οὔ; τίς μοι φύλαξ ἦν, εἰ σὺ συμφορᾶς τύχοις;
ἀλλὰ πῶς ἠλευθερώθης ἀνδρὸς ἀνοσίου τυχών;

Διόνυσος
αὐτὸς ἐξέσῳσ᾽ ἐμαυτὸν ῥᾳδίως ἄνευ πόνου.

Χορός
οὐδέ σου συνῆψε χεῖρε δεσμίοισιν ἐν βρόχοις;

Διόνυσος
ταῦτα καὶ καθύβρισ᾽ αὐτόν, ὅτι με δεσμεύειν δοκῶν
οὔτ᾽ ἔθιγεν οὔθ᾽ ἥψαθ᾽ ἡμῶν, ἐλπίσιν δ᾽ ἐβόσκετο.
πρὸς φάτναις δὲ ταῦρον εὑρών, οὗ καθεῖρξ᾽ ἡμᾶς ἄγων,
τῷδε περὶ βρόχους ἔβαλλε γόνασι καὶ χηλαῖς ποδῶν,
θυμὸν ἐκπνέων, ἱδρῶτα σώματος στάζων ἄπο,
χείλεσιν διδοὺς ὀδόντας· πλησίον δ᾽ ἐγὼ παρὼν
ἥσυχος θάσσων ἔλευσσον. ἐν δὲ τῷδε τῷ χρόνῳ
ἀνετίναξ᾽ ἐλθὼν ὁ Βάκχος δῶμα καὶ μητρὸς τάφῳ
πῦρ ἀνῆψ᾽· ὃ δ᾽ ὡς ἐσεῖδε, δώματ᾽ αἴθεσθαι δοκῶν,
ᾔσσ᾽ ἐκεῖσε κᾆτ᾽ ἐκεῖσε, δμωσὶν Ἀχελῷον φέρειν
ἐννέπων, ἅπας δ᾽ ἐν ἔργῳ δοῦλος ἦν, μάτην πονῶν.
διαμεθεὶς δὲ τόνδε μόχθον, ὡς ἐμοῦ πεφευγότος,
ἵεται ξίφος κελαινὸν ἁρπάσας δόμων ἔσω.

κᾆθ᾽ ὁ Βρόμιος, ὡς ἔμοιγε φαίνεται, δόξαν λέγω,
φάσμ᾽ ἐποίησεν κατ᾽ αὐλήν· ὃ δ᾽ ἐπὶ τοῦθ᾽ ὡρμημένος
ᾔσσε κἀκέντει φαεννὸν <αἰθέρ᾽>, ὡς σφάζων ἐμέ.
πρὸς δὲ τοῖσδ᾽ αὐτῷ τάδ᾽ ἄλλα Βάκχιος λυμαίνεται·
δώματ᾽ ἔρρηξεν χαμᾶζε· συντεθράνωται δ᾽ ἅπαν
πικροτάτους ἰδόντι δεσμοὺς τοὺς ἐμούς· κόπου δ᾽ ὕπο
διαμεθεὶς ξίφος παρεῖται· πρὸς θεὸν γὰρ ὢν ἀνὴρ
ἐς μάχην ἐλθεῖν ἐτόλμησε. ἥσυχος δ᾽ ἐκβὰς ἐγὼ
δωμάτων ἥκω πρὸς ὑμᾶς, Πενθέως οὐ φροντίσας.
ὡς δέ μοι δοκεῖ — ψοφεῖ γοῦν ἀρβύλη δόμων ἔσω —
ἐς προνώπι᾽ αὐτίχ᾽ ἥξει. τί ποτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἐκ τούτων ἐρεῖ;
ῥᾳδίως γὰρ αὐτὸν οἴσω, κἂν πνέων ἔλθῃ μέγα.
πρὸς σοφοῦ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς ἀσκεῖν σώφρον᾽ εὐοργησίαν.

Πενθεύς
πέπονθα δεινά· διαπέφευγέ μ᾽ ὁ ξένος,
ὃς ἄρτι δεσμοῖς ἦν κατηναγκασμένος.
ἔα ἔα·
ὅδ᾽ ἐστὶν ἀνήρ· τί τάδε; πῶς προνώπιος
φαίνῃ πρὸς οἴκοις τοῖς ἐμοῖς, ἔξω βεβώς;

Διόνυσος
στῆσον πόδ᾽, ὀργῇ δ᾽ ὑπόθες ἥσυχον πόδα.

Πενθεύς
πόθεν σὺ δεσμὰ διαφυγὼν ἔξω περᾷς;

Διόνυσος
οὐκ εἶπον — ἢ οὐκ ἤκουσας — ὅτι λύσει μέ τις;

Πενθεύς
τίς; τοὺς λόγους γὰρ ἐσφέρεις καινοὺς ἀεί.

Διόνυσος
ὃς τὴν πολύβοτρυν ἄμπελον φύει βροτοῖς.

Πενθεύς
*

Διόνυσος
ὠνείδισας δὴ τοῦτο Διονύσῳ καλόν.

Πενθεύς
κλῄειν κελεύω πάντα πύργον ἐν κύκλῳ.

Διόνυσος
τί δ᾽; οὐχ ὑπερβαίνουσι καὶ τείχη θεοί;

Πενθεύς
σοφὸς σοφὸς σύ, πλὴν ἃ δεῖ σ᾽ εἶναι σοφόν.

Διόνυσος
ἃ δεῖ μάλιστα, ταῦτ᾽ ἔγωγ᾽ ἔφυν σοφός.
κείνου δ᾽ ἀκούσας πρῶτα τοὺς λόγους μάθε,
ὃς ἐξ ὄρους πάρεστιν ἀγγελῶν τί σοι·
ἡμεῖς δέ σοι μενοῦμεν, οὐ φευξούμεθα.

Ἄγγελος
Πενθεῦ κρατύνων τῆσδε Θηβαίας χθονός,
ἥκω Κιθαιρῶν᾽ ἐκλιπών, ἵν᾽ οὔποτε
λευκῆς χιόνος ἀνεῖσαν εὐαγεῖς βολαί.

Πενθεύς
ἥκεις δὲ ποίαν προστιθεὶς σπουδὴν λόγου;

Ἄγγελος
βάκχας ποτνιάδας εἰσιδών, αἳ τῆσδε γῆς
οἴστροισι λευκὸν κῶλον ἐξηκόντισαν,
ἥκω φράσαι σοὶ καὶ πόλει χρῄζων, ἄναξ,
ὡς δεινὰ δρῶσι θαυμάτων τε κρείσσονα.
θέλω δ᾽ ἀκοῦσαι, πότερά σοι παρρησίᾳ
φράσω τὰ κεῖθεν ἢ λόγον στειλώμεθα·
τὸ γὰρ τάχος σου τῶν φρενῶν δέδοικ᾽, ἄναξ,
καὶ τοὐξύθυμον καὶ τὸ βασιλικὸν λίαν.

Πενθεύς
λέγ᾽, ὡς ἀθῷος ἐξ ἐμοῦ πάντως ἔσῃ.

τοῖς γὰρ δικαίοις οὐχὶ θυμοῦσθαι χρεών.
ὅσῳ δ᾽ ἂν εἴπῃς δεινότερα βακχῶν πέρι,
τοσῷδε μᾶλλον τὸν ὑποθέντα τὰς τέχνας
γυναιξὶ τόνδε τῇ δίκῃ προσθήσομεν.

Ἄγγελος
ἀγελαῖα μὲν βοσκήματ᾽ ἄρτι πρὸς λέπας
μόσχων ὑπεξήκριζον, ἡνίχ᾽ ἥλιος
ἀκτῖνας ἐξίησι θερμαίνων χθόνα.
ὁρῶ δὲ θιάσους τρεῖς γυναικείων χορῶν,
ὧν ἦρχ᾽ ἑνὸς μὲν Αὐτονόη, τοῦ δευτέρου
μήτηρ Ἀγαύη σή, τρίτου δ᾽ Ἰνὼ χοροῦ.
ηὗδον δὲ πᾶσαι σώμασιν παρειμέναι,
αἱ μὲν πρὸς ἐλάτης νῶτ᾽ ἐρείσασαι φόβην,
αἱ δ᾽ ἐν δρυὸς φύλλοισι πρὸς πέδῳ κάρα
εἰκῇ βαλοῦσαι σωφρόνως, οὐχ ὡς σὺ φῂς
ᾠνωμένας κρατῆρι καὶ λωτοῦ ψόφῳ
θηρᾶν καθ᾽ ὕλην Κύπριν ἠρημωμένας.
ἡ σὴ δὲ μήτηρ ὠλόλυξεν ἐν μέσαις
σταθεῖσα βάκχαις, ἐξ ὕπνου κινεῖν δέμας,
μυκήμαθ᾽ ὡς ἤκουσε κεροφόρων βοῶν.
αἱ δ᾽ ἀποβαλοῦσαι θαλερὸν ὀμμάτων ὕπνον
ἀνῆξαν ὀρθαί, θαῦμ᾽ ἰδεῖν εὐκοσμίας,
νέαι παλαιαὶ παρθένοι τ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἄζυγες.
καὶ πρῶτα μὲν καθεῖσαν εἰς ὤμους κόμας
νεβρίδας τ᾽ ἀνεστείλανθ᾽ ὅσαισιν ἀμμάτων
σύνδεσμ᾽ ἐλέλυτο, καὶ καταστίκτους δορὰς
ὄφεσι κατεζώσαντο λιχμῶσιν γένυν.
αἱ δ᾽ ἀγκάλαισι δορκάδ᾽ ἢ σκύμνους λύκων
ἀγρίους ἔχουσαι λευκὸν ἐδίδοσαν γάλα,
ὅσαις νεοτόκοις μαστὸς ἦν σπαργῶν ἔτι
βρέφη λιποῦσαις· ἐπὶ δ᾽ ἔθεντο κισσίνους
στεφάνους δρυός τε μίλακός τ᾽ ἀνθεσφόρου.
θύρσον δέ τις λαβοῦσ᾽ ἔπαισεν ἐς πέτραν,
ὅθεν δροσώδης ὕδατος ἐκπηδᾷ νοτίς·
ἄλλη δὲ νάρθηκ᾽ ἐς πέδον καθῆκε γῆς,
καὶ τῇδε κρήνην ἐξανῆκ᾽ οἴνου θεός·

ὅσαις δὲ λευκοῦ πώματος πόθος παρῆν,
ἄκροισι δακτύλοισι διαμῶσαι χθόνα
γάλακτος ἑσμοὺς εἶχον· ἐκ δὲ κισσίνων
θύρσων γλυκεῖαι μέλιτος ἔσταζον ῥοαί.
ὥστ᾽, εἰ παρῆσθα, τὸν θεὸν τὸν νῦν ψέγεις
εὐχαῖσιν ἂν μετῆλθες εἰσιδὼν τάδε.
ξυνήλθομεν δὲ βουκόλοι καὶ ποιμένες,
κοινῶν λόγων δώσοντες ἀλλήλοις ἔριν
ὡς δεινὰ δρῶσι θαυμάτων τ᾽ ἐπάξια·
καί τις πλάνης κατ᾽ ἄστυ καὶ τρίβων λόγων
ἔλεξεν εἰς ἅπαντας· Ὦ σεμνὰς πλάκας
ναίοντες ὀρέων, θέλετε θηρασώμεθα
Πενθέως Ἀγαύην μητέρ᾽ ἐκ βακχευμάτων
χάριν τ᾽ ἄνακτι θώμεθα; εὖ δ᾽ ἡμῖν λέγειν
ἔδοξε, θάμνων δ᾽ ἐλλοχίζομεν φόβαις
κρύψαντες αὐτούς· αἳ δὲ τὴν τεταγμένην
ὥραν ἐκίνουν θύρσον ἐς βακχεύματα,
Ἴακχον ἀθρόῳ στόματι τὸν Διὸς γόνον
Βρόμιον καλοῦσαι· πᾶν δὲ συνεβάκχευ᾽ ὄρος
καὶ θῆρες, οὐδὲν δ᾽ ἦν ἀκίνητον δρόμῳ.
κυρεῖ δ᾽ Ἀγαύη πλησίον θρῴσκουσά μου·
κἀγὼ ᾽ξεπήδησ᾽ ὡς συναρπάσαι θέλων,
λόχμην κενώσας ἔνθ᾽ ἐκρυπτόμην δέμας.
ἣ δ᾽ ἀνεβόησεν· Ὦ δρομάδες ἐμαὶ κύνες,
θηρώμεθ᾽ ἀνδρῶν τῶνδ᾽ ὕπ᾽· ἀλλ᾽ ἕπεσθέ μοι,
ἕπεσθε θύρσοις διὰ χερῶν ὡπλισμέναι.
ἡμεῖς μὲν οὖν φεύγοντες ἐξηλύξαμεν
βακχῶν σπαραγμόν, αἳ δὲ νεμομέναις χλόην
μόσχοις ἐπῆλθον χειρὸς ἀσιδήρου μέτα.
καὶ τὴν μὲν ἂν προσεῖδες εὔθηλον πόριν
μυκωμένην ἔχουσαν ἐν χεροῖν δίχα,
ἄλλαι δὲ δαμάλας διεφόρουν σπαράγμασιν.
εἶδες δ᾽ ἂν ἢ πλεύρ᾽ ἢ δίχηλον ἔμβασιν
ῥιπτόμεν᾽ ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω· κρεμαστὰ δὲ
ἔσταζ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἐλάταις ἀναπεφυρμέν᾽ αἵματι.
ταῦροι δ᾽ ὑβρισταὶ κἀς κέρας θυμούμενοι
τὸ πρόσθεν ἐσφάλλοντο πρὸς γαῖαν δέμας,

μυριάσι χειρῶν ἀγόμενοι νεανίδων.
θᾶσσον δὲ διεφοροῦντο σαρκὸς ἐνδυτὰ
ἢ σὲ ξυνάψαι βλέφαρα βασιλείοις κόραις.
χωροῦσι δ᾽ ὥστ᾽ ὄρνιθες ἀρθεῖσαι δρόμῳ
πεδίων ὑποτάσεις, αἳ παρ᾽ Ἀσωποῦ ῥοαῖς
εὔκαρπον ἐκβάλλουσι Θηβαίων στάχυν·
Ὑσιάς τ᾽ Ἐρυθράς θ᾽, αἳ Κιθαιρῶνος λέπας
νέρθεν κατῳκήκασιν, ὥστε πολέμιοι,
ἐπεσπεσοῦσαι πάντ᾽ ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω
διέφερον· ἥρπαζον μὲν ἐκ δόμων τέκνα·
ὁπόσα δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ὤμοις ἔθεσαν, οὐ δεσμῶν ὕπο
προσείχετ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἔπιπτεν ἐς μέλαν πέδον,
οὐ χαλκός, οὐ σίδηρος· ἐπὶ δὲ βοστρύχοις
πῦρ ἔφερον, οὐδ᾽ ἔκαιεν. οἳ δ᾽ ὀργῆς ὕπο
ἐς ὅπλ᾽ ἐχώρουν φερόμενοι βακχῶν ὕπο·
οὗπερ τὸ δεινὸν ἦν θέαμ᾽ ἰδεῖν, ἄναξ.
τοῖς μὲν γὰρ οὐχ ἥμασσε λογχωτὸν βέλος,
κεῖναι δὲ θύρσους ἐξανιεῖσαι χερῶν
ἐτραυμάτιζον κἀπενώτιζον φυγῇ
γυναῖκες ἄνδρας, οὐκ ἄνευ θεῶν τινος.
πάλιν δ᾽ ἐχώρουν ὅθεν ἐκίνησαν πόδα,
κρήνας ἐπ᾽ αὐτὰς ἃς ἀνῆκ᾽ αὐταῖς θεός.
νίψαντο δ᾽ αἷμα, σταγόνα δ᾽ ἐκ παρηίδων
γλώσσῃ δράκοντες ἐξεφαίδρυνον χροός.
τὸν δαίμον᾽ οὖν τόνδ᾽ ὅστις ἔστ᾽, ὦ δέσποτα,
δέχου πόλει τῇδ᾽· ὡς τά τ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ἐστὶν μέγας,
κἀκεῖνό φασιν αὐτόν, ὡς ἐγὼ κλύω,
τὴν παυσίλυπον ἄμπελον δοῦναι βροτοῖς.
οἴνου δὲ μηκέτ᾽ ὄντος οὐκ ἔστιν Κύπρις
οὐδ᾽ ἄλλο τερπνὸν οὐδὲν ἀνθρώποις ἔτι.

Χορός

ταρβῶ μὲν εἰπεῖν τοὺς λόγους ἐλευθέρους
πρὸς τὸν τύραννον, ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως εἰρήσεται·
Διόνυσος ἥσσων οὐδενὸς θεῶν ἔφυ.

Πενθεύς
ἤδη τόδ᾽ ἐγγὺς ὥστε πῦρ ὑφάπτεται
ὕβρισμα βακχῶν, ψόγος ἐς Ἕλληνας μέγας.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ὀκνεῖν δεῖ· στεῖχ᾽ ἐπ᾽ Ἠλέκτρας ἰὼν
πύλας· κέλευε πάντας ἀσπιδηφόρους
ἵππων τ᾽ ἀπαντᾶν ταχυπόδων ἐπεμβάτας
πέλτας θ᾽ ὅσοι πάλλουσι καὶ τόξων χερὶ
ψάλλουσι νευράς, ὡς ἐπιστρατεύσομεν
βάκχαισιν· οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ᾽ ὑπερβάλλει τάδε,
εἰ πρὸς γυναικῶν πεισόμεσθ᾽ ἃ πάσχομεν.

Διόνυσος
πείθῃ μὲν οὐδέν, τῶν ἐμῶν λόγων κλύων,
Πενθεῦ· κακῶς δὲ πρὸς σέθεν πάσχων ὅμως
οὔ φημι χρῆναί σ᾽ ὅπλ᾽ ἐπαίρεσθαι θεῷ,
ἀλλ᾽ ἡσυχάζειν· Βρόμιος οὐκ ἀνέξεται
κινοῦντα βάκχας <σ᾽> εὐίων ὀρῶν ἄπο.

Πενθεύς
οὐ μὴ φρενώσεις μ᾽, ἀλλὰ δέσμιος φυγὼν
σῴσῃ τόδ᾽; ἢ σοὶ πάλιν ἀναστρέψω δίκην;

Διόνυσος
θύοιμ᾽ ἂν αὐτῷ μᾶλλον ἢ θυμούμενος
πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζοιμι θνητὸς ὢν θεῷ.

Πενθεύς
θύσω, φόνον γε θῆλυν, ὥσπερ ἄξιαι,
πολὺν ταράξας ἐν Κιθαιρῶνος πτυχαῖς.

Διόνυσος
φεύξεσθε πάντες· καὶ τόδ᾽ αἰσχρόν, ἀσπίδας
θύρσοισι βακχῶν ἐκτρέπειν χαλκηλάτους

Πενθεύς
ἀπόρῳ γε τῷδε συμπεπλέγμεθα ξένῳ,
ὃς οὔτε πάσχων οὔτε δρῶν σιγήσεται.

Διόνυσος
ὦ τᾶν, ἔτ᾽ ἔστιν εὖ καταστῆσαι τάδε.

Πενθεύς
τί δρῶντα; δουλεύοντα δουλείαις ἐμαῖς;
Διόνυσος
ἐγὼ γυναῖκας δεῦρ᾽ ὅπλων ἄξω δίχα.

Πενθεύς
οἴμοι· τόδ᾽ ἤδη δόλιον ἔς με μηχανᾷ.

Διόνυσος
ποῖόν τι, σῷσαί σ᾽ εἰ θέλω τέχναις ἐμαῖς;

Πενθεύς
ξυνέθεσθε κοινῇ τάδ᾽, ἵνα βακχεύητ᾽ ἀεί.

Διόνυσος
καὶ μὴν ξυνεθέμην — τοῦτό γ᾽ ἔστι — τῷ θεῷ.

Πενθεύς
ἐκφέρετέ μοι δεῦρ᾽ ὅπλα, σὺ δὲ παῦσαι λέγων.

Διόνυσος
ἆ.
βούλῃ σφ᾽ ἐν ὄρεσι συγκαθημένας ἰδεῖν;

Πενθεύς
μάλιστα, μυρίον γε δοὺς χρυσοῦ σταθμόν.

Διόνυσος
τί δ᾽ εἰς ἔρωτα τοῦδε πέπτωκας μέγαν;

Πενθεύς
λυπρῶς νιν εἰσίδοιμ᾽ ἂν ἐξῳνωμένας.

Διόνυσος
ὅμως δ᾽ ἴδοις ἂν ἡδέως ἅ σοι πικρά;

Πενθεύς
σάφ᾽ ἴσθι, σιγῇ γ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἐλάταις καθήμενος.

Διόνυσος
ἀλλ᾽ ἐξιχνεύσουσίν σε, κἂν ἔλθῃς λάθρᾳ.

Πενθεύς
ἀλλ᾽ ἐμφανῶς· καλῶς γὰρ ἐξεῖπας τάδε.

Διόνυσος
ἄγωμεν οὖν σε κἀπιχειρήσεις ὁδῷ;

Πενθεύς
ἄγ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα, τοῦ χρόνου δέ σοι φθονῶ.

Διόνυσος
στεῖλαί νυν ἀμφὶ χρωτὶ βυσσίνους πέπλους.

Πενθεύς
τί δὴ τόδ᾽; ἐς γυναῖκας ἐξ ἀνδρὸς τελῶ;

Διόνυσος
μή σε κτάνωσιν, ἢν ἀνὴρ ὀφθῇς ἐκεῖ.

Πενθεύς
εὖ γ᾽ εἶπας αὖ τόδ᾽· ὥς τις εἶ πάλαι σοφός.

Διόνυσος
Διόνυσος ἡμᾶς ἐξεμούσωσεν τάδε.

Πενθεύς
πῶς οὖν γένοιτ᾽ ἂν ἃ σύ με νουθετεῖς καλῶς;

Διόνυσος
ἐγὼ στελῶ σε δωμάτων ἔσω μολών.

Πενθεύς
τίνα στολήν; ἦ θῆλυν; ἀλλ᾽ αἰδώς μ᾽ ἔχει.

Διόνυσος
οὐκέτι θεατὴς μαινάδων πρόθυμος εἶ.

Πενθεύς
στολὴν δὲ τίνα φῂς ἀμφὶ χρῶτ᾽ ἐμὸν βαλεῖν;

Διόνυσος
κόμην μὲν ἐπὶ σῷ κρατὶ ταναὸν ἐκτενῶ.

Πενθεύς
τὸ δεύτερον δὲ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τί μοι;

Διόνυσος
πέπλοι ποδήρεις· ἐπὶ κάρᾳ δ᾽ ἔσται μίτρα.

Πενθεύς
ἦ καί τι πρὸς τοῖσδ᾽ ἄλλο προσθήσεις ἐμοί;

Διόνυσος
θύρσον γε χειρὶ καὶ νεβροῦ στικτὸν δέρας.

Πενθεύς
οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην θῆλυν ἐνδῦναι στολήν.

Διόνυσος
ἀλλ᾽ αἷμα θήσεις συμβαλὼν βάκχαις μάχην.

Πενθεύς
ὀρθῶς· μολεῖν χρὴ πρῶτον εἰς κατασκοπήν.

Διόνυσος
σοφώτερον γοῦν ἢ κακοῖς θηρᾶν κακά.

Πενθεύς
καὶ πῶς δι᾽ ἄστεως εἶμι Καδμείους λαθών;

Διόνυσος
ὁδοὺς ἐρήμους ἴμεν· ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἡγήσομαι.

Πενθεύς
πᾶν κρεῖσσον ὥστε μὴ ᾽γγελᾶν βάκχας ἐμοί.
ἐλθόντ᾽ ἐς οἴκους . . . ἂν δοκῇ βουλεύσομαι.

Διόνυσος
ἔξεστι· πάντῃ τό γ᾽ ἐμὸν εὐτρεπὲς πάρα.

Πενθεύς
στείχοιμ᾽ ἄν· ἢ γὰρ ὅπλ᾽ ἔχων πορεύσομαι
ἢ τοῖσι σοῖσι πείσομαι βουλεύμασιν.

Διόνυσος
γυναῖκες, ἀνὴρ ἐς βόλον καθίσταται,
ἥξει δὲ βάκχας, οὗ θανὼν δώσει δίκην.
Διόνυσε, νῦν σὸν ἔργον· οὐ γὰρ εἶ πρόσω·
τεισώμεθ᾽ αὐτόν. πρῶτα δ᾽ ἔκστησον φρενῶν,
ἐνεὶς ἐλαφρὰν λύσσαν· ὡς φρονῶν μὲν εὖ
οὐ μὴ θελήσῃ θῆλυν ἐνδῦναι στολήν,
ἔξω δ᾽ ἐλαύνων τοῦ φρονεῖν ἐνδύσεται.
χρῄζω δέ νιν γέλωτα Θηβαίοις ὀφλεῖν
γυναικόμορφον ἀγόμενον δι᾽ ἄστεως
ἐκ τῶν ἀπειλῶν τῶν πρίν, αἶσι δεινὸς ἦν.
ἀλλ᾽ εἶμι κόσμον ὅνπερ εἰς Ἅιδου λαβὼν
ἄπεισι μητρὸς ἐκ χεροῖν κατασφαγείς,
Πενθεῖ προσάψων· γνώσεται δὲ τὸν Διὸς
Διόνυσον, ὃς πέφυκεν ἐν τέλει θεός,
δεινότατος, ἀνθρώποισι δ᾽ ἠπιώτατος.

Χορός
ἦρ᾽ ἐν παννυχίοις χοροῖς
θήσω ποτὲ λευκὸν
πόδ᾽ ἀναβακχεύουσα, δέραν
εἰς αἰθέρα δροσερὸν ῥίπτουσ᾽,
ὡς νεβρὸς χλοεραῖς ἐμπαί-
ζουσα λείμακος ἡδοναῖς,
ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν φοβερὰν φύγῃ
θήραν ἔξω φυλακᾶς
εὐπλέκτων ὑπὲρ ἀρκύων,

θωΰσσων δὲ κυναγέτας
συντείνῃ δράμημα κυνῶν·
μόχθοις τ᾽ ὠκυδρόμοις τ᾽ ἀέλ-
λαις θρῴσκει πεδίον
παραποτάμιον, ἡδομένα
βροτῶν ἐρημίαις σκιαρο-
κόμοιό τ᾽ ἔρνεσιν ὕλας.
τί τὸ σοφόν; ἢ τί τὸ κάλλιον
παρὰ θεῶν γέρας ἐν βροτοῖς
ἢ χεῖρ᾽ ὑπὲρ κορυφᾶς
τῶν ἐχθρῶν κρείσσω κατέχειν;
ὅ τι καλὸν φίλον ἀεί.
ὁρμᾶται μόλις, ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως
πιστόν <τι> τὸ θεῖον
σθένος· ἀπευθύνει δὲ βροτῶν
τούς τ᾽ ἀγνωμοσύναν τιμῶν-
τας καὶ μὴ τὰ θεῶν αὔξον-
τας σὺν μαινομένᾳ δόξᾳ.
κρυπτεύουσι δὲ ποικίλως
δαρὸν χρόνου πόδα καὶ
θηρῶσιν τὸν ἄσεπτον. οὐ
γὰρ κρεῖσσόν ποτε τῶν νόμων
γιγνώσκειν χρὴ καὶ μελετᾶν.
κούφα γὰρ δαπάνα νομί-
ζειν ᾖσχὺν τόδ᾽ ἔχειν,
ὅ τι ποτ᾽ ἄρα τὸ δαιμόνιον,
τό τ᾽ ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ νόμιμον
ἀεὶ φύσει τε πεφυκός.
τί τὸ σοφόν; ἢ τί τὸ κάλλιον
παρὰ θεῶν γέρας ἐν βροτοῖς
ἢ χεῖρ᾽ ὑπὲρ κορυφᾶς
τῶν ἐχθρῶν κρείσσω κατέχειν;
ὅ τι καλὸν φίλον ἀεί.
εὐδαίμων μὲν ὃς ἐκ θαλάσσας
ἔφυγε χεῖμα, λιμένα δ᾽ ἔκιχεν·
εὐδαίμων δ᾽ ὃς ὕπερθε μόχθων
ἐγένεθ᾽· ἑτέρᾳ δ᾽ ἕτερος ἕτερον

ὄλβῳ καὶ δυνάμει παρῆλθεν.
μυρίαι δ᾽ ἔτι μυρίοις
εἰσὶν ἐλπίδες· αἳ μὲν
τελευτῶσιν ἐν ὄλβῳ
βροτοῖς, αἳ δ᾽ ἀπέβησαν·
τὸ δὲ κατ᾽ ἦμαρ ὅτῳ βίοτος
εὐδαίμων, μακαρίζω.

Διόνυσος
σὲ τὸν πρόθυμον ὄνθ᾽ ἃ μὴ χρεὼν ὁρᾶν
σπεύδοντά τ᾽ ἀσπούδαστα, Πενθέα λέγω,
ἔξιθι πάροιθε δωμάτων, ὄφθητί μοι,
σκευὴν γυναικὸς μαινάδος βάκχης ἔχων,
μητρός τε τῆς σῆς καὶ λόχου κατάσκοπος·
πρέπεις δὲ Κάδμου θυγατέρων μορφὴν μιᾷ.

Πενθεύς
καὶ μὴν ὁρᾶν μοι δύο μὲν ἡλίους δοκῶ,
δισσὰς δὲ Θήβας καὶ πόλισμ᾽ ἑπτάστομον·
καὶ ταῦρος ἡμῖν πρόσθεν ἡγεῖσθαι δοκεῖς
καὶ σῷ κέρατα κρατὶ προσπεφυκέναι.
ἀλλ᾽ ἦ ποτ᾽ ἦσθα θήρ; τεταύρωσαι γὰρ οὖν.

Διόνυσος
ὁ θεὸς ὁμαρτεῖ, πρόσθεν ὢν οὐκ εὐμενής,
ἔνσπονδος ἡμῖν· νῦν δ᾽ ὁρᾷς ἃ χρή σ᾽ ὁρᾶν.

Πενθεύς
τί φαίνομαι δῆτ᾽; οὐχὶ τὴν Ἰνοῦς στάσιν
ἢ τὴν Ἀγαύης ἑστάναι, μητρός γ᾽ ἐμῆς;

Διόνυσος
αὐτὰς ἐκείνας εἰσορᾶν δοκῶ σ᾽ ὁρῶν.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐξ ἕδρας σοι πλόκαμος ἐξέστηχ᾽ ὅδε,
οὐχ ὡς ἐγώ νιν ὑπὸ μίτρᾳ καθήρμοσα.

Πενθεύς
ἔνδον προσείων αὐτὸν ἀνασείων τ᾽ ἐγὼ

καὶ βακχιάζων ἐξ ἕδρας μεθώρμισα.

Διόνυσος
ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸν ἡμεῖς, οἷς σε θεραπεύειν μέλει,
πάλιν καταστελοῦμεν· ἀλλ᾽ ὄρθου κάρα.

Πενθεύς
ἰδού, σὺ κόσμει· σοὶ γὰρ ἀνακείμεσθα δή.

Διόνυσος
ζῶναί τέ σοι χαλῶσι κοὐχ ἑξῆς πέπλων
στολίδες ὑπὸ σφυροῖσι τείνουσιν σέθεν.

Πενθεύς
κἀμοὶ δοκοῦσι παρά γε δεξιὸν πόδα·
τἀνθένδε δ᾽ ὀρθῶς παρὰ τένοντ᾽ ἔχει πέπλος.

Διόνυσος
ἦ πού με τῶν σῶν πρῶτον ἡγήσῃ φίλων,
ὅταν παρὰ λόγον σώφρονας βάκχας ἴδῃς.

Πενθεύς
πότερα δὲ θύρσον δεξιᾷ λαβὼν χερὶ
ἢ τῇδε, βάκχῃ μᾶλλον εἰκασθήσομαι;

Διόνυσος
ἐν δεξιᾷ χρὴ χἅμα δεξιῷ ποδὶ
αἴρειν νιν· αἰνῶ δ᾽ ὅτι μεθέστηκας φρενῶν.

Πενθεύς
ἆρ᾽ ἂν δυναίμην τὰς Κιθαιρῶνος πτυχὰς
αὐταῖσι βάκχαις τοῖς ἐμοῖς ὤμοις φέρειν;

Διόνυσος
δύναι᾽ ἄν, εἰ βούλοιο· τὰς δὲ πρὶν φρένας
οὐκ εἶχες ὑγιεῖς, νῦν δ᾽ ἔχεις οἵας σε δεῖ.

Πενθεύς
μοχλοὺς φέρωμεν; ἢ χεροῖν ἀνασπάσω
κορυφαῖς ὑποβαλὼν ὦμον ἢ βραχίονα;

Διόνυσος
μὴ σύ γε τὰ Νυμφῶν διολέσῃς ἱδρύματα
καὶ Πανὸς ἕδρας ἔνθ᾽ ἔχει συρίγματα.

Πενθεύς
καλῶς ἔλεξας· οὐ σθένει νικητέον
γυναῖκας· ἐλάταισιν δ᾽ ἐμὸν κρύψω δέμας.

Διόνυσος
κρύψῃ σὺ κρύψιν ἥν σε κρυφθῆναι χρεών,
ἐλθόντα δόλιον μαινάδων κατάσκοπον.

Πενθεύς
καὶ μὴν δοκῶ σφᾶς ἐν λόχμαις ὄρνιθας ὡς
λέκτρων ἔχεσθαι φιλτάτοις ἐν ἔρκεσιν.

Διόνυσος
οὐκοῦν ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸ τοῦτ᾽ ἀποστέλλῃ φύλαξ·
λήψῃ δ᾽ ἴσως σφᾶς, ἢν σὺ μὴ ληφθῇς πάρος.

Πενθεύς
κόμιζε διὰ μέσης με Θηβαίας χθονός·
μόνος γὰρ αὐτῶν εἰμ᾽ ἀνὴρ τολμῶν τόδε.

Διόνυσος
μόνος σὺ πόλεως τῆσδ᾽ ὑπερκάμνεις, μόνος·
τοιγάρ σ᾽ ἀγῶνες ἀναμένουσιν οὓς ἐχρῆν.
ἕπου δέ· πομπὸς [δ᾽] εἶμ᾽ ἐγὼ σωτήριος,
κεῖθεν δ᾽ ἀπάξει σ᾽ ἄλλος.

Πενθεύς
ἡ τεκοῦσά γε.

Διόνυσος
ἐπίσημον ὄντα πᾶσιν.

Πενθεύς
ἐπὶ τόδ᾽ ἔρχομαι.

Διόνυσος
φερόμενος ἥξεις . . .

Πενθεύς
ἁβρότητ᾽ ἐμὴν λέγεις.

Διόνυσος
ἐν χερσὶ μητρός.

Πενθεύς
καὶ τρυφᾶν μ᾽ ἀναγκάσεις.

Διόνυσος
τρυφάς γε τοιάσδε.

Πενθεύς
ἀξίων μὲν ἅπτομαι.

Διόνυσος
δεινὸς σὺ δεινὸς κἀπὶ δείν᾽ ἔρχῃ πάθη,
ὥστ᾽ οὐρανῷ στηρίζον εὑρήσεις κλέος.
ἔκτειν᾽, Ἀγαύη, χεῖρας αἵ θ᾽ ὁμόσποροι
Κάδμου θυγατέρες· τὸν νεανίαν ἄγω
τόνδ᾽ εἰς ἀγῶνα μέγαν, ὁ νικήσων δ᾽ ἐγὼ
καὶ Βρόμιος ἔσται. τἄλλα δ᾽ αὐτὸ σημανεῖ.

Χορός
ἴτε θοαὶ Λύσσας κύνες ἴτ᾽ εἰς ὄρος,
θίασον ἔνθ᾽ ἔχουσι Κάδμου κόραι,
ἀνοιστρήσατέ νιν
ἐπὶ τὸν ἐν γυναικομίμῳ στολᾷ
λυσσώδη κατάσκοπον μαινάδων.

μάτηρ πρῶτά νιν λευρᾶς ἀπὸ πέτρας
ἢ σκόλοπος ὄψεται
δοκεύοντα, μαινάσιν δ᾽ ἀπύσει·
Τίς ὅδ᾽ ὀρειδρόμων
μαστὴρ Καδμείων ἐς ὄρος ἐς ὄρος ἔμολ᾽
ἔμολεν, ὦ βάκχαι; τίς ἄρα νιν ἔτεκεν;
οὐ γὰρ ἐξ αἵματος
γυναικῶν ἔφυ, λεαίνας δέ τινος
ὅδ᾽ ἢ Γοργόνων Λιβυσσᾶν γένος.
ἴτω δίκα φανερός, ἴτω ξιφηφόρος
φονεύουσα λαιμῶν διαμπὰξ
τὸν ἄθεον ἄνομον ἄδικον Ἐχίονος
γόνον γηγενῆ.
ὃς ἀδίκῳ γνώμᾳ παρανόμῳ τ᾽ ὀργᾷ
περὶ <σὰ> Βάκχι᾽, ὄργια ματρός τε σᾶς
μανείσᾳ πραπίδι
παρακόπῳ τε λήματι στέλλεται,
τἀνίκατον ὡς κρατήσων βίᾳ,
γνωμᾶν σωφρόνα θάνατος ἀπροφάσι-
στος ἐς τὰ θεῶν ἔφυ·
βροτείως τ᾽ ἔχειν ἄλυπος βίος.
τὸ σοφὸν οὐ φθονῶ·
χαίρω θηρεύουσα· τὰ δ᾽ ἔτερα μεγάλα
φανερά τ᾽· ὤ, νάει<ν> ἐπὶ τὰ καλὰ βίον,
ἦμαρ ἐς νύκτα τ᾽ εὐ-
αγοῦντ᾽ εὐσεβεῖν, τὰ δ᾽ ἔξω νόμιμα
δίκας ἐκβαλόντα τιμᾶν θεούς.
ἴτω δίκα φανερός, ἴτω ξιφηφόρος
φονεύουσα λαιμῶν διαμπὰξ
τὸν ἄθεον ἄνομον ἄδικον Ἐχίονος
τόκον γηγενῆ.
φάνηθι ταῦρος ἢ πολύκρανος ἰδεῖν
δράκων ἢ πυριφλέγων ὁρᾶσθαι λέων.
ἴθ᾽, ὦ Βάκχε, θηραγρευτᾷ βακχᾶν
γελῶντι προσώπῳ περίβαλε βρόχον
θανάσιμον ὑπ᾽ ἀγέλαν πεσόν-
τι τὰν μαινάδων.

Ἄγγελος Β
ὦ δῶμ᾽ ὃ πρίν ποτ᾽ εὐτύχεις ἀν᾽ Ἑλλάδα,
Σιδωνίου γέροντος, ὃς τὸ γηγενὲς
δράκοντος ἔσπειρ᾽ Ὄφεος ἐν γαίᾳ θέρος,
ὥς σε στενάζω, δοῦλος ὢν μέν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως
[χρηστοῖσι δούλοις συμφορὰ τὰ δεσποτῶν].

Χορός
τί δ᾽ ἔστιν; ἐκ βακχῶν τι μηνύεις νέον;

Ἄγγελος
Πενθεὺς ὄλωλεν, παῖς Ἐχίονος πατρός.

Χορός
ὦναξ Βρόμιε, θεὸς φαίνῃ μέγας.

Ἄγγελος
πῶς φῄς; τί τοῦτ᾽ ἔλεξας; ἦ ᾽πὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖς
χαίρεις κακῶς πράσσουσι δεσπόταις, γύναι;

Χορός
εὐάζω ξένα μέλεσι βαρβάροις·
οὐκέτι γὰρ δεσμῶν ὑπὸ φόβῳ πτήσσω.

Ἄγγελος
Θήβας δ᾽ ἀνάνδρους ὦδ᾽ ἄγεις . . .
*

Χορός
ὁ Διόνυσος ὁ Διόνυσος, οὐ Θῆβαι
κράτος ἔχουσ᾽ ἐμόν.

Ἄγγελος
συγγνωστὰ μέν σοι, πλὴν ἐπ᾽ ἐξειργασμένοις
κακοῖσι χαίρειν, ὦ γυναῖκες, οὐ καλόν.

Χορός
ἔννεπέ μοι, φράσον, τίνι μόρῳ θνῄσκει

ἄδικος ἄδικά τ᾽ ἐκπορίζων ἀνήρ;

Ἄγγελος
ἐπεὶ θεράπνας τῆσδε Θηβαίας χθονὸς
λιπόντες ἐξέβημεν Ἀσωποῦ ῥοάς,
λέπας Κιθαιρώνειον εἰσεβάλλομεν
Πενθεύς τε κἀγώ — δεσπότῃ γὰρ εἰπόμην —
ξένος θ᾽ ὃς ἡμῖν πομπὸς ἦν θεωρίας.
πρῶτον μὲν οὖν ποιηρὸν ἵζομεν νάπος,
τά τ᾽ ἐκ ποδῶν σιγηλὰ καὶ γλώσσης ἄπο
σῴζοντες, ὡς ὁρῷμεν οὐχ ὁρώμενοι.
ἦν δ᾽ ἄγκος ἀμφίκρημνον, ὕδασι διάβροχον,
πεύκαισι συσκιάζον, ἔνθα μαινάδες
καθῆντ᾽ ἔχουσαι χεῖρας ἐν τερπνοῖς πόνοις.
αἳ μὲν γὰρ αὐτῶν θύρσον ἐκλελοιπότα
κισσῷ κομήτην αὖθις ἐξανέστεφον,
αἳ δ᾽, ἐκλιποῦσαι ποικίλ᾽ ὡς πῶλοι ζυγά,
βακχεῖον ἀντέκλαζον ἀλλήλαις μέλος.
Πενθεὺς δ᾽ ὁ τλήμων θῆλυν οὐχ ὁρῶν ὄχλον
ἔλεξε τοιάδ᾽· Ὦ ξέν᾽, οὗ μὲν ἕσταμεν,
οὐκ ἐξικνοῦμαι μαινάδων ὄσσοις νόθων·
ὄχθων δ᾽ ἔπ᾽, ἀμβὰς ἐς ἐλάτην ὑψαύχενα,
ἴδοιμ᾽ ἂν ὀρθῶς μαινάδων αἰσχρουργίαν.
τοὐντεῦθεν ἤδη τοῦ ξένου <τὸ> θαῦμ᾽ ὁρῶ·
λαβὼν γὰρ ἐλάτης οὐράνιον ἄκρον κλάδον
κατῆγεν, ἦγεν, ἦγεν ἐς μέλαν πέδον·
κυκλοῦτο δ᾽ ὥστε τόξον ἢ κυρτὸς τροχὸς
τόρνῳ γραφόμενος περιφορὰν ἕλκει δρόμον·
ὣς κλῶν᾽ ὄρειον ὁ ξένος χεροῖν ἄγων
ἔκαμπτεν ἐς γῆν, ἔργματ᾽ οὐχὶ θνητὰ δρῶν.
Πενθέα δ᾽ ἱδρύσας ἐλατίνων ὄζων ἔπι,
ὀρθὸν μεθίει διὰ χερῶν βλάστημ᾽ ἄνω
ἀτρέμα, φυλάσσων μὴ ἀναχαιτίσειέ νιν,
ὀρθὴ δ᾽ ἐς ὀρθὸν αἰθέρ᾽ ἐστηρίζετο,
ἔχουσα νώτοις δεσπότην ἐφήμενον·
ὤφθη δὲ μᾶλλον ἢ κατεῖδε μαινάδας.
ὅσον γὰρ οὔπω δῆλος ἦν θάσσων ἄνω,

καὶ τὸν ξένον μὲν οὐκέτ᾽ εἰσορᾶν παρῆν,
ἐκ δ᾽ αἰθέρος φωνή τις, ὡς μὲν εἰκάσαι
Διόνυσος, ἀνεβόησεν· Ἴ Ὦ νεάνιδες,
ἄγω τὸν ὑμᾶς κἀμὲ τἀμά τ᾽ ὄργια
γέλων τιθέμενον· ἀλλὰ τιμωρεῖσθέ νιν.
καὶ ταῦθ᾽ ἅμ᾽ ἠγόρευε καὶ πρὸς οὐρανὸν
καὶ γαῖαν ἐστήριξε φῶς σεμνοῦ πυρός.
σίγησε δ᾽ αἰθήρ, σῖγα δ᾽ ὕλιμος νάπη
φύλλ᾽ εἶχε, θηρῶν δ᾽ οὐκ ἂν ἤκουσας βοήν.
αἳ δ᾽ ὠσὶν ἠχὴν οὐ σαφῶς δεδεγμέναι
ἔστησαν ὀρθαὶ καὶ διήνεγκαν κόρας.
ὃ δ᾽ αὖθις ἐπεκέλευσεν· ὡς δ᾽ ἐγνώρισαν
σαφῆ κελευσμὸν Βακχίου Κάδμου κόραι,
ᾔξαν πελείας ὠκύτητ᾽ οὐχ ἧσσονες
ποδῶν τρέχουσαι συντόνοις δραμήμασι,
μήτηρ Ἀγαύη σύγγονοί θ᾽ ὁμόσποροι
πᾶσαί τε βάκχαι· διὰ δὲ χειμάρρου νάπης
ἀγμῶν τ᾽ ἐπήδων θεοῦ πνοαῖσιν ἐμμανεῖς.
ὡς δ᾽ εἶδον ἐλάτῃ δεσπότην ἐφήμενον,
πρῶτον μὲν αὐτοῦ χερμάδας κραταιβόλους
ἔρριπτον, ἀντίπυργον ἐπιβᾶσαι πέτραν,
ὄζοισί τ᾽ ἐλατίνοισιν ἠκοντίζετο.
ἄλλαι δὲ θύρσους ἵεσαν δι᾽ αἰθέρος
Πενθέως, στόχον δύστηνον· ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἤνυτον.
κρεῖσσον γὰρ ὕψος τῆς προθυμίας ἔχων
καθῆσθ᾽ ὁ τλήμων, ἀπορίᾳ λελημμένος.
τέλος δὲ δρυΐνους συγκεραυνοῦσαι κλάδους
ῥίζας ἀνεσπάρασσον ἀσιδήροις μοχλοῖς.
ἐπεὶ δὲ μόχθων τέρματ᾽ οὐκ ἐξήνυτον,
ἔλεξ᾽ Ἀγαύη· Φέρε, περιστᾶσαι κύκλῳ
πτόρθου λάβεσθε, μαινάδες, τὸν ἀμβάτην
θῆρ᾽ ὡς ἕλωμεν, μηδ᾽ ἀπαγγείλῃ θεοῦ
χοροὺς κρυφαίους. αἳ δὲ μυρίαν χέρα
προσέθεσαν ἐλάτῃ κἀξανέσπασαν χθονός·
ὑψοῦ δὲ θάσσων ὑψόθεν χαμαιριφὴς
πίπτει πρὸς οὖδας μυρίοις οἰμώγμασιν
Πενθεύς· κακοῦ γὰρ ἐγγὺς ὢν ἐμάνθανεν.

πρώτη δὲ μήτηρ ἦρξεν ἱερέα φόνου
καὶ προσπίτνει νιν· ὃ δὲ μίτραν κόμης ἄπο
ἔρριψεν, ὡς νιν γνωρίσασα μὴ κτάνοι
τλήμων Ἀγαύη, καὶ λέγει, παρηίδος
ψαύων· Ἐγώ τοι, μῆτερ, εἰμί, παῖς σέθεν
Πενθεύς, ὃν ἔτεκες ἐν δόμοις Ἐχίονος·
οἴκτιρε δ᾽ ὦ μῆτέρ με, μηδὲ ταῖς ἐμαῖς
ἁμαρτίαισι παῖδα σὸν κατακτάνῃς.
ἣ δ᾽ ἀφρὸν ἐξιεῖσα καὶ διαστρόφους
κόρας ἑλίσσουσ᾽, οὐ φρονοῦσ᾽ ἃ χρὴ φρονεῖν,
ἐκ Βακχίου κατείχετ᾽, οὐδ᾽ ἔπειθέ νιν.
λαβοῦσα δ᾽ ὠλένης ἀριστερὰν χέρα,
πλευραῖσιν ἀντιβᾶσα τοῦ δυσδαίμονος
ἀπεσπάραξεν ὦμον, οὐχ ὑπὸ σθένους,
ἀλλ᾽ ὁ θεὸς εὐμάρειαν ἐπεδίδου χεροῖν·
Ἰνὼ δὲ τἀπὶ θάτερ᾽ ἐξειργάζετο,
ῥηγνῦσα σάρκας, Αὐτονόη τ᾽ ὄχλος τε πᾶς
ἐπεῖχε βακχῶν· ἦν δὲ πᾶσ᾽ ὁμοῦ βοή,
ὃ μὲν στενάζων ὅσον ἐτύγχαν᾽ ἐμπνέων,
αἱ δ᾽ ἠλάλαζον. ἔφερε δ᾽ ἣ μὲν ὠλένην,
ἣ δ᾽ ἴχνος αὐταῖς ἀρβύλαις· γυμνοῦντο δὲ
πλευραὶ σπαραγμοῖς· πᾶσα δ᾽ ἡματωμένη
χεῖρας διεσφαίριζε σάρκα Πενθέως.
κεῖται δὲ χωρὶς σῶμα, τὸ μὲν ὑπὸ στύφλοις
πέτραις, τὸ δ᾽ ὕλης ἐν βαθυξύλῳ φόβῃ,
οὐ ῥᾴδιον ζήτημα· κρᾶτα δ᾽ ἄθλιον,
ὅπερ λαβοῦσα τυγχάνει μήτηρ χεροῖν,
πήξασ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἄκρον θύρσον ὡς ὀρεστέρου
φέρει λέοντος διὰ Κιθαιρῶνος μέσου,
λιποῦσ᾽ ἀδελφὰς ἐν χοροῖσι μαινάδων.
χωρεῖ δὲ θήρᾳ δυσπότμῳ γαυρουμένη
τειχέων ἔσω τῶνδ᾽, ἀνακαλοῦσα Βάκχιον
τὸν ξυγκύναγον, τὸν ξυνεργάτην ἄγρας,
τὸν καλλίνικον, ᾧ δάκρυα νικηφορεῖ.
ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν <τῇδ᾽> ἐκποδὼν τῇ ξυμφορᾷ
ἄπειμ᾽, Ἀγαύην πρὶν μολεῖν πρὸς δώματα.
τὸ σωφρονεῖν δὲ καὶ σέβειν τὰ τῶν θεῶν

κάλλιστον· οἶμαι δ᾽ αὐτὸ καὶ σοφώτατον
θνητοῖσιν εἶναι κτῆμα τοῖσι χρωμένοις.

Χορός
ἀναχορεύσωμεν Βάκχιον,
ἀναβοάσωμεν ξυμφορὰν
τὰν τοῦ δράκοντος Πενθέος ἐκγενέτα·
ὃς τὰν θηλυγενῆ στολὰν
νάρθηκά τε, πιστὸν Ἄιδαν,
ἔλαβεν εὔθυρσον,
ταῦρον προηγητῆρα συμφορᾶς ἔχων.
βάκχαι Καδμεῖαι,
τὸν καλλίνικον κλεινὸν ἐξεπράξατε
ἐς στόνον, ἐς δάκρυα.
καλὸς ἀγών, χέρ᾽ αἵματι στάζουσαν
περιβαλεῖν τέκνου.
ἀλλ᾽, εἰσορῶ γὰρ ἐς δόμους ὁρμωμένην
Πενθέως Ἀγαύην μητέρ᾽ ἐν διαστρόφοις
ὄσσοις, δέχεσθε κῶμον εὐίου θεοῦ.

Ἀγαύη
Ἀσιάδες βάκχαι —

Χορός
τί μ᾽ ὀροθύνεις, ὦ;

Ἀγαύη
φέρομεν ἐξ ὀρέων
ἔλικα νεότομον ἐπὶ μέλαθρα,
μακάριον θήραν.

Χορός
ὁρῶ καί σε δέξομαι σύγκωμον.

Ἀγαύη
ἔμαρψα τόνδ᾽ ἄνευ βρόχων
<λέοντος ἀγροτέρου> νέον ἶνιν·
ὡς ὁρᾶν πάρα.

Χορός
πόθεν ἐρημίας;

Ἀγαύη
Κιθαιρὼν . . .

Χορός
Κιθαιρών;

Ἀγαύη
κατεφόνευσέ νιν.

Χορός
τίς ἁ βαλοῦσα;

Ἀγαύη
πρῶτον ἐμὸν τὸ γέρας.
μάκαιρ᾽ Ἀγαύη κληζόμεθ᾽ ἐν θιάσοις. 1180

Χορός
τίς ἄλλα;

Ἀγαύη
τὰ Κάδμου . . .

Χορός
τί Κάδμου;

Ἀγαύη
γένεθλα
μετ᾽ ἐμὲ μετ᾽ ἐμὲ τοῦδ᾽ 1182b
ἔθιγε θηρός· εὐτυχής γ᾽ ἆδ᾽ ἄγρα.

Χορός
*

Ἀγαύη
μέτεχέ νυν θοίνας.

Χορός
τί; μετέχω, τλᾶμον;

Ἀγαύη
νέος ὁ μόσχος ἅρ-
τι γένυν ὑπὸ κόρυθ᾽ ἁπαλότριχα
κατάκομον θάλλει.

Χορός
πρέπει γ᾽ ὥστε θὴρ ἄγραυλος φόβῃ.

Ἀγαύη
ὁ Βάκχιος κυναγέτας
σοφὸς σοφῶς ἀνέπηλ᾽ ἐπὶ θῆρα
τόνδε μαινάδας.

Χορός
ὁ γὰρ ἄναξ ἀγρεύς.

Ἀγαύη
ἐπαινεῖς;

Χορός
ἐπαινῶ.

Ἀγαύη
τάχα δὲ Καδμεῖοι . . .

Χορός
καὶ παῖς γε Πενθεὺς . . .

Ἀγαύη
ματέρ᾽ ἐπαινέσεται,
λαβοῦσαν ἄγραν τάνδε λεοντοφυῆ.

Χορός
περισσάν.

Ἀγαύη
περισσῶς.

Χορός
ἀγάλλῃ;

Ἀγαύη
γέγηθα,
μεγάλα μεγάλα καὶ 1198b
φανερὰ τᾷδ᾽ ἄγρᾳ κατειργασμένα.

Χορός
δεῖξόν νυν, ὦ τάλαινα, σὴν νικηφόρον 1200
ἀστοῖσιν ἄγραν ἣν φέρουσ᾽ ἐλήλυθας.

Ἀγαύη
ὦ καλλίπυργον ἄστυ Θηβαίας χθονὸς
ναίοντες, ἔλθεθ᾽ ὡς ἴδητε τήνδ᾽ ἄγραν,
Κάδμου θυγατέρες θηρὸς ἣν ἠγρεύσαμεν,
οὐκ ἀγκυλητοῖς Θεσσαλῶν στοχάσμασιν, 1205
οὐ δικτύοισιν, ἀλλὰ λευκοπήχεσι
χειρῶν ἀκμαῖσιν. κᾆτα κομπάζειν χρεὼν
καὶ λογχοποιῶν ὄργανα κτᾶσθαι μάτην;
ἡμεῖς δέ γ᾽ αὐτῇ χειρὶ τόνδε θ᾽ εἵλομεν,
χωρίς τε θηρὸς ἄρθρα διεφορήσαμεν. 1210
ποῦ μοι πατὴρ ὁ πρέσβυς; ἐλθέτω πέλας.
Πενθεύς τ᾽ ἐμὸς παῖς ποῦ ᾽στιν; αἰρέσθω λαβὼν
πηκτῶν πρὸς οἴκους κλιμάκων προσαμβάσεις,
ὡς πασσαλεύσῃ κρᾶτα τριγλύφοις τόδε
λέοντος ὃν πάρειμι θηράσας᾽ ἐγώ. 1215

Κάδμος
ἕπεσθέ μοι φέροντες ἄθλιον βάρος
Πενθέως, ἕπεσθε, πρόσπολοι, δόμων πάρος,
οὗ σῶμα μοχθῶν μυρίοις ζητήμασιν
φέρω τόδ᾽, εὑρὼν ἐν Κιθαιρῶνος πτυχαῖς
διασπαρακτόν, κοὐδὲν ἐν ταὐτῷ πέδῳ 1220
λαβών, ἐν ὕλῃ κείμενον δυσευρέτῳ.

ἤκουσα γάρ του θυγατέρων τολμήματα,
ἤδη κατ᾽ ἄστυ τειχέων ἔσω βεβὼς
σὺν τῷ γέροντι Τειρεσίᾳ Βακχῶν πάρα·
πάλιν δὲ κάμψας εἰς ὄρος κομίζομαι
τὸν κατθανόντα παῖδα Μαινάδων ὕπο.
καὶ τὴν μὲν Ἀκτέων᾽ Ἀρισταίῳ ποτὲ
τεκοῦσαν εἶδον Αὐτονόην Ἰνώ θ᾽ ἅμα
ἔτ᾽ ἀμφὶ δρυμοὺς οἰστροπλῆγας ἀθλίας,
τὴν δ᾽ εἶπέ τίς μοι δεῦρο βακχείῳ ποδὶ
στείχειν Ἀγαύην, οὐδ᾽ ἄκραντ᾽ ἠκούσαμεν·
λεύσσω γὰρ αὐτήν, ὄψιν οὐκ εὐδαίμονα.

Ἀγαύη
πάτερ, μέγιστον κομπάσαι πάρεστί σοι,
πάντων ἀρίστας θυγατέρας σπεῖραι μακρῷ
θνητῶν· ἁπάσας εἶπον, ἐξόχως δ᾽ ἐμέ,
ἣ τὰς παρ᾽ ἱστοῖς ἐκλιποῦσα κερκίδας
ἐς μείζον᾽ ἦκω, θῆρας ἀγρεύειν χεροῖν.
φέρω δ᾽ ἐν ὠλέναισιν, ὡς ὁρᾷς, τάδε
λαβοῦσα τἀριστεῖα, σοῖσι πρὸς δόμοις
ὡς ἀγκρεμασθῇ· σὺ δέ, πάτερ, δέξαι χεροῖν·
γαυρούμενος δὲ τοῖς ἐμοῖς ἀγρεύμασιν
κάλει φίλους ἐς δαῖτα· μακάριος γὰρ εἶ,
μακάριος, ἡμῶν τοιάδ᾽ ἐξειργασμένων.

Κάδμος
ὦ πένθος οὐ μετρητὸν οὐδ᾽ οἷόν τ᾽ ἰδεῖν,
φόνον ταλαίναις χερσὶν ἐξειργασμένων.
καλὸν τὸ θῦμα καταβαλοῦσα δαίμοσιν
ἐπὶ δαῖτα Θήβας τάσδε κἀμὲ παρακαλεῖς.
οἴμοι κακῶν μὲν πρῶτα σῶν, ἔπειτ᾽ ἐμῶν·
ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἡμᾶς ἐνδίκως μέν, ἀλλ᾽ ἄγαν,
Βρόμιος ἄναξ ἀπώλεσ᾽ οἰκεῖος γεγώς.

Ἀγαύη
ὡς δύσκολον τὸ γῆρας ἀνθρώποις ἔφυ
ἔν τ᾽ ὄμμασι σκυθρωπόν. εἴθε παῖς ἐμὸς

εὔθηρος εἴη, μητρὸς εἰκασθεὶς τρόποις,
ὅτ᾽ ἐν νεανίαισι Θηβαίοις ἅμα
θηρῶν ὀριγνῷτ᾽· ἀλλὰ θεομαχεῖν μόνον
οἷός τ᾽ ἐκεῖνος. νουθετητέος, πάτερ,
σοὐστίν. τίς αὐτὸν δεῦρ᾽ ἂν ὄψιν εἰς ἐμὴν
καλέσειεν, ὡς ἴδῃ με τὴν εὐδαίμονα;

Κάδμος
φεῦ φεῦ· φρονήσασαι μὲν οἷ᾽ ἐδράσατε
ἀλγήσετ᾽ ἄλγος δεινόν· εἰ δὲ διὰ τέλους
ἐν τῷδ᾽ ἀεὶ μενεῖτ᾽ ἐν ᾧ καθέστατε,
οὐκ εὐτυχοῦσαι δόξετ᾽ οὐχὶ δυστυχεῖν.

Ἀγαύη
τί δ᾽ οὐ καλῶς τῶνδ᾽ ἢ τί λυπηρῶς ἔχει;

Κάδμος
πρῶτον μὲν ἐς τόνδ᾽ αἰθέρ᾽ ὄμμα σὸν μέθες.

Ἀγαύη
ἰδού· τί μοι τόνδ᾽ ἐξυπεῖπας εἰσορᾶν;

Κάδμος
ἔθ᾽ αὐτὸς ἢ σοι μεταβολὰς ἔχειν δοκεῖ;

Ἀγαύη
λαμπρότερος ἢ πρὶν καὶ διειπετέστερος.

Κάδμος
τὸ δὲ πτοηθὲν τόδ᾽ ἔτι σῇ ψυχῇ πάρα;

Ἀγαύη
οὐκ οἶδα τοὔπος τοῦτο. γίγνομαι δέ πως
ἔννους, μετασταθεῖσα τῶν πάρος φρενῶν.

Κάδμος
κλύοις ἂν οὖν τι κἀποκρίναι᾽ ἂν σαφῶς;

Ἀγαύη
ὡς ἐκλέλησμαί γ᾽ ἃ πάρος εἴπομεν, πάτερ.
Κάδμος
ἐς ποῖον ἦλθες οἶκον ὑμεναίων μέτα;

Ἀγαύη
Σπαρτῷ μ᾽ ἔδωκας, ὡς λέγουσ᾽, Ἐχίονι.

Κάδμος
τίς οὖν ἐν οἴκοις παῖς ἐγένετο σῷ πόσει;

Ἀγαύη
Πενθεύς, ἐμῇ τε καὶ πατρὸς κοινωνίᾳ.

Κάδμος
τίνος πρόσωπον δῆτ᾽ ἐν ἀγκάλαις ἔχεις;

Ἀγαύη
λέοντος, ὥς γ᾽ ἔφασκον αἱ θηρώμεναι.

Κάδμος
σκέψαι νυν ὀρθῶς· βραχὺς ὁ μόχθος εἰσιδεῖν.

Ἀγαύη
ἔα, τί λεύσσω; τί φέρομαι τόδ᾽ ἐν χεροῖν;

Κάδμος
ἄθρησον αὐτὸ καὶ σαφέστερον μάθε.

Ἀγαύη
ὁρῶ μέγιστον ἄλγος ἡ τάλαιν᾽ ἐγώ.

Κάδμος
μῶν σοι λέοντι φαίνεται προσεικέναι;

Ἀγαύη
οὔκ, ἀλλὰ Πενθέως ἡ τάλαιν᾽ ἔχω κάρα.

Κάδμος
ᾠμωγμένον γε πρόσθεν ἢ σὲ γνωρίσαι.

Ἀγαύη
τίς ἔκτανέν νιν; — πῶς ἐμὰς ἦλθεν χέρας;

Κάδμος
δύστην᾽ ἀλήθει᾽, ὡς ἐν οὐ καιρῷ πάρει.

Ἀγαύη
λέγ᾽, ὡς τὸ μέλλον καρδία πήδημ᾽ ἔχει.

Κάδμος
σύ νιν κατέκτας καὶ κασίγνηται σέθεν.

Ἀγαύη
ποῦ δ᾽ ὤλετ᾽; ἦ κατ᾽ οἶκον; ἢ ποίοις τόποις;

Κάδμος
οὗπερ πρὶν Ἀκτέωνα διέλαχον κύνες.

Ἀγαύη
τί δ᾽ ἐς Κιθαιρῶν᾽ ἦλθε δυσδαίμων ὅδε;

Κάδμος
ἐκερτόμει θεὸν σάς τε βακχείας μολών.

Ἀγαύη
ἡμεῖς δ᾽ ἐκεῖσε τίνι τρόπῳ κατήραμεν;

Κάδμος
ἐμάνητε, πᾶσά τ᾽ ἐξεβακχεύθη πόλις.

Ἀγαύη
Διόνυσος ἡμᾶς ὤλεσ᾽, ἄρτι μανθάνω.

Κάδμος
ὕβριν <γ᾽> ὑβρισθείς· θεὸν γὰρ οὐχ ἡγεῖσθέ νιν.

Ἀγαύη
τὸ φίλτατον δὲ σῶμα ποῦ παιδός, πάτερ;

Κάδμος
ἐγὼ μόλις τόδ᾽ ἐξερευνήσας φέρω.

Ἀγαύη
ἦ πᾶν ἐν ἄρθροις συγκεκλημένον καλῶς;

Κάδμος
*

Ἀγαύη
Πενθεῖ δὲ τί μέρος ἀφροσύνης προσῆκ᾽ ἐμῆς;

Κάδμος
ὑμῖν ἐγένεθ᾽ ὅμοιος, οὐ σέβων θεόν.
τοιγὰρ συνῆψε πάντας ἐς μίαν βλάβην,
ὑμᾶς τε τόνδε θ᾽, ὥστε διολέσαι δόμους
κἄμ᾽, ὅστις ἄτεκνος ἀρσένων παίδων γεγὼς
τῆς σῆς τόδ᾽ ἔρνος, ὦ τάλαινα, νηδύος
αἴσχιστα καὶ κάκιστα κατθανόνθ᾽ ὁρῶ,
ᾧ δῶμ᾽ ἀνέβλεφ᾽ — ὃς συνεῖχες, ὦ τέκνον,
τοὐμὸν μέλαθρον, παιδὸς ἐξ ἐμῆς γεγώς,
πόλει τε τάρβος ἦσθα· τὸν γέροντα δὲ
οὐδεὶς ὑβρίζειν ἤθελ᾽ εἰσορῶν τὸ σὸν
κάρα· δίκην γὰρ ἀξίαν ἐλάμβανες.
νῦν δ᾽ ἐκ δόμων ἄτιμος ἐκβεβλήσομαι
ὁ Κάδμος ὁ μέγας, ὃς τὸ Θηβαίων γένος
ἔσπειρα κἀξήμησα κάλλιστον θέρος.
ὦ φίλτατ᾽ ἀνδρῶν — καὶ γὰρ οὐκέτ᾽ ὢν ὅμως
τῶν φιλτάτων ἔμοιγ᾽ ἀριθμήσῃ, τέκνον —
οὐκέτι γενείου τοῦδε θιγγάνων χερί,
τὸν <μητρὸς> αὐδῶν <πατέρα> προσπτύξῃ, τέκνον,
λέγων· Τίς ἀδικεῖ, τίς σ᾽ ἀτιμάζει, γέρον;
τίς σὴν ταράσσει καρδίαν λυπηρὸς ὤν;
λέγ᾽, ὡς κολάζω τὸν ἀδικοῦντά σ᾽, ὦ πάτερ.
νῦν δ᾽ ἄθλιος μέν εἰμ᾽ ἐγώ, τλήμων δὲ σύ.

οἰκτρὰ δὲ μήτηρ, τλήμονες δὲ σύγγονοι.
εἰ δ᾽ ἔστιν ὅστις δαιμόνων ὑπερφρονεῖ,
ἐς τοῦδ᾽ ἀθρήσας θάνατον ἡγείσθω θεούς.

Χορός
τὸ μὲν σὸν ἀλγῶ, Κάδμε· σὸς δ᾽ ἔχει δίκην
παῖς παιδὸς ἀξίαν μέν, ἀλγεινὴν δὲ σοί.

Ἀγαύη
ὦ πάτερ, ὁρᾷς γὰρ τἄμ᾽ ὅσῳ μετεστράφη ...
*

Διόνυσος
δράκων γενήσῃ μεταβαλών, δάμαρ τε σὴ
ἐκθηριωθεῖσ᾽ ὄφεος ἀλλάξει τύπον,
ἣν Ἄρεος ἔσχες Ἁρμονίαν θνητὸς γεγώς.
ὄχον δὲ μόσχων, χρησμὸς ὡς λέγει Διός,
ἐλᾷς μετ᾽ ἀλόχου, βαρβάρων ἡγούμενος.
πολλὰς δὲ πέρσεις ἀναρίθμῳ στρατεύματι
πόλεις· ὅταν δὲ Λοξίου χρηστήριον
διαρπάσωσι, νόστον ἄθλιον πάλιν
σχήσουσι· σὲ δ᾽ Ἄρης Ἁρμονίαν τε ῥύσεται
μακάρων τ᾽ ἐς αἶαν σὸν καθιδρύσει βίον.
ταῦτ᾽ οὐχὶ θνητοῦ πατρὸς ἐκγεγὼς λέγω
Διόνυσος, ἀλλὰ Ζηνός· εἰ δὲ σωφρονεῖν
ἔγνωθ᾽, ὅτ᾽ οὐκ ἠθέλετε, τὸν Διὸς γόνον
εὐδαιμονεῖτ᾽ ἂν σύμμαχον κεκτημένοι.

Κάδμος
Διόνυσε, λισσόμεσθά σ᾽, ἠδικήκαμεν.

Διόνυσος
ὄψ᾽ ἐμάθεθ᾽ ἡμᾶς, ὅτε δὲ χρῆν, οὐκ ᾔδετε.

Κάδμος
ἐγνώκαμεν ταῦτ᾽· ἀλλ᾽ ἐπεξέρχῃ λίαν.

Διόνυσος
καὶ γὰρ πρὸς ὑμῶν θεὸς γεγὼς ὑβριζόμην.

Κάδμος
ὀργὰς πρέπει θεοὺς οὐχ ὁμοιοῦσθαι βροτοῖς.

Διόνυσος
πάλαι τάδε Ζεὺς οὑμὸς ἐπένευσεν πατήρ.

Ἀγαύη
αἰαῖ, δέδοκται, πρέσβυ, τλήμονες φυγαί.

Διόνυσος
τί δῆτα μέλλεθ᾽ ἅπερ ἀναγκαίως ἔχει;

Κάδμος
ὦ τέκνον, ὡς ἐς δεινὸν ἤλθομεν κακὸν
<πάντες,> σύ θ᾽ ἡ τάλαινα σύγγονοί τε σαί,
ἐγώ θ᾽ ὁ τλήμων· βαρβάρους ἀφίξομαι
γέρων μέτοικος· ἔτι δέ μοι τὸ θέσφατον
ἐς Ἑλλάδ᾽ ἀγαγεῖν μιγάδα βάρβαρον στρατόν.
καὶ τὴν Ἄρεως παῖδ᾽ Ἁρμονίαν, δάμαρτ᾽ ἐμήν,
δράκων δρακαίνης <φύσιν> ἔχουσαν ἀγρίαν
ἄξω ᾽πὶ βωμοὺς καὶ τάφους Ἑλληνικούς,
ἡγούμενος λόγχαισιν· οὐδὲ παύσομαι
κακῶν ὁ τλήμων, οὐδὲ τὸν καταιβάτην
Ἀχέροντα πλεύσας ἥσυχος γενήσομαι.

Ἀγαύη
ὦ πάτερ, ἐγὼ δὲ σοῦ στερεῖσα φεύξομαι.

Κάδμος
τί μ᾽ ἀμφιβάλλεις χερσίν, ὦ τάλαινα παῖ,
ὄρνις ὅπως κηφῆνα πολιόχρων κύκνος;

Ἀγαύη
ποῖ γὰρ τράπωμαι πατρίδος ἐκβεβλημένη;

Κάδμος
οὐκ οἶδα, τέκνον· μικρὸς ἐπίκουρος πατήρ.

Ἀγαύη
χαῖρ᾽, ὦ μέλαθρον, χαῖρ᾽, ὦ πατρία
πόλις· ἐκλείπω σ᾽ ἐπὶ δυστυχίᾳ
φυγὰς ἐκ θαλάμων.

Κάδμος
στεῖχέ νυν, ὦ παῖ, τὸν Ἀρισταίου ...
*

Ἀγαύη
στένομαί σε, πάτερ.

Κάδμος
κἀγὼ <σέ>, τέκνον,
καὶ σὰς ἐδάκρυσα κασιγνήτας.

Ἀγαύη
δεινῶς γὰρ τάνδ᾽ αἰκείαν
Διόνυσος ἄναξ τοὺς σοὺς εἰς
οἴκους ἔφερεν.

Διόνυσος
καὶ γὰρ ἔπασχον δεινὰ πρὸς ὑμῶν,
ἀγέραστον ἔχων ὄνομ᾽ ἐν Θήβαις.

Ἀγαύη
χαῖρε, πάτερ, μοι.

Κάδμος
χαῖρ᾽, ὦ μελέα
θύγατερ. χαλεπῶς <δ᾽> ἐς τόδ᾽ ἂν ἥκοις.

Ἀγαύη
ἄγετ᾽, ὦ πομποί, με κασιγνήτας
ἵνα συμφυγάδας ληψόμεθ᾽ οἰκτράς.

ἔλθοιμι δ᾽ ὅπου
μήτε Κιθαιρὼν <ἔμ᾽ ἴδοι> μιαρὸς
μήτε Κιθαιρῶν᾽ ὄσσοισιν ἐγώ,
μήθ᾽ ὅθι θύρσου μνῆμ᾽ ἀνάκειται·
Βάκχαις δ᾽ ἄλλαισι μέλοιεν.

Χορός
πολλαὶ μορφαὶ τῶν δαιμονίων,
πολλὰ δ᾽ ἀέλπτως κραίνουσι θεοί·
καὶ τὰ δοκηθέντ᾽ οὐκ ἐτελέσθη,
τῶν δ᾽ ἀδοκήτων πόρον ηὗρε θεός.
τοιόνδ᾽ ἀπέβη τόδε πρᾶγμα.

IPHIGENIA AT AULIS

Ἀγαμέμνων

Ἐγένοντο Λήδᾳ Θεστιάδι τρεῖς παρθένοι,
Φοίβη Κλυταιμήστρα τ᾽, ἐμὴ ξυνάορος,
Ἑλένη τε: ταύτης οἱ τὰ πρῶτ᾽ ὠλβισμένοι
μνηστῆρες ἦλθον Ἑλλάδος νεανίαι.
δειναὶ δ᾽ ἀπειλαὶ καὶ κατ᾽ ἀλλήλων φόνος
ξυνίσταθ᾽, ὅστις μὴ λάβοι τὴν παρθένον.
τὸ πρᾶγμα δ᾽ ἀπόρως εἶχε Τυνδάρεῳ πατρί,
δοῦναί τε μὴ δοῦναί τε, τῆς τύχης ὅπως
ἄψαιτ᾽ ἄριστα. καί νιν εἰσῆλθεν τάδε:
ὅρκους συνάψαι δεξιάς τε συμβαλεῖν
μνηστῆρας ἀλλήλοισι καὶ δι᾽ ἐμπύρων
σπονδὰς καθεῖναι κἀπαράσασθαι τάδε:
ὅτου γυνὴ γένοιτο Τυνδαρὶς κόρη,
τούτῳ ξυναμυνεῖν, εἴ τις ἐκ δόμων λαβὼν
οἴχοιτο τόν τ᾽ ἔχοντ᾽ ἀπωθοίη λέχους,
κἀπιστρατεύσειν καὶ κατασκάψειν πόλιν
Ἕλλην᾽ ὁμοίως βάρβαρόν θ᾽ ὅπλων μέτα.
ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἐπιστώθησαν — εὖ δέ πως γέρων
ὑπῆλθεν αὐτοὺς Τυνδάρεως πυκνῇ φρενί —
δίδωσ᾽ ἑλέσθαι θυγατρὶ μνηστήρων ἕνα,
ὅτου πνοαὶ φέροιεν Ἀφροδίτης φίλαι.
ἣ δ᾽ εἵλεθ᾽, ὅς σφε μήποτ᾽ ὤφελεν λαβεῖν,
Μενέλαον. ἐλθὼν δ᾽ ἐκ Φρυγῶν ὁ τὰς θεὰς
κρίνων ὅδ᾽, ὡς ὁ μῦθος Ἀργείων ἔχει,
Λακεδαίμον᾽, ἀνθηρὸς μὲν εἱμάτων στολῇ
χρυσῷ δὲ λαμπρός, βαρβάρῳ χλιδήματι,
ἐρῶν ἐρῶσαν ᾧχετ᾽ ἐξαναρπάσας
Ἑλένην πρὸς Ἴδης βούσταθμ᾽, ἔκδημον λαβὼν
Μενέλαον. ὃ δὲ καθ᾽ Ἑλλάδ᾽ οἰστρήσας δρόμῳ
ὅρκους παλαιοὺς Τυνδάρεω μαρτύρεται,
ὡς χρὴ βοηθεῖν τοῖσιν ἠδικημένοις.

πέμπω σοι πρὸς ταῖς πρόσθεν
δέλτους, ὦ Λήδας ἔρνος ...

Πρεσβύτης

λέγε καὶ σήμαιν᾽, ἵνα καὶ γλώσσῃ
σύντονα τοῖς σοῖς γράμμασιν αὐδῶ.

Ἀγαμέμνων

μὴ στέλλειν τὰν σὰν ἶνιν πρὸς
τὰν κολπώδη πτέρυγ᾽ Εὐβοίας
Αὖλιν ἀκλύσταν.
εἰς ἄλλας ὥρας γὰρ δὴ
παιδὸς δαίσομεν ὑμεναίους.

Πρεσβύτης

καὶ πῶς Ἀχιλεὺς λέκτρων ἀπλακὼν
οὐ μέγα φυσῶν θυμὸν ἐπαρεῖ
σοὶ σῇ τ᾽ ἀλόχῳ;
τόδε καὶ δεινόν: σήμαιν᾽ ὅ τι φῄς.

Ἀγαμέμνων

ὄνομ᾽, οὐκ ἔργον, παρέχων Ἀχιλεὺς
οὐκ οἶδε γάμους, οὐδ᾽ ὅ τι πράσσομεν,
οὐδ᾽ ὅτι κείνῳ παῖδ᾽ ἐπεφήμισα
νυμφείους εἰς ἀγκώνων
εὐνὰς ἐκδώσειν λέκτροις.

Πρεσβύτης

δεινά γ᾽ ἐτόλμας, Ἀγάμεμνον ἄναξ,
ὃς τῷ τῆς θεᾶς σὴν παῖδ᾽ ἄλοχον
φατίσας ἦγες σφάγιον Δαναοῖς.

Ἀγαμέμνων

οἴμοι, γνώμας ἐξέσταν,
αἰαῖ, πίπτω δ᾽ εἰς ἄταν.
ἀλλ᾽ ἴθ᾽ ἐρέσσων σὸν πόδα, γήρᾳ
μηδὲν ὑπείκων.

Πρεσβύτης
σπεύδω, βασιλεῦ.

Ἀγαμέμνων

μή νυν μήτ᾽ ἀλσώδεις ἵζου
κρήνας μήθ᾽ ὕπνῳ θελχθῇς.

Πρεσβύτης

εὔφημα θρόει.

Ἀγαμέμνων

πάντῃ δὲ πόρον σχιστὸν ἀμείβων
λεῦσσε, φυλάσσων μή τίς σε λάθῃ
τροχαλοῖσιν ὄχοις παραμειψαμένη
παῖδα κομίζουσ᾽ ἐνθάδ᾽ ἀπήνη
Δαναῶν πρὸς ναῦς.

Πρεσβύτης

ἔσται τάδε.

Ἀγαμέμνων
κλῄθρων δ᾽ ἐξόρμοις
ἅν νιν πομπαῖς ἀντήσῃς,
πάλιν εἰσόρμα, σεῖε χαλινούς,
ἐπὶ Κυκλώπων ἰεὶς θυμέλας.

Πρεσβύτης

πιστὸς δὲ φράσας τάδε πῶς ἔσομαι,
λέγε, παιδὶ σέθεν τῇ σῇ τ᾽ ἀλόχῳ;

Ἀγαμέμνων

σφραγῖδα φύλασσ᾽ ἣν ἐπὶ δέλτῳ
τήνδε κομίζεις. ἴθι. λευκαίνει
τόδε φῶς ἤδη λάμπουσ᾽ ἠὼς
πῦρ τε τεθρίππων τῶν Ἀελίου:
σύλλαβε μόχθων.
θνητῶν δ᾽ ὄλβιος ἐς τέλος οὐδεὶς
οὐδ᾽ εὐδαίμων:
οὔπω γὰρ ἔφυ τις ἄλυπος.

Χορός

ἔμολον ἀμφὶ παρακτίαν
ψάμαθον Αὐλίδος ἐναλίας,
Εὐρίπου διὰ χευμάτων
κέλσασα στενοπόρθμων,
Χαλκίδα πόλιν ἐμὰν προλιποῦσ᾽,
ἀγχιάλων ὑδάτων τροφὸν
τᾶς κλεινᾶς Ἀρεθούσας,
Ἀχαιῶν στρατιὰν ὡς ἐσιδοίμαν
Ἀχαιῶν τε πλάτας ναυσιπόρους ἡ-
μιθέων, οὓς ἐπὶ Τροίαν
ἐλάταις χιλιόναυσιν
τὸν ξανθὸν Μενέλαόν θ᾽
ἁμέτεροι πόσεις
ἐνέπουσ᾽ Ἀγαμέμνονά τ᾽ εὐπατρίδαν
στέλλειν ἐπὶ τὰν Ἑλέναν, ἀπ᾽
Εὐρώτα δονακοτρόφου
Πάρις ὁ βουκόλος ἂν ἔλαβε
δῶρον τᾶς Ἀφροδίτας,
ὅτ᾽ ἐπὶ κρηναίαισι δρόσοις
Ἥρᾳ Παλλάδι τ᾽ ἔριν ἔριν
μορφᾶς ἁ Κύπρις ἔσχεν.

πολύθυτον δὲ δι᾽ ἄλσος Ἀρ-
τέμιδος ἤλυθον ὀρομένα,
φοινίσσουσα παρῇδ᾽ ἐμὰν

αἰσχύνᾳ νεοθαλεῖ,
ἀσπίδος ἔρυμα καὶ κλισίας
ὁπλοφόρους Δαναῶν θέλουσ᾽
ἵππων τ᾽ ὄχλον ἰδέσθαι.
κατεῖδον δὲ δύ᾽ Αἴαντε συνέδρω,
τὸν Οἰλέως Τελαμῶνός τε γόνον, τὸν
Σαλαμῖνος στέφανον: Πρω-
τεσίλαόν τ᾽ ἐπὶ θάκοις
πεσσῶν ἡδομένους μορ-
φαῖσι πολυπλόκοις
Παλαμήδεά θ᾽, ὃν τέκε παῖς ὁ Ποσει-
δᾶνος, Διομήδεά θ᾽ ἡδο-
ναῖς δίσκου κεχαρημένον,
παρὰ δὲ Μηριόνην, Ἄρεος
ὄζον, θαῦμα βροτοῖσιν,
τὸν ἀπὸ νησαίων τ᾽ ὀρέων
Λαέρτα τόκον, ἅμα δὲ Νι-
ρέα, κάλλιστον Ἀχαιῶν.

τὸν ἰσάνεμόν τε ποδοῖν
λαιψηροδρόμον Ἀχιλῆα,
τὸν ἁ Θέτις τέκε καὶ Χείρων
ἐξεπόνησεν, εἶδον
αἰγιαλοῖς παρά τε κροκάλαις
δρόμον ἔχοντα σὺν ὅπλοις:
ἅμιλλαν δ᾽ ἐπόνει ποδοῖν
πρὸς ἅρμα τέτρωρον
ἐλίσσων περὶ νίκας.
ὁ δὲ διφρηλάτας ἐβοᾶτ᾽,
Εὔμηλος Φερητιάδας,
ᾧ καλλίστους ἰδόμαν
χρυσοδαιδάλτους στομίοις
πώλους κέντρῳ θεινομένους,
τοὺς μὲν μέσους ζυγίους
λευκοστίκτῳ τριχὶ βαλιούς,
τοὺς δ᾽ ἔξω σειροφόρους
ἀντήρεις καμπαῖσι δρόμων,

πυρσότριχας, μονόχαλα δ᾽ ὑπὸ σφυρὰ
ποικιλοδέρμονας: οἷς παρεπάλλετο
Πηλεΐδας σὺν ὅπλοισι παρ᾽ ἄντυγα καὶ σύ-
ριγγας ἁρματείους.

Χορός

ναῶν δ᾽ εἰς ἀριθμὸν ἤλυθον
καὶ θέαν ἀθέσφατον,
τὰν γυναικεῖον ὄψιν ὀμμάτων
ὡς πλήσαιμι, μέλινον ἀδονάν.
καὶ κέρας μὲν ἦν
δεξιὸν πλάτας ἔχων
Φθιώτας ὁ Μυρμιδὼν Ἄρης
πεντήκοντα ναυσὶ θουρίαις.
χρυσέαις δ᾽ εἰκόσιν κατ᾽ ἄκρα Νη-
ρῆδες ἔστασαν θεαί,
πρύμναις σῆμ᾽ Ἀχιλλείου στρατοῦ.

Ἀργείων δὲ ταῖσδ᾽ ἰσήρετμοι
νᾶες ἔστασαν πέλας:
ὧν ὁ Μηκιστέως στρατηλάτας
παῖς ἦν, Ταλαὸς ὃν τρέφει πατήρ,
Καπανέως τε παῖς
Σθένελος: Ἀτθίδας δ᾽ ἄγων
ἑξήκοντα ναῦς ὁ Θησέως
παῖς ἑξῆς ἐναυλόχει, θεὰν
Παλλάδ᾽ ἐν μωνύχοις ἔχων πτερω-
τοῖσιν ἅρμασιν θετόν,
εὔσημόν γε φάσμα ναυβάταις.
Βοιωτῶν δ᾽ ὅπλισμα πόντιον
πεντήκοντα νῆας εἰδόμαν
σημείοισιν ἐστολισμένας:
τοῖς δὲ Κάδμος ἦν
χρύσεον δράκοντ᾽ ἔχων
ἀμφὶ ναῶν κόρυμβα:
Λήιτος δ᾽ ὁ γηγενὴς

ἦρχε ναΐου στρατοῦ:
Φωκίδος δ᾽ ἀπὸ χθονὸς
Λοκρᾶς τε τοῖσδ᾽ ἵσας ἄγων
ναῦς ἦλθ᾽ Οἰλέως τόκος κλυτὰν
Θρονιάδ᾽ ἐκλιπὼν πόλιν.
Μυκήνας δὲ τᾶς Κυκλωπίας
παῖς Ἀτρέως ἔπεμπε ναυβάτας
ναῶν ἑκατὸν ἠθροϊσμένους:
σὺν δ᾽ Ἄδραστος ἦν
ταγός, ὡς φίλος φίλῳ,
τᾶς φυγούσας μέλαθρα
βαρβάρων χάριν γάμων
πρᾶξιν Ἑλλὰς ὡς λάβοι.
ἐκ Πύλου δὲ Νέστορος
Γερηνίου κατειδόμαν
πρύμνας σῆμα ταυρόπουν ὁρᾶν,
τὸν πάροικον Ἀλφεόν.
Αἰνιάνων δὲ δωδεκάστολοι
νᾶες ἦσαν, ὧν ἄναξ
Γουνεὺς ἦρχε: τῶνδε δ᾽ αὖ πέλας
Ἤλιδος δυνάστορες,
οὓς Ἐπειοὺς ὠνόμαζε πᾶς λεώς:
Εὔρυτος δ᾽ ἄνασσε τῶνδε,
λευκήρετμον δ᾽ Ἄρη
Τάφιον ἦγεν, ὧν Μέγης ἄνασσε,
Φυλέως λόχευμα,
τὰς Ἐχίνας λιπὼν
νήσους ναυβάταις ἀπροσφόρους.
Αἴας δ᾽ ὁ Σαλαμῖνος ἔντροφος
δεξιὸν κέρας † πρὸς τὸ λαιὸν ξυνᾶγε †,
τῶν ἧσσον ὥρμει πλάταισιν
ἐσχάταισι συμπλέκων
δώδεκ᾽ εὐστροφωτάταισι ναυσίν. ὣς
ἄιον καὶ ναυβάταν
εἰδόμαν λεών:
ᾧ τις εἰ προσαρμόσει
βαρβάρους βάριδας,

νόστον οὐκ ἀποίσεται,
ἐνθάδ᾽ οἷον εἰδόμαν
νάιον πόρευμα,
τὰ δὲ κατ᾽ οἴκους κλύουσα συγκλήτου
μνήμην σῴζομαι στρατεύματος. **Πρεσβύτης**

Μενέλαε, τολμᾷς δείν᾽, ἅ σ᾽ οὐ τολμᾶν χρεών.

Μενέλαος

ἄπελθε: λίαν δεσπόταισι πιστὸς εἶ.

Πρεσβύτης

καλόν γέ μοι τοὔνειδος ἐξωνείδισας.

Μενέλαος

κλαίοις ἄν, εἰ πράσσοις ἃ μὴ πράσσειν σε δεῖ.

Πρεσβύτης

οὐ χρῆν σε λῦσαι δέλτον, ἣν ἐγὼ ‘φερον.

Μενέλαος

οὐδέ γε φέρειν σὲ πᾶσιν Ἕλλησιν κακά.

Πρεσβύτης

ἄλλοις ἀμιλλῶ ταῦτ᾽: ἄφες δὲ τήνδ᾽ ἐμοί.

Μενέλαος

οὐκ ἂν μεθείμην.

Πρεσβύτης
οὐδ᾽ ἔγωγ᾽ ἀφήσομαι.

Μενέλαος

σκήπτρῳ τάχ᾽ ἆρα σὸν καθαιμάξω κάρα.

Πρεσβύτης

ἀλλ᾽ εὐκλεές τοι δεσποτῶν θνῄσκειν ὕπερ.

Μενέλαος

μέθες: μακροὺς δὲ δοῦλος ὢν λέγεις λόγους.

Πρεσβύτης

ὦ δέσποτ᾽, ἀδικούμεσθα. σὰς δ᾽ ἐπιστολὰς
ἐξαρπάσας ὅδ᾽ ἐκ χερῶν ἐμῶν βίᾳ,
Ἀγάμεμνον, οὐδὲν τῇ δίκῃ χρῆσθαι θέλει.

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἔα:
τίς ποτ᾽ ἐν πύλαισι θόρυβος καὶ λόγων ἀκοσμία;

Μενέλαος

οὐμὸς οὐχ ὁ τοῦδε μῦθος κυριώτερος λέγειν.

Ἀγαμέμνων

σὺ δὲ τί τῷδ᾽ ἐς ἔριν ἀφῖξαι, Μενέλεως, βίᾳ τ᾽ ἄγεις;

Μενέλαος

βλέψον εἰς ἡμᾶς, ἵν᾽ ἀρχὰς τῶν λόγων ταύτας λάβω.

Ἀγαμέμνων

μῶν τρέσας οὐκ ἀνακαλύψω βλέφαρον, Ἀτρέως γεγώς;

Μενέλαος

τήνδ᾽ ὁρᾷς δέλτον, κακίστων γραμμάτων ὑπηρέτιν;

Ἀγαμέμνων

εἰσορῶ: καὶ πρῶτα ταύτην σῶν ἀπάλλαξον χερῶν.

Μενέλαος

οὔ, πρὶν ἂν δείξω γε Δαναοῖς πᾶσι τἀγγεγραμμένα.

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἦ γὰρ οἶσθ᾽ ἃ μή σε καιρὸς εἰδέναι σήμαντρ᾽ ἀνείς;

Μενέλαος

ὥστε σ᾽ ἀλγῦναί γ᾽, ἀνοίξας ἃ σὺ κάκ᾽ εἰργάσω λάθρᾳ.

Ἀγαμέμνων

ποῦ δὲ κἄλαβές νιν; ὦ θεοί, σῆς ἀναισχύντου φρενός.

Μενέλαος

προσδοκῶν σὴν παῖδ᾽ ἀπ᾽ Ἄργους, εἰ στράτευμ᾽ ἀφίξεται.

Ἀγαμέμνων

τί δέ σε τἀμὰ δεῖ φυλάσσειν; οὐκ ἀναισχύντου τόδε;

Μενέλαος

ὅτι τὸ βούλεσθαί μ᾽ ἔκνιζε: σὸς δὲ δοῦλος οὐκ ἔφυν.

Ἀγαμέμνων

οὐχὶ δεινά; τὸν ἐμὸν οἰκεῖν οἶκον οὐκ ἐάσομαι;

Μενέλαος

πλάγια γὰρ φρονεῖς, τὰ μὲν νῦν, τὰ δὲ πάλαι, τὰ δ᾽ αὐτίκα.

Ἀγαμέμνων

εὖ κεκόμψευσαι πονηρά: γλῶσσ᾽ ἐπίφθονον σοφή.

Μενέλαος

Μενέλαος

νοῦς δέ γ᾽ οὐ βέβαιος ἄδικον κτῆμα κοὐ σαφὲς φίλοις.
βούλομαι δέ σ᾽ ἐξελέγξαι, καὶ σὺ μήτ᾽ ὀργῆς ὕπο
ἀποτρέπου τἀληθὲς οὔτ᾽ αὖ κατατενῶ λίαν ἐγώ.
οἶσθ᾽, ὅτ᾽ ἐσπούδαζες ἄρχειν Δαναΐδαις πρὸς Ἴλιον,
τῷ δοκεῖν μὲν οὐχὶ χρῄζων, τῷ δὲ βούλεσθαι θέλων,
ὡς ταπεινὸς ἦσθα, πάσης δεξιᾶς προσθιγγάνων
καὶ θύρας ἔχων ἀκλῄστους τῷ θέλοντι δημοτῶν
καὶ διδοὺς πρόσρησιν ἑξῆς πᾶσι — κεἰ μή τις θέλοι —
τοῖς τρόποις ζητῶν πρίασθαι τὸ φιλότιμον ἐκ μέσου;
κᾆτ᾽, ἐπεὶ κατέσχες ἀρχάς, μεταβαλὼν ἄλλους τρόπους
τοῖς φίλοισιν οὐκέτ᾽ ἦσθα τοῖς πρὶν ὡς πρόσθεν φίλος,
δυσπρόσιτος ἔσω τε κλῄθρων σπάνιος. ἄνδρα δ᾽ οὐ χρεὼν
τὸν ἀγαθὸν πράσσοντα μεγάλα τοὺς τρόπους μεθιστάναι,
ἀλλὰ καὶ βέβαιον εἶναι τότε μάλιστα τοῖς φίλοις,
ἡνίκ᾽ ὠφελεῖν μάλιστα δυνατός ἐστιν εὐτυχῶν.

ταῦτα μέν σε πρῶτ᾽ ἐπῆλθον, ἵνα σε πρῶθ᾽ ἡῦρον κακόν.
ὡς δ᾽ ἐς Αὖλιν ἦλθες αὖθις χὡ Πανελλήνων στρατός,
οὐδὲν ἦσθ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἐξεπλήσσου τῇ τύχῃ τῇ τῶν θεῶν,
οὐρίας πομπῆς σπανίζων: Δαναΐδαι δ᾽ ἀφιέναι
ναῦς διήγγελλον, μάτην δὲ μὴ πονεῖν ἐν Αὐλίδι.
ὡς ἄνολβον εἶχες ὄμμα σύγχυσίν τ᾽, εἰ μὴ νεῶν
χιλίων ἄρχων τὸ Πριάμου πεδίον ἐμπλήσεις δορός.
κἀμὲ παρεκάλεις: Τί δράσω; τίνα δὲ πόρον εὕρω πόθεν; —
ὥστε μὴ στερέντα σ᾽ ἀρχῆς ἀπολέσαι καλὸν κλέος.
κᾆτ᾽, ἐπεὶ Κάλχας ἐν ἱεροῖς εἶπε σὴν θῦσαι κόρην

Ἀρτέμιδι, καὶ πλοῦν ἔσεσθαι Δαναΐδαις, ἡσθεὶς φρένας
ἄσμενος θύσειν ὑπέστης παῖδα: καὶ πέμπεις ἑκών,
οὐ βίᾳ — μὴ τοῦτο λέξῃς — σῇ δάμαρτι, παῖδα σὴν
δεῦρ᾽ ἀποστέλλειν, Ἀχιλλεῖ πρόφασιν ὡς γαμουμένην.
κᾆθ᾽ ὑποστρέψας λέληψαι μεταβαλὼν ἄλλας γραφάς,
ὡς φονεὺς οὐκέτι θυγατρὸς σῆς ἔσῃ. μάλιστά γε.
οὗτος αὐτός ἐστιν αἰθὴρ ὃς τάδ᾽ ἤκουσεν σέθεν.
μυρίοι δέ τοι πεπόνθασ᾽ αὐτό: πρὸς τὰ πράγματα
ἐκπονοῦσ᾽ ἔχοντες, εἶτα δ᾽ ἐξεχώρησαν κακῶς,
τὰ μὲν ὑπὸ γνώμης πολιτῶν ἀσυνέτου, τὰ δ᾽ ἐνδίκως
ἀδύνατοι γεγῶτες αὐτοὶ διαφυλάξασθαι πόλιν.
Ἑλλάδος μάλιστ᾽ ἔγωγε τῆς ταλαιπώρου στένω,
ἤ, θέλουσα δρᾶν τι κεδνόν, βαρβάρους τοὺς οὐδένας
καταγελῶντας ἐξανήσει διὰ σὲ καὶ τὴν σὴν κόρην.
μηδέν᾽ ἀνδρείας ἔκατι προστάτην θείμην χθονός,
μηδ᾽ ὅπλων ἄρχοντα: νοῦν χρὴ τὸν στρατηλάτην ἔχειν:
πόλεος ὡς ἄρχων ἀνὴρ πᾶς, ξύνεσιν ἢν ἔχων τύχῃ.

Χορός

δεινὸν κασιγνήτοισι γίγνεσθαι λόγους
μάχας θ᾽, ὅταν ποτ᾽ ἐμπέσωσιν εἰς ἔριν.

Ἀγαμέμνων

βούλομαί σ᾽ εἰπεῖν κακῶς εὖ, βραχέα, μὴ λίαν ἄνω
βλέφαρα πρὸς ταναιδὲς ἀγαγών, ἀλλὰ σωφρονεστέρως,
ὡς ἀδελφὸν ὄντ᾽: ἀνὴρ γὰρ χρηστὸς αἰδεῖσθαι φιλεῖ.
εἰπέ μοι, τί δεινὰ φυσᾷς αἱματηρὸν ὄμμ᾽ ἔχων;
τίς ἀδικεῖ σε; τοῦ κέχρησαι; χρηστὰ λέκτρ᾽ ἐρᾷς λαβεῖν;
οὐκ ἔχοιμ᾽ ἄν σοι παρασχεῖν: ὧν γὰρ ἐκτήσω, κακῶς
ἦρχες. εἶτ᾽ ἐγὼ δίκην δῶ σῶν κακῶν, ὁ μὴ σφαλείς;
οὐ δάκνει σε τὸ φιλότιμον τοὐμόν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν ἀγκάλαις
εὐπρεπῆ γυναῖκα χρῄζεις, τὸ λελογισμένον παρεὶς
καὶ τὸ καλόν, ἔχειν. πονηροῦ φωτὸς ἡδοναὶ κακαί.
εἰ δ᾽ ἐγώ, γνοὺς πρόσθεν οὐκ εὖ, μετετέθην εὐβουλίᾳ,
μαίνομαι; σὺ μᾶλλον, ὅστις ἀπολέσας κακὸν λέχος
ἀναλαβεῖν θέλεις, θεοῦ σοι τὴν τύχην διδόντος εὖ.

ὤμοσαν τὸν Τυνδάρειον ὅρκον οἱ κακόφρονες
φιλόγαμοι μνηστῆρες — ἡ δέ γ᾽ Ἐλπίς, οἶμαι μέν, θεός,
κἀξέπραξεν αὐτὸ μᾶλλον ἢ σὺ καὶ τὸ σὸν σθένος —
οὓς λαβὼν στράτευε: ἕτοιμοι δ᾽ εἰσὶ μωρίᾳ φρενῶν.
οὐ γὰρ ἀσύνετον τὸ θεῖον, ἀλλ᾽ ἔχει συνιέναι
τοὺς κακῶς παγέντας ὅρκους καὶ κατηναγκασμένους.
τἀμὰ δ᾽ οὐκ ἀποκτενῶ ‘γὼ τέκνα: κοὐ τὸ σὸν μὲν εὖ
παρὰ δίκην ἔσται κακίστης εὔνιδος τιμωρίᾳ,
ἐμὲ δὲ συντήξουσι νύκτες ἡμέραι τε δακρύοις,
ἄνομα δρῶντα κοὐ δίκαια παῖδας οὓς ἐγεινάμην.
ταῦτά σοι βραχέα λέλεκται καὶ σαφῆ καὶ ῥᾴδια:
εἰ δὲ μὴ βούλῃ φρονεῖν εὖ, τἄμ᾽ ἐγὼ θήσω καλῶς.

Χορός

οἵδ᾽ αὖ διάφοροι τῶν πάρος λελεγμένων
μύθων, καλῶς δ᾽ ἔχουσι, φείδεσθαι τέκνων.

Μενέλαος

αἰαῖ, φίλους ἄρ᾽ οὐχὶ κεκτήμην τάλας.

Ἀγαμέμνων

εἰ τοὺς φίλους γε μὴ θέλεις ἀπολλύναι.

Μενέλαος

δείξεις δὲ ποῦ μοι πατρὸς ἐκ ταὐτοῦ γεγώς;

Ἀγαμέμνων

συνσωφρονεῖν σοι βούλομ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ οὐ συννοσεῖν.

Μενέλαος

ἐς κοινὸν ἀλγεῖν τοῖς φίλοισι χρὴ φίλους.

Ἀγαμέμνων

εὖ δρῶν παρακάλει μ᾽, ἀλλὰ μὴ λυπῶν ἐμέ.

Μενέλαος

οὐκ ἄρα δοκεῖ σοι τάδε πονεῖν σὺν Ἑλλάδι;

Ἀγαμέμνων

Ἑλλὰς δὲ σὺν σοὶ κατὰ θεὸν νοσεῖ τινα.

Μενέλαος

σκήπτρῳ νυν αὔχει, σὸν κασίγνητον προδούς.
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἄλλας εἶμι μηχανάς τινας
φίλους τ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἄλλους —

Αγγελος Α
ὦ Πανελλήνων ἄναξ,
Ἀγάμεμνον, ἥκω παῖδά σοι τὴν σὴν ἄγων,
ἣν Ἰφιγένειαν ὠνόμαζες ἐν δόμοις.
μήτηρ δ᾽ ὁμαρτεῖ, σῆς Κλυταιμήστρας δέμας,
καὶ παῖς Ὀρέστης, ὥς τι τερφθείης ἰδών,
χρόνον παλαιὸν δωμάτων ἔκδημος ὤν.
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς μακρὰν ἔτεινον, εὔρυτον παρὰ
κρήνην ἀναψύχουσι θηλύπουν βάσιν,
αὐταί τε πῶλοί τ᾽: ἐς δὲ λειμώνων χλόην
καθεῖμεν αὐτάς, ὡς βορᾶς γευσαίατο.
ἐγὼ δὲ πρόδρομος σῆς παρασκευῆς χάριν
ἥκω: πέπυσται γὰρ στρατός — ταχεῖα γὰρ
διῆξε φήμη — παῖδα σὴν ἀφιγμένην.
πᾶς δ᾽ ἐς θένα ὅμιλος ἔρχεται δρόμῳ,
σὴν παῖδ᾽ ὅπως ἴδωσιν: οἱ δ᾽ εὐδαίμονες
ἐν πᾶσι κλεινοὶ καὶ περίβλεπτοι βροτοῖς.
λέγουσι δ᾽: Ὑμέναιός τις ἢ τί πράσσεται;
ἢ πόθον ἔχων θυγατρὸς Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ
ἐκόμισε παῖδα; τῶν δ᾽ ἂν ἤκουσας τάδε:
Ἀρτέμιδι προτελίζουσι τὴν νεάνιδα,
Αὐλίδος ἀνάσσῃ. τίς νιν ἄξεταί ποτε;

ἀλλ᾽ εἶα, τἀπὶ τοισίδ᾽ ἐξάρχου κανᾶ,
στεφανοῦσθε κρᾶτα καὶ σύ, Μενέλεως ἄναξ,
ὑμέναιον εὐτρέπιζε καὶ κατὰ στέγας
λωτὸς βοάσθω καὶ ποδῶν ἔστω κτύπος:
φῶς γὰρ τόδ᾽ ἥκει μακάριον τῇ παρθένῳ.

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἐπῄνεσ᾽, ἀλλὰ στεῖχε δωμάτων ἔσω:
τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ἰούσης τῆς τύχης ἔσται καλῶς.
οἴμοι, τί φῶ δύστηνος; ἄρξωμαι πόθεν;
ἐς οἷ᾽ ἀνάγκης ζεύγματ᾽ ἐμπεπτώκαμεν.
ὑπῆλθε δαίμων, ὥστε τῶν σοφισμάτων
πολλῷ γενέσθαι τῶν ἐμῶν σοφώτερος.
ἡ δυσγένεια δ᾽ ὡς ἔχει τι χρήσιμον.
καὶ γὰρ δακρῦσαι ῥᾳδίως αὐτοῖς ἔχει,
ἅπαντά τ᾽ εἰπεῖν. τῷ δὲ γενναίῳ φύσιν
ἄνολβα ταῦτα. προστάτην δὲ τοῦ βίου
τὸν ὄγκον ἔχομεν τῷ τ᾽ ὄχλῳ δουλεύομεν.
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐκβαλεῖν μὲν αἰδοῦμαι δάκρυ,
τὸ μὴ δακρῦσαι δ᾽ αὖθις αἰδοῦμαι τάλας,
ἐς τὰς μεγίστας συμφορὰς ἀφιγμένος.
εἶέν: τί φήσω πρὸς δάμαρτα τὴν ἐμήν;
πῶς δέξομαί νιν; ποῖον ὄμμα συμβαλῶ;
καὶ γάρ μ᾽ ἀπώλεσ᾽ ἐπὶ κακοῖς ἅ μοι πάρος
ἐλθοῦσ᾽ ἄκλητος. εἰκότως δ᾽ ἅμ᾽ ἕσπετο
θυγατρὶ νυμφεύσουσα καὶ τὰ φίλτατα
δώσουσ᾽, ἵν᾽ ἡμᾶς ὄντας εὑρήσει κακούς.
τὴν δ᾽ αὖ τάλαιναν παρθένον — τί παρθένον;
Ἅιδης νιν, ὡς ἔοικε, νυμφεύσει τάχα —
ὡς ᾤκτισ᾽: οἶμαι γάρ νιν ἱκετεύσειν τάδε:
Ὦ πάτερ, ἀποκτενεῖς με; τοιούτους γάμους
γήμειας αὐτὸς χὤστις ἐστί σοι φίλος.
παρὼν δ᾽ Ὀρέστης ἐγγὺς ἀναβοήσεται
οὐ συνετὰ συνετῶς: ἔτι γάρ ἐστι νήπιος.
αἰαῖ, τὸν Ἑλένης ὥς μ᾽ ἀπώλεσεν γάμον
γήμας ὁ Πριάμου Πάρις, ὃς εἴργασται τάδε.

Χορός

κἀγὼ κατῴκτιρ᾽, ὡς γυναῖκα δεῖ ξένην
ὑπὲρ τυράννων συμφορᾶς καταστένειν.

Μενέλαος

ἀδελφέ, δός μοι δεξιᾶς τῆς σῆς θιγεῖν.

Ἀγαμέμνων

δίδωμι: σὸν γὰρ τὸ κράτος, ἄθλιος δ᾽ ἐγώ.

Μενέλαος

Πέλοπα κατόμνυμ᾽, ὃς πατὴρ τοὐμοῦ πατρὸς
τοῦ σοῦ τ᾽ ἐκλήθη, τὸν τεκόντα τ᾽ Ἀτρέα,
ἦ μὴν ἐρεῖν σοι τἀπὸ καρδίας σαφῶς
καὶ μὴ ‘πίτηδες μηδέν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅσον φρονῶ.
ἐγώ σ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ὄσσων ἐκβαλόντ᾽ ἰδὼν δάκρυ
ᾤκτιρα, καὐτὸς ἀνταφῆκά σοι πάλιν
καὶ τῶν παλαιῶν ἐξαφίσταμαι λόγων,
οὐκ ἐς σὲ δεινός: εἰμὶ δ᾽ οὖπερ εἶ σὺ νῦν:
καί σοι παραινῶ μήτ᾽ ἀποκτείνειν τέκνον
μήτ᾽ ἀνθελέσθαι τοὐμόν. οὐ γὰρ ἔνδικον
σὲ μὲν στενάζειν, τἀμὰ δ᾽ ἡδέως ἔχειν,
θνῄσκειν τε τοὺς σούς, τοὺς δ᾽ ἐμοὺς ὁρᾶν φάος.
τί βούλομαι γάρ; οὐ γάμους ἐξαιρέτους
ἄλλους λάβοιμ᾽ ἄν, εἰ γάμων ἱμείρομαι;
ἀλλ᾽ ἀπολέσας ἀδελφόν, ὅν μ᾽ ἥκιστα χρῆν,
Ἑλένην ἕλωμαι, τὸ κακὸν ἀντὶ τἀγαθοῦ;
ἄφρων νέος τ᾽ ἦ, πρὶν τὰ πράγματ᾽ ἐγγύθεν
σκοπῶν ἐσεῖδον οἷον ἦν κτείνειν τέκνα.
ἄλλως τέ μ᾽ ἔλεος τῆς ταλαιπώρου κόρης
ἐσῆλθε, συγγένειαν ἐννοουμένῳ,
ἣ τῶν ἐμῶν ἕκατι θύεσθαι γάμων
μέλλει. τί δ᾽ Ἑλένης παρθένῳ τῇ σῇ μέτα;
ἴτω στρατεία διαλυθεῖσ᾽ ἐξ Αὐλίδος,

σὺ δ᾽ ὄμμα παῦσαι δακρύοις τέγγων τὸ σόν,
ἀδελφέ, κἀμὲ παρακαλῶν ἐς δάκρυα.
εἰ δέ τι κόρης σῆς θεσφάτων μέτεστι σοί,
μὴ ‘μοὶ μετέστω: σοὶ νέμω τοὐμὸν μέρος.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐς μεταβολὰς ἦλθον ἀπὸ δεινῶν λόγων;
εἰκὸς πέπονθα: τὸν ὁμόθεν πεφυκότα
στέργων μετέπεσον. ἀνδρὸς οὐ κακοῦ τροπαὶ
τοιαίδε, χρῆσθαι τοῖσι βελτίστοις ἀεί.

Χορός

γενναῖ᾽ ἔλεξας Ταντάλῳ τε τῷ Διὸς
πρέποντα: προγόνους οὐ καταισχύνεις σέθεν.

Ἀγαμέμνων

αἰνῶ σε, Μενέλα᾽, ὅτι παρὰ γνώμην ἐμὴν
ὑπέθηκας ὀρθῶς τοὺς λόγους σοῦ τ᾽ ἀξίως.
ταραχὴ δ᾽ ἀδελφῶν διά τ᾽ ἔρωτα γίγνεται
πλεονεξίαν τε δωμάτων: ἀπέπτυσα
τοιάνδε συγγένειαν ἀλλήλοιν πικράν.
ἀλλ᾽ ἥκομεν γὰρ εἰς ἀναγκαίας τύχας,
θυγατρὸς αἱματηρὸν ἐκπρᾶξαι φόνον.

Μενέλαος

πῶς; τίς δ᾽ ἀναγκάσει σε τήν γε σὴν κτανεῖν;

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἅπας Ἀχαιῶν σύλλογος στρατεύματος.

Μενέλαος

οὔκ, ἤν νιν εἰς Ἄργος γ᾽ ἀποστείλῃς πάλιν.

Ἀγαμέμνων

λάθοιμι τοῦτ᾽ ἄν. ἀλλ᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽ οὐ λήσομεν.

Μενέλαος

τὸ ποῖον; οὗτοι χρὴ λίαν ταρβεῖν ὄχλον.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Κάλχας ἐρεῖ μαντεύματ᾽ Ἀργείων στρατῷ.

Μενέλαος

οὔκ, ἢν θάνῃ γε πρόσθε: τοῦτο δ᾽ εὐμαρές.

Ἀγαμέμνων

τὸ μαντικὸν πᾶν σπέρμα φιλότιμον κακόν.

Μενέλαος

† κοὐδέν γ᾽ ἄχρηστον, οὐδὲ χρήσιμον παρόν. †

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἐκεῖνο δ᾽ οὐ δέδοικας ὃ ἔμ᾽ ἐσέρχεται;

Μενέλαος

ὂν μὴ σὺ φράζεις, πῶς ὑπολάβοιμ᾽ ἂν λόγον;

Ἀγαμέμνων

τὸ Σισύφειον σπέρμα πάντ᾽ οἶδεν τάδε.

Μενέλαος

οὐκ ἔστ᾽ Ὀδυσσεὺς ὅ τι σὲ κἀμὲ πημανεῖ.

Ἀγαμέμνων

ποικίλος ἀεὶ πέφυκε τοῦ τ᾽ ὄχλου μέτα.

Μενέλαος

φιλοτιμίᾳ μὲν ἐνέχεται, δεινῷ κακῷ.

Ἀγαμέμνων

οὐκ οὖν δοκεῖς νιν στάντ᾽ ἐν Ἀργείοις μέσοις
λέξειν ἃ Κάλχας θέσφατ᾽ ἐξηγήσατο,
κἄμ᾽ ὡς ὑπέστην θῦμα, κᾆτ᾽ ἐψευδόμην,
Ἀρτέμιδι θύσειν; οὐ ξυναρπάσας στρατόν,
σὲ κἄμ᾽ ἀποκτείναντας Ἀργείους κόρην
σφάξαι κελεύσει; κἂν πρὸς Ἄργος ἐκφύγω,
ἐλθόντες αὐτοῖς τείχεσιν Κυκλωπίοις
συναρπάσουσι καὶ κατασκάψουσι γῆν.
τοιαῦτα τἀμὰ πήματ᾽: ὦ τάλας ἐγώ,
ὡς ἠπόρημαι πρὸς θεῶν τὰ νῦν τάδε.
ἔν μοι φύλαξον, Μενέλεως, ἀνὰ στρατὸν
ἐλθών, ὅπως ἂν μὴ Κλυταιμήστρα τάδε
μάθῃ, πρὶν Ἅιδῃ παῖδ᾽ ἐμὴν προσθῶ λαβών,
ὡς ἐπ᾽ ἐλαχίστοις δακρύοις πράσσω κακῶς.
ὑμεῖς τε σιγήν, ὦ ξέναι, φυλάσσετε.

Χορός

μάκαρες οἳ μετρίας θεοῦ
μετά τε σωφροσύνας μετέ-
σχον λέκτρων Ἀφροδίτας,
γαλανείᾳ χρησάμενοι
μανιάδων οἴστρων, ὅθι δὴ
δίδυμ᾽ Ἔρως ὁ χρυσοκόμας
τόξ᾽ ἐντείνεται χαρίτων,
τὸ μὲν ἐπ᾽ εὐαίωνι πότμῳ,
τὸ δ᾽ ἐπὶ συγχύσει βιοτᾶς.
ἀπενέπω νιν ἀμετέρων,
Κύπρι καλλίστα, θαλάμων.
εἴη δέ μοι μετρία μὲν
χάρις, πόθοι δ᾽ ὅσιοι,

καὶ μετέχοιμι τᾶς Ἀφροδί-
τας, πολλὰν δ᾽ ἀποθείμαν.

Χορός

διάφοροι δὲ φύσεις βροτῶν,
διάφοροι δὲ τρόποι: τὸ δ᾽ ὀρ-
θῶς ἐσθλὸν σαφὲς αἰεί:
τροφαί θ᾽ αἱ παιδευόμεναι
μέγα φέρουσ᾽ ἐς τὰν ἀρετάν:
τό τε γὰρ αἰδεῖσθαι σοφία,
τάν τ᾽ ἐξαλλάσσουσαν ἔχει
χάριν ὑπὸ γνώμας ἐσορᾶν
τὸ δέον, ἔνθα δόξα φέρει
κλέος ἀγήρατον βιοτᾷ.
μέγα τι θηρεύειν ἀρετάν,
γυναιξὶ μὲν κατὰ Κύπριν
κρυπτάν, ἐν ἀνδράσι δ᾽ αὖ
κόσμος ἐνὼν ὁ μυριοπλη-
θὴς μείζω πόλιν αὔξει.

ἔμολες, ὦ Πάρις, ἦτε σύ γε
βουκόλος ἀργενναῖς ἐτράφης
Ἰδαίαις παρὰ μόσχοις,
βάρβαρα συρίζων, Φρυγίων
αὐλῶν Ὀλύμπου καλάμοις
μιμήματα πνείων.
εὔθηλοι δὲ τρέφοντο βόες,
ὅτε σε κρίσις ἔμηνε θεᾶν,
ἃ σ᾽ Ἑλλάδα πέμπει:
ἐλεφαντοδέτων πάροι-
θεν δόμων δὲ στὰς Ἑλένας
ἐν ἀντωποῖς βλεφάροισιν
ἔρωτά τ᾽ ἔδωκας, ἔρωτι δ᾽
αὐτὸς ἐπτοάθης.
ὅθεν ἔρις ἔριν

Ἑλλάδα σὺν δορὶ ναυσί τ᾽ ἄγει
ἐς Τροίας πέργαμα ...

Χορός ανδρων Αργειων

ἰὼ ἰώ: μεγάλαι μεγάλων
εὐδαιμονίαι: τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως
ἴδετ᾽ Ἰφιγένειαν, ἄνασσαν ἐμήν,
τὴν Τυνδάρεω τε Κλυταιμήστραν:
ὡς ἐκ μεγάλων ἐβλαστήκασ᾽
ἐπί τ᾽ εὐμήκεις ἥκουσι τύχας.
θεοί γ᾽ οἱ κρείσσους οἵ τ᾽ ὀλβοφόροι
τοῖς οὐκ εὐδαίμοσι θνητῶν.

Χορός

στῶμεν, Χαλκίδος ἔκγονα θρέμματα,
τὴν βασίλειαν δεξώμεθ᾽ ὄχων
ἄπο μὴ σφαλερῶς ἐπὶ γαῖαν,
ἀγανῶς δὲ χεροῖν μαλακῇ ῥώμῃ,
μὴ ταρβήσῃ † νεωστί μοι μολὸν
κλεινὸν τέκνον Ἀγαμέμνονος,
μηδὲ θόρυβον † μηδ᾽ ἔκπληξιν
ταῖς Ἀργείαις
ξεῖναι ξείναις παρέχωμεν.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ὄρνιθα μὲν τόνδ᾽ αἴσιον ποιούμεθα,
τὸ σόν τε χρηστὸν καὶ λόγων εὐφημίαν:
ἐλπίδα δ᾽ ἔχω τιν᾽ ὡς ἐπ᾽ ἐσθλοῖσιν γάμοις
πάρειμι νυμφαγωγός. ἀλλ᾽ ὀχημάτων
ἔξω πορεύεθ᾽ ἃς φέρω φερνὰς κόρῃ,
καὶ πέμπετ᾽ ἐς μέλαθρον εὐλαβούμενοι.
σὺ δ᾽, ὦ τέκνον μοι, λεῖπε πωλικοὺς ὄχους,
ἁβρὸν τιθεῖσα κῶλον ἀσθενές θ᾽ ἅμα.
ὑμεῖς δέ, νεάνιδές, νιν ἀγκάλαις ἔπι
δέξασθε καὶ πορεύσατ᾽ ἐξ ὀχημάτων.

κἀμοὶ χερός τις ἐνδότω στηρίγματα,
θάκους ἀπήνης ὡς ἂν ἐκλίπω καλῶς.
αἳ δ᾽ ἐς τὸ πρόσθεν στῆτε πωλικῶν ζυγῶν:
φοβερὸν γὰρ ἀπαράμυθον ὄμμα πωλικόν:
καὶ παῖδα τόνδε, τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος γόνον,
λάζυσθ᾽, Ὀρέστην: ἔτι γάρ ἐστι νήπιος.
τέκνον, καθεύδεις πωλικῷ δαμεὶς ὄχῳ;
ἔγειρ᾽ ἀδελφῆς ἐφ᾽ ὑμέναιον εὐτυχῶς:
ἀνδρὸς γὰρ ἀγαθοῦ κῆδος αὐτὸς ἐσθλὸς ὢν
λήψῃ, κόρης Νηρῇδος ἰσόθεον γένος.
ἔξῆς κάθησο δεῦρό μου ποδός, τέκνον:
πρὸς μητέρ᾽, Ἰφιγένεια, μακαρίαν δέ με
ξέναισι ταῖσδε πλησία σταθεῖσα δός,
καὶ — δεῦρο δὴ — πατέρα πρόσειπε σὸν φίλον.

Ἰφιγένεια

ὦ μῆτερ, ὑποδραμοῦσά σ᾽: ὀργισθῇς δὲ μή:
πρὸς στέρνα πατρὸς στέρνα τἀμὰ περιβαλῶ.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ὦ σέβας ἐμοὶ μέγιστον, Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ,
ἥκομεν, ἐφετμαῖς οὐκ ἀπιστοῦσαι σέθεν.

Ἰφιγένεια

ἐγὼ δὲ βούλομαι τὰ σὰ στέρν᾽, ὦ πάτερ,
ὑποδραμοῦσα προσβαλεῖν διὰ χρόνου:
ποθῶ γὰρ ὄμμα δὴ σόν. ὀργισθῇς δὲ μή.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἀλλ᾽, ὦ τέκνον, χρή: φιλοπάτωρ δ᾽ ἀεί ποτ᾽ εἶ
μάλιστα παίδων τῷδ᾽ ὅσους ἐγὼ ‘τεκον.

Ἰφιγένεια

ὦ πάτερ, ἐσεῖδόν σ᾽ ἀσμένη πολλῷ χρόνῳ.

Ἀγαμέμνων

καὶ γὰρ πατὴρ σέ: τόδ᾽ ἴσον ὑπὲρ ἀμφοῖν λέγεις.

Ἰφιγένεια

χαῖρ᾽: εὖ δέ μ᾽ ἀγαγὼν πρὸς σ᾽ ἐποίησας, πάτερ.

Ἀγαμέμνων

οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ὅπως φῶ τοῦτο καὶ μὴ φῶ, τέκνον.

Ἰφιγένεια

ἔα:
ὡς οὐ βλέπεις ἔκηλον ἄσμενός μ᾽ ἰδών.

Ἀγαμέμνων

πόλλ᾽ ἀνδρὶ βασιλεῖ καὶ στρατηλάτῃ μέλει.

Ἰφιγένεια

παρ᾽ ἐμοὶ γενοῦ νῦν, μὴ ‘πὶ φροντίδας τρέπου.

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἀλλ᾽ εἰμὶ παρὰ σοὶ νῦν ἅπας κοὐκ ἄλλοθι.

Ἰφιγένεια

μέθες νυν ὀφρὺν ὄμμα τ᾽ ἔκτεινον φίλον.

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἰδού, γέγηθά σ᾽ ὡς γέγηθ᾽ ὁρῶν, τέκνον.

Ἰφιγένεια

κἄπειτα λείβεις δάκρυ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ὀμμάτων σέθεν;

Ἀγαμέμνων

μακρὰ γὰρ ἡμῖν ἡ ‘πιοῦσ᾽ ἀπουσία.

Ἰφιγένεια

† οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ὅ τι φῄς, οὐκ οἶδα, φίλτατ᾽ ἐμοὶ πάτερ. †

Ἀγαμέμνων

συνετὰ λέγουσα μᾶλλον εἰς οἶκτόν μ᾽ ἄγεις.

Ἰφιγένεια

ἀσύνετά νυν ἐροῦμεν, εἰ σέ γ᾽ εὐφρανῶ.

Ἀγαμέμνων

παπαῖ. τὸ σιγᾶν οὐ σθένω: σὲ δ᾽ ἦνεσα.

Ἰφιγένεια

μέν᾽, ὦ πάτερ, κατ᾽ οἶκον ἐπὶ τέκνοις σέθεν.

Ἀγαμέμνων

θέλω γε: τὸ θέλειν δ᾽ οὐκ ἔχων ἀλγύνομαι.

Ἰφιγένεια

ὅλοιντο λόγχαι καὶ τὰ Μενέλεω κακά.

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἄλλους ὀλεῖ πρόσθ᾽ ἃ ἐμὲ διολέσαντ᾽ ἔχει.

Ἰφιγένεια

ὡς πολὺν ἀπῆσθα χρόνον ἐν Αὐλίδος μυχοῖς.

Ἀγαμέμνων

καὶ νῦν γέ μ᾽ ἴσχει δή τι μὴ στέλλειν στρατόν.

Ἰφιγένεια

ποῦ τοὺς Φρύγας λέγουσιν ᾠκίσθαι, πάτερ;

Ἀγαμέμνων

οὗ μήποτ᾽ οἰκεῖν ὤφελ᾽ ὁ Πριάμου Πάρις.

Ἰφιγένεια

μακρὰν ἀπαίρεις, ὦ πάτερ, λιπὼν ἐμέ.

Ἀγαμέμνων

† εἰς ταὐτόν, ὦ θύγατερ, ἥκεις σῷ πατρί. †

Ἰφιγένεια

φεῦ:
εἴθ᾽ ἦν καλόν μοι σοί τ᾽ ἄγειν σύμπλουν ἐμέ.

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἔτ᾽ ἔστι καὶ σοὶ πλοῦς, ἵν᾽ ἀμμνήσῃ πατρός.

Ἰφιγένεια

σὺν μητρὶ πλεύσασ᾽ ἢ μόνη πορεύσομαι;

Ἀγαμέμνων

μόνη, μονωθεῖσ᾽ ἀπὸ πατρὸς καὶ μητέρος.

Ἰφιγένεια

οὔ πού μ᾽ ἐς ἄλλα δώματ᾽ οἰκίζεις, πάτερ;

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἐατέ᾽: οὐ χρὴ τοιάδ᾽ εἰδέναι κόρας.

Ἰφιγένεια

σπεῦδ᾽ ἐκ Φρυγῶν μοι, θέμενος εὖ τἀκεῖ, πάτερ.

Ἀγαμέμνων

θῦσαί με θυσίαν πρῶτα δεῖ τιν᾽ ἐνθάδε.

Ἰφιγένεια

ἀλλὰ ξὺν ἱεροῖς χρὴ τό γ᾽ εὐσεβὲς σκοπεῖν.

Ἀγαμέμνων

εἴσῃ σύ: χερνίβων γὰρ ἑστήξῃ πέλας.

Ἰφιγένεια

στήσομεν ἄρ᾽ ἀμφὶ βωμόν, ὦ πάτερ, χορούς;

Ἀγαμέμνων

ζηλῶ σὲ μᾶλλον ἢ ‘μὲ τοῦ μηδὲν φρονεῖν.
χώρει δὲ μελάθρων ἐντός — ὀφθῆναι κόραις
πικρόν — φίλημα δοῦσα δεξιάν τέ μοι,
μέλλουσα δαρὸν πατρὸς ἀποικήσειν χρόνον.
ὦ στέρνα καὶ παρῇδες, ὦ ξανθαὶ κόμαι,
ὡς ἄχθος ὑμῖν ἐγένεθ᾽ ἡ Φρυγῶν πόλις
Ἑλένη τε. — παύω τοὺς λόγους: ταχεῖα γὰρ
νοτὶς διώκει μ᾽ ὀμμάτων ψαύσαντά σου.
ἴθ᾽ ἐς μέλαθρα. σὲ δὲ παραιτοῦμαι τάδε,
Λήδας γένεθλον, εἰ κατῳκτίσθην ἄγαν,
μέλλων Ἀχιλλεῖ θυγατέρ᾽ ἐκδώσειν ἐμήν.

ἀποστολαὶ γὰρ μακάριαι μέν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως
δάκνουσι τοὺς τεκόντας, ὅταν ἄλλοις δόμοις
παῖδας παραδιδῷ πολλὰ μοχθήσας πατήρ.

Κλυταιμήστρα

οὐχ ὧδ᾽ ἀσύνετός εἰμι, πείσεσθαι δέ με
καὐτὴν δόκει τάδ᾽, ὥστε μή σε νουθετεῖν,
ὅταν σὺν ὑμεναίοισιν ἐξάγω κόρην:
ἀλλ᾽ ὁ νόμος αὐτὰ τῷ χρόνῳ συνισχανεῖ.
τοὔνομα μὲν οὖν παῖδ᾽ οἶδ᾽ ὅτῳ κατῄνεσας,
γένους δ᾽ ὁποίου χὠπόθεν, μαθεῖν θέλω.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Αἴγινα θυγάτηρ ἐγένετ᾽ Ἀσωποῦ πατρός.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ταύτην δὲ θνητῶν ἢ θεῶν ἔζευξε τίς;

Ἀγαμέμνων

Ζεύς: Αἰακὸν δ᾽ ἔφυσεν, Οἰνώνης πρόμον.

Κλυταιμήστρα

τὰ δ᾽ Αἰακοῦ παῖς τίς κατέσχε δώματα;

Ἀγαμέμνων

Πηλεύς: ὁ Πηλεὺς δ᾽ ἔσχε Νηρέως κόρην.

Κλυταιμήστρα

θεοῦ διδόντος, ἢ βίᾳ θεῶν λαβών;

Ἀγαμέμνων

Ζεὺς ἠγγύησε καὶ δίδωσ᾽ ὁ κύριος.

Κλυταιμήστρα

γαμεῖ δὲ ποῦ νιν; ἦ κατ᾽ οἶδμα πόντιον;

Ἀγαμέμνων

Χείρων ἵν᾽ οἰκεῖ σεμνὰ Πηλίου βάθρα.

Κλυταιμήστρα

οὗ φασι Κενταύρειον ᾠκίσθαι γένος;

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἐνταῦθ᾽ ἔδαισαν Πηλέως γάμους θεοί.

Κλυταιμήστρα

Θέτις δ᾽ ἔθρεψεν ἢ πατὴρ Ἀχιλλέα;

Ἀγαμέμνων

Χείρων, ἵν᾽ ἦθη μὴ μάθοι κακῶν βροτῶν.

Κλυταιμήστρα

φεῦ:
σοφός γ᾽ ὁ θρέψας χὠ διδοὺς σοφώτερος.

Ἀγαμέμνων

τοιόσδε παιδὸς σῆς ἀνὴρ ἔσται πόσις.

Κλυταιμήστρα

οὐ μεμπτός. οἰκεῖ δ᾽ ἄστυ ποῖον Ἑλλάδος;

Ἀγαμέμνων

Ἀπιδανὸν ἀμφὶ ποταμὸν ἐν Φθίας ὅροις.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἐκεῖσ᾽ ἀπάξει σὴν ἐμήν τε παρθένον;

Ἀγαμέμνων

715 κείνῳ μελήσει ταῦτα, τῷ κεκτημένῳ.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἀλλ᾽ εὐτυχοίτην. τίνι δ᾽ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ γαμεῖ;

Ἀγαμέμνων

ὅταν σελήνης εὐτυχὴς ἔλθῃ κύκλος.

Κλυταιμήστρα

προτέλεια δ᾽ ἤδη παιδὸς ἔσφαξας θεᾷ;

Ἀγαμέμνων

μέλλω: ‘πὶ ταύτῃ καὶ καθέσταμεν τύχῃ.

Κλυταιμήστρα

720 κἄπειτα δαίσεις τοὺς γάμους ἐς ὕστερον;

Ἀγαμέμνων

θύσας γε θύμαθ᾽ ἃ ἐμὲ χρὴ θῦσαι θεοῖς.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἡμεῖς δὲ θοίνην ποῦ γυναιξὶ θήσομεν;

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἐνθάδε παρ᾽ εὐπρύμνοισιν Ἀργείων πλάταις.

Κλυταιμήστρα

καλῶς ἀναγκαίως τε: συνενέγκοι δ᾽ ὅμως.

Ἀγαμέμνων

οἶσθ᾽ οὖν ὃ δρᾶσον, ὦ γύναι; πιθοῦ δέ μοι.

Κλυταιμήστρα

τί χρῆμα; πείθεσθαι γὰρ εἴθισμαι σέθεν.

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἡμεῖς μὲν ἐνθάδ᾽, οὗπέρ ἐσθ᾽ ὁ νυμφίος ...

Κλυταιμήστρα

μητρὸς τί χωρὶς δράσεθ᾽, ἃ ἐμὲ δρᾶν χρεών;

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἐκδώσομεν σὴν παῖδα Δαναϊδῶν μέτα.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἡμᾶς δὲ ποῦ χρὴ τηνικαῦτα τυγχάνειν;

Ἀγαμέμνων

χώρει πρὸς Ἄργος παρθένους τε τημέλει.

Κλυταιμήστρα

λιποῦσα παῖδα; τίς δ᾽ ἀνασχήσει φλόγα;

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἐγὼ παρέξω φῶς ὃ νυμφίοις πρέπει.

Κλυταιμήστρα

οὐχ ὁ νόμος οὗτος οὐδὲ φαῦλ᾽ ἡγητέα.

Ἀγαμέμνων

735 οὐ καλὸν ἐν ὄχλῳ σ᾽ ἐξομιλεῖσθαι στρατοῦ.

Κλυταιμήστρα

καλὸν τεκοῦσαν τἀμά μ᾽ ἐκδοῦναι τέκνα.

Ἀγαμέμνων

καὶ τάς γ᾽ ἐν οἴκῳ μὴ μόνας εἶναι κόρας.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ὀχυροῖσι παρθενῶσι φρουροῦνται καλῶς.

Ἀγαμέμνων

πιθοῦ.

Κλυταιμήστρα
μὰ τὴν ἄνασσαν Ἀργείαν θεάν.
740 ἐλθὼν δὲ τἄξω πρᾶσσε, τἀν δόμοις δ᾽ ἐγώ,
ἃ χρὴ παρεῖναι νυμφίοισι παρθένοις.

Ἀγαμέμνων

οἴμοι: μάτην ἦξ᾽, ἐλπίδος δ᾽ ἀπεσφάλην,
ἐξ ὀμμάτων δάμαρτ᾽ ἀποστεῖλαι θέλων.
σοφίζομαι δὲ κἀπὶ τοῖσι φιλτάτοις
745 τέχνας πορίζω, πανταχῇ νικώμενος.
ὅμως δὲ σὺν Κάλχαντι τῷ θυηπόλῳ
κοινῇ τὸ τῆς θεοῦ φίλον, ἐμοὶ δ᾽ οὐκ εὐτυχές,

ἐξευπορήσων εἶμι, μόχθον Ἑλλάδος.
χρὴ δ᾽ ἐν δόμοισιν ἄνδρα τὸν σοφὸν τρέφειν
γυναῖκα χρηστὴν κἀγαθήν, ἢ μὴ τρέφειν.

Χορός

ἥξει δὴ Σιμόεντα καὶ
δίνας ἀργυροειδεῖς
ἄγυρις Ἑλλάνων στρατιᾶς
ἀνά τε ναυσὶν καὶ σὺν ὅπλοις
Ἴλιον ἐς τὸ Τροίας
Φοιβήιον δάπεδον,
τὰν Κασάνδραν ἵν᾽ ἀκούω
ῥίπτειν ξανθοὺς πλοκάμους
χλωροκόμῳ στεφάνῳ δάφνας
κοσμηθεῖσαν, ὅταν θεοῦ
μαντόσυνοι πνεύσωσ᾽ ἀνάγκαι.

στάσονται δ᾽ ἐπὶ περγάμων
Τροίας ἀμφί τε τείχη
Τρῶες, ὅταν χάλκασπις Ἄρης
πόντιος εὐπρῴροιο πλάτας
εἰρεσίᾳ πελάζῃ
Σιμουντίοις ὀχετοῖς,
τὰν τῶν ἐν αἰθέρι δισσῶν
Διοσκούρων Ἑλέναν
ἐκ Πριάμου κομίσαι θέλων
ἐς γᾶν Ἑλλάδα δοριπόνοις
ἀσπίσι καὶ λόγχαις Ἀχαιῶν.
Πέργαμον δὲ Φρυγῶν πόλιν
λαΐνους περὶ πύργους
κυκλώσας Ἄρει φονίῳ,
λαιμοτόμου κεφαλᾶς
σπάσας Πάριν Ἀτρεΐδας,
πέρσας κατάκρας πόλιν,
θήσει κόρας πολυκλαύτους
δάμαρτά τε Πριάμου.

ἁ δὲ Διὸς Ἑλένα κόρα
πολύκλαυτος ἐδεῖται
πόσιν προλιποῦσα.
μήτ᾽ ἐμοὶ
μήτ᾽ ἐμοῖσι τέκνων τέκνοις
ἐλπὶς ἄδε ποτ᾽ ἔλθοι,
οἵαν αἱ πολύχρυσοι
Λυδαὶ καὶ Φρυγῶν ἄλοχοι
στήσουσι παρ᾽ ἱστοῖς
μυθεῦσαι τάδ᾽ ἐς ἀλλήλας:
Τίς ἄρα μ᾽ εὐπλοκάμου κόμας
ῥῦμα δακρυόεν τανύσας
πατρίδος ὀλλυμένας ἀπολωτιεῖ;
διὰ σέ, τὰν κύκνου δολιχαύχενος γόνον,
εἰ δὴ φάτις ἔτυμος ὡς
ἔτυχεν, Λήδα ὄρνιθι πταμένῳ
Διὸς ὅτ᾽ ἠλλάχθη δέμας, εἴτ᾽
ἐν δέλτοις Πιερίσιν
μῦθοι τάδ᾽ ἐς ἀνθρώπους
ἤνεγκαν παρὰ καιρὸν ἄλλως. **Ἀχιλλεύς**

ποῦ τῶν Ἀχαιῶν ἐνθάδ᾽ ὁ στρατηλάτης;
τίς ἂν φράσειε προσπόλων τὸν Πηλέως
ζητοῦντά νιν παῖδ᾽ ἐν πύλαις Ἀχιλλέα;
οὐκ ἐξ ἴσου γὰρ μένομεν Εὐρίπου πέλας.
οἳ μὲν γὰρ ἡμῶν, ὄντες ἄζυγες γάμων,
οἴκους ἐρήμους ἐκλιπόντες ἐνθάδε
θάσσουσ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀκταῖς, οἳ δ᾽ ἔχοντες εὔνιδας
ἄπαιδες: οὕτω δεινὸς ἐμπέπτωκ᾽ ἔρως
τῆσδε στρατείας Ἑλλάδ᾽ οὐκ ἄνευ θεῶν.
τοὐμὸν μὲν οὖν δίκαιον ἐμὲ λέγειν χρεών,
ἄλλος δ᾽ ὁ χρῄζων αὐτὸς ὑπὲρ αὑτοῦ φράσει.
γῆν γὰρ λιπὼν Φάρσαλον ἠδὲ Πηλέα
μένω ‘πὶ λεπταῖς ταισίδ᾽ Εὐρίπου πνοαῖς,
Μυρμιδόνας ἴσχων: οἳ δ᾽ ἀεὶ προσκείμενοι
λέγουσ᾽: Ἀχιλλεῦ, τί μένομεν; πόσον χρόνον
ἔτ᾽ ἐκμετρῆσαι χρὴ πρὸς Ἰλίου στόλον;

δρᾶ γ᾽, εἴ τι δράσεις, ἢ ἄπαγ᾽ οἴκαδε στρατόν,
τὰ τῶν Ἀτρειδῶν μὴ μένων μελλήματα.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ὦ παῖ θεᾶς Νηρῇδος, ἔνδοθεν λόγων
τῶν σῶν ἀκούσασ᾽ ἐξέβην πρὸ δωμάτων.

Ἀχιλλεύς

ὦ πότνι᾽ αἰδώς, τήνδε τίνα λεύσσω ποτὲ
γυναῖκα, μορφὴν εὐπρεπῆ κεκτημένην;

Κλυταιμήστρα

οὐ θαῦμά σ᾽ ἡμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, οἷς μὴ πάρος
προσῆκες: αἰνῶ δ᾽ ὅτι σέβεις τὸ σωφρονεῖν.

Ἀχιλλεύς

τίς δ᾽ εἶ; τί δ᾽ ἦλθες Δαναϊδῶν ἐς σύλλογον,
γυνὴ πρὸς ἄνδρας ἀσπίσιν πεφραγμένους;

Κλυταιμήστρα

Λήδας μέν εἰμι παῖς, Κλυταιμήστρα δέ μοι
ὄνομα, πόσις δέ μοὐστὶν Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ.

Ἀχιλλεύς

καλῶς ἔλεξας ἐν βραχεῖ τὰ καίρια.
αἰσχρὸν δέ μοι γυναιξὶ συμβάλλειν λόγους.

Κλυταιμήστρα

μεῖνον — τί φεύγεις; — δεξιάν τ᾽ ἐμῇ χερὶ
σύναψον, ἀρχὴν μακαρίαν νυμφευμάτων.

Ἀχιλλεύς

τί φῄς; ἐγώ σοι δεξιάν; αἰδοίμεθ᾽ ἂν
Ἀγαμέμνον᾽, εἰ ψαύοιμεν ὧν μή μοι θέμις.

Κλυταιμήστρα

θέμις μάλιστα, τὴν ἐμὴν ἐπεὶ γαμεῖς
παῖδ᾽, ὦ θεᾶς παῖ ποντίας Νηρηίδος.

Ἀχιλλεύς

ποίους γάμους φῄς; ἀφασία μ᾽ ἔχει, γύναι:
εἰ μή τι παρανοοῦσα καινουργεῖς λόγον;

Κλυταιμήστρα

πᾶσιν τόδ᾽ ἐμπέφυκεν, αἰδεῖσθαι φίλους
καινοὺς ὁρῶσι καὶ γάμου μεμνημένοις.

Ἀχιλλεύς

οὐπώποτ᾽ ἐμνήστευσα παῖδα σήν, γύναι,
οὐδ᾽ ἐξ Ἀτρειδῶν ἦλθέ μοι λόγος γάμων.

Κλυταιμήστρα

τί δῆτ᾽ ἂν εἴη; σὺ πάλιν αὖ λόγους ἐμοὺς
θαύμαζ᾽: ἐμοὶ γὰρ θαύματ᾽ ἐστὶ τὰ παρὰ σοῦ.

Ἀχιλλεύς

εἴκαζε: κοινόν ἐστιν εἰκάζειν τάδε:
ἄμφω γὰρ οὐ ψευδόμεθα τοῖς λόγοις ἴσως.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἀλλ᾽ ἦ πέπονθα δεινά; μνηστεύω γάμους
οὐκ ὄντας, ὡς εἴξασιν: αἰδοῦμαι τάδε.

Ἀχιλλεύς

ἴσως ἐκερτόμησε κἀμὲ καὶ σέ τις.
ἀλλ᾽ ἀμελίᾳ δὸς αὐτὰ καὶ φαύλως φέρε.

Κλυταιμήστρα

χαῖρ᾽: οὐ γὰρ ὀρθοῖς ὄμμασίν σ᾽ ἔτ᾽ εἰσορῶ,
ψευδὴς γενομένη καὶ παθοῦσ᾽ ἀνάξια.

Ἀχιλλεύς

καὶ σοὶ τόδ᾽ ἐστὶν ἐξ ἐμοῦ: πόσιν δὲ σὸν
στείχω ματεύσων τῶνδε δωμάτων ἔσω.

Πρεσβύτης

ὦ ξέν᾽, Αἰακοῦ γένεθλον, μεῖνον: ὦ, σέ τοι λέγω,
τὸν θεᾶς γεγῶτα παῖδα, καὶ σέ, τὴν Λήδας κόρην.

Ἀχιλλεύς

τίς ὁ καλῶν πύλας παροίξας; ὡς τεταρβηκὼς καλεῖ.

Πρεσβύτης

δοῦλος, οὐχ ἁβρύνομαι τῷδ᾽: ἡ τύχη γὰρ οὐκ ἐᾷ.

Ἀχιλλεύς

τίνος; ἐμὸς μὲν οὐχί: χωρὶς τἀμὰ καὶ Ἀγαμέμνονος.

Πρεσβύτης

τῆσδε τῆς πάροιθεν οἴκων, Τυνδάρεω δόντος πατρός.

Ἀχιλλεύς

ἔσταμεν: φράζ᾽, εἴ τι χρῄζεις, ὧν μ᾽ ἐπέσχες οὕνεκα.

Πρεσβύτης

ἦ μόνω παρόντε δῆτα ταῖσδ᾽ ἐφέστατον πύλαις;

Ἀχιλλεύς

ὡς μόνοιν λέγοις ἄν, ἔξω δ᾽ ἐλθὲ βασιλείων δόμων.

Πρεσβύτης

ὦ Τύχη πρόνοιά θ᾽ ἡμή, σῴσαθ᾽ οὓς ἐγὼ θέλω.

Ἀχιλλεύς

865 ὁ λόγος ἐς μέλλοντ᾽ † ἂν ὥση † χρόνον: ἔχει δ᾽ ὄγκον τινά.

Κλυταιμήστρα

δεξιᾶς ἕκατι μὴ μέλλ᾽, εἴ τί μοι χρῄζεις λέγειν.

Πρεσβύτης

οἶσθα δῆτ᾽ ἔμ᾽, ὅστις ὢν σοὶ καὶ τέκνοις εὔνους ἔφυν;

Κλυταιμήστρα

οἶδά σ᾽ ὄντ᾽ ἐγὼ παλαιὸν δωμάτων ἐμῶν λάτριν.

Πρεσβύτης

χὥτι μ᾽ ἐν ταῖς σαῖσι φερναῖς ἔλαβεν Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ;

Κλυταιμήστρα

870 ἦλθες εἰς Ἄργος μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν καὶ ἐμὸς ἦσθ᾽ ἀεί ποτε.

Πρεσβύτης

ὦδ᾽ ἔχει. καὶ σοὶ μὲν εὔνους εἰμί, σῷ δ᾽ ἧσσον πόσει.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἐκκάλυπτε νῦν ποθ᾽ ἡμῖν οὕστινας λέγεις λόγους.

Πρεσβύτης

παῖδα σὴν πατὴρ ὁ φύσας αὐτόχειρ μέλλει κτενεῖν.

Κλυταιμήστρα

πῶς; ἀπέπτυσ᾽, ὦ γεραιέ, μῦθον: οὐ γὰρ εὖ φρονεῖς.

Πρεσβύτης

875 φασγάνῳ λευκὴν φονεύων τῆς ταλαιπώρου δέρην.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ὦ τάλαιν᾽ ἐγώ. μεμηνὼς ἆρα τυγχάνει πόσις;

Πρεσβύτης

ἀρτίφρων, πλὴν ἐς σὲ καὶ σὴν παῖδα: τοῦτο δ᾽ οὐ φρονεῖ.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἐκ τίνος λόγου; τίς αὐτὸν οὐπάγων ἀλαστόρων;

Πρεσβύτης

θέσφαθ᾽, ὥς γέ φησι Κάλχας, ἵνα πορεύηται στρατός.

Κλυταιμήστρα

880 ποῖ; τάλαιν᾽ ἐγώ, τάλαινα δ᾽ ἣν πατὴρ μέλλει κτενεῖν.

Πρεσβύτης

Δαρδάνου πρὸς δώμαθ᾽, Ἑλένην Μενέλεως ὅπως λάβῃ.

Κλυταιμήστρα

εἰς ἄρ᾽ Ἰφιγένειαν Ἑλένης νόστος ἦν πεπρωμένος;

Πρεσβύτης

πάντ᾽ ἔχεις: Ἀρτέμιδι θύσειν παῖδα σὴν μέλλει πατήρ.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ὁ δὲ γάμος τίν᾽ εἶχε πρόφασιν, ᾧ μ᾽ ἐκόμισεν ἐκ δόμων;

Πρεσβύτης

ἵν᾽ ἀγάγοις χαίρουσ᾽ Ἀχιλλεῖ παῖδα νυμφεύσουσα σήν.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ὦ θύγατερ, ἥκεις ἐπ᾽ ὀλέθρῳ καὶ σὺ καὶ μήτηρ σέθεν.

Πρεσβύτης

οἰκτρὰ πάσχετον δύ᾽ οὖσαι: δεινὰ δ᾽ Ἀγαμέμνων ἔτλη.

Κλυταιμήστρα

οἴχομαι τάλαινα, δακρύων τ᾽ ὄμματ᾽ οὐκέτι στέγω.

Πρεσβύτης

εἴπερ ἀλγεινὸν τὸ τέκνων στερόμενον, δακρυρρόει.

Κλυταιμήστρα

σὺ δὲ τάδ᾽, ὦ γέρον, πόθεν φῂς εἰδέναι πεπυσμένος;

Πρεσβύτης

δέλτον ᾠχόμην φέρων σοι πρὸς τὰ πρὶν γεγραμμένα.

Κλυταιμήστρα

οὐκ ἐῶν ἢ ξυγκελεύων παῖδ᾽ ἄγειν θανουμένην;

Πρεσβύτης

μὴ μὲν οὖν ἄγειν: φρονῶν γὰρ ἔτυχε σὸς πόσις τότ᾽ εὖ.

Κλυταιμήστρα

κᾆτα πῶς φέρων γε δέλτον οὐκ ἐμοὶ δίδως λαβεῖν;

Πρεσβύτης

895 Μενέλεως ἀφείλεθ᾽ ἡμᾶς, ὃς κακῶν τῶνδ᾽ αἴτιος.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ὦ τέκνον Νηρῇδος, ὦ παῖ Πηλέως, κλύεις τάδε;

Ἀχιλλεύς

ἔκλυον οὖσαν ἀθλίαν σε, τὸ δ᾽ ἐμὸν οὐ φαύλως φέρω.

Κλυταιμήστρα

παῖδά μου κατακτενοῦσι σοῖς δολώσαντες γάμοις.

Ἀχιλλεύς

μέμφομαι κἀγὼ πόσει σῷ, κοὐχ ἁπλῶς οὕτω φέρω.

Κλυταιμήστρα

900 οὐκ ἐπαιδεσθήσομαί γε προσπεσεῖν τὸ σὸν γόνυ,
θνητὸς ἐκ θεᾶς γεγῶτα: τί γὰρ ἐγὼ σεμνύνομαι;
ἢ τίνος σπουδαστέον μοι μᾶλλον ἢ τέκνου πέρι;
ἀλλ᾽ ἄμυνον, ὦ θεᾶς παῖ, τῇ τ᾽ ἐμῇ δυσπραξίᾳ
τῇ τε λεχθείσῃ δάμαρτι σῇ — μάτην μέν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως.
905 σοὶ καταστέψασ᾽ ἐγώ νιν ἦγον ὡς γαμουμένην,
νῦν δ᾽ ἐπὶ σφαγὰς κομίζω: σοὶ δ᾽ ὄνειδος ἵξεται,

ὅστις οὐκ ἤμυνας: εἰ γὰρ μὴ γάμοισιν ἐζύγης,
ἀλλ᾽ ἐκλήθης γοῦν ταλαίνης παρθένου φίλος πόσις.
πρὸς γενειάδος σε, πρός σε δεξιᾶς, πρὸς μητέρος —
ὄνομα γὰρ τὸ σόν μ᾽ ἀπώλεσ᾽, ᾧ σ᾽ ἀμυναθεῖν χρεών —
οὐκ ἔχω βωμὸν καταφυγεῖν ἄλλον ἢ τὸ σὸν γόνυ:
οὐδὲ φίλος οὐδεὶς γελᾷ μοι: τὰ δ᾽ Ἀγαμέμνονος κλύεις,
ὠμὰ καὶ πάντολμ᾽: ἀφῖγμαι δ᾽, ὥσπερ εἰσορᾷς, γυνὴ
ναυτικὸν στράτευμ᾽ ἄναρχον κἀπὶ τοῖς κακοῖς θρασύ ...
χρήσιμον δ᾽, ὅταν θέλωσιν. ἢν δὲ τολμήσῃς σύ μου
χεῖρ᾽ ὑπερτεῖναι, σεσῴσμεθ᾽: εἰ δὲ μή, οὐ σεσῴσμεθα.

Χορός

δεινὸν τὸ τίκτειν καὶ φέρει φίλτρον μέγα
πᾶσίν τε κοινὸν ὥσθ᾽ ὑπερκάμνειν τέκνων.

Ἀχιλλεύς

Ἀχιλλεύς

ὑψηλόφρων μοι θυμὸς αἴρεται πρόσω:
ἐπίσταμαι δὲ τοῖς κακοῖσί τ᾽ ἀσχαλᾶν
μετρίως τε χαίρειν τοῖσιν ἐξωγκωμένοις.
λελογισμένοι γὰρ οἱ τοιοίδ᾽ εἰσὶν βροτῶν
ὀρθῶς διαζῆν τὸν βίον γνώμης μέτα.
ἔστιν μὲν οὖν ἵν᾽ ἡδὺ μὴ λίαν φρονεῖν,
ἔστιν δὲ χὤπου χρήσιμον γνώμην ἔχειν.
ἐγὼ δ᾽, ἐν ἀνδρὸς εὐσεβεστάτου τραφεὶς
Χείρωνος, ἔμαθον τοὺς τρόπους ἁπλοῦς ἔχειν.
καὶ τοῖς Ἀτρείδαις, ἢν μὲν ἡγῶνται καλῶς,
πεισόμεθ᾽, ὅταν δὲ μὴ καλῶς, οὐ πείσομαι.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐνθάδ᾽ ἐν Τροίᾳ τ᾽ ἐλευθέραν φύσιν
παρέχων, Ἄρη τὸ κατ᾽ ἐμὲ κοσμήσω δορί.
σὲ δ᾽, ᾧ σχέτλια παθοῦσα πρὸς τῶν φιλτάτων,
ἃ δὴ κατ᾽ ἄνδρα γίγνεται νεανίαν,
τοσοῦτον οἶκτον περιβαλὼν καταστελῶ,
κοὔποτε κόρη σὴ πρὸς πατρὸς σφαγήσεται,
ἐμὴ φατισθεῖσ᾽: οὐ γὰρ ἐμπλέκειν πλοκὰς

ἐγὼ παρέξω σῷ πόσει τοὐμὸν δέμας.
τοὔνομα γάρ, εἰ καὶ μὴ σίδηρον ἥρατο,
τοὐμὸν φονεύσει παῖδα σήν. τὸ δ᾽ αἴτιον
πόσις σός. ἁγνὸν δ᾽ οὐκέτ᾽ ἐστὶ σῶμ᾽ ἐμόν,
εἰ δι᾽ ἔμ᾽ ὀλεῖται διά τε τοὺς ἐμοὺς γάμους
ἡ δεινὰ τλᾶσα κοὐκ ἀνεκτὰ παρθένος,
θαυμαστὰ δ᾽ ὡς ἀνάξι᾽ ἠτιμασμένη.

ἐγὼ κάκιστος ἦν ἄρ᾽ Ἀργείων ἀνήρ,
ἐγὼ τὸ μηδέν, Μενέλεως δ᾽ ἐν ἀνδράσιν,
ὡς οὐχὶ Πηλέως, ἀλλ᾽ ἀλάστορος γεγώς,
εἴπερ φονεύει τοὐμὸν ὄνομα σῷ πόσει.
μὰ τὸν δι᾽ ὑγρῶν κυμάτων τεθραμμένον
Νηρέα, φυτουργὸν Θέτιδος ἥ μ᾽ ἐγείνατο,
οὐχ ἅψεται σῆς θυγατρὸς Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ,
οὐδ᾽ εἰς ἄκραν χεῖρ᾽, ὥστε προσβαλεῖν πέπλοις:
ἢ Σίπυλος ἔσται πόλις, ὅρισμα βαρβάρων,
ὅθεν πεφύκασ᾽ οἱ στρατηλάται γένος,
Φθίας δὲ τοὔνομ᾽ οὐδαμοῦ κεκλήσεται.
πικροὺς δὲ προχύτας χέρνιβάς τ᾽ ἀνάξεται
Κάλχας ὁ μάντις. τίς δὲ μάντις ἔστ᾽ ἀνήρ,
ὃς ὀλίγ᾽ ἀληθῆ, πολλὰ δὲ ψευδῆ λέγει
τυχών, ὅταν δὲ μὴ τύχῃ, διοίχεται;
οὐ τῶν γάμων ἕκατι — μυρίαι κόραι
θηρῶσι λέκτρον τοὐμόν — εἴρηται τόδε:
ἀλλ᾽ ὕβριν ἐς ἡμᾶς ὕβρισ᾽ Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ.
χρῆν δ᾽ αὐτὸν αἰτεῖν τοὐμὸν ὄνομ᾽ ἐμοῦ πάρα,
θήραμα παιδός: ἡ Κλυταιμήστρα δ᾽ ἐμοὶ
μάλιστ᾽ ἐπείσθη θυγατέρ᾽ ἐκδοῦναι πόσει.
ἔδωκά τἂν Ἕλλησιν, εἰ πρὸς Ἴλιον
ἐν τῷδ᾽ ἔκαμνε νόστος: οὐκ ἠρνούμεθ᾽ ἂν
τὸ κοινὸν αὔξειν ὧν μέτ᾽ ἐστρατευόμην.
νῦν δ᾽ οὐδέν εἰμι, παρὰ δὲ τοῖς στρατηλάταις
ἐν εὐμαρεῖ με δρᾶν τε καὶ μὴ δρᾶν κακῶς.
τάχ᾽ εἴσεται σίδηρος, ὃν πρὶν ἐς Φρύγας
ἐλθεῖν, † φόνου κηλῖσιν αἵματι † χρανῶ,
εἴ τίς με τὴν σὴν θυγατέρ᾽ ἐξαιρήσεται.

ἀλλ᾽ ἡσύχαζε: θεὸς ἐγὼ πέφηνά σοι
μέγιστος, οὐκ ὤν: ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως γενήσομαι.

Χορός

ἔλεξας, ὦ παῖ Πηλέως, σοῦ τ᾽ ἄξια
καὶ τῆς ἐναλίας δαίμονος, σεμνῆς θεοῦ.

Κλυταιμήστρα

φεῦ:
πῶς ἄν σ᾽ ἐπαινέσαιμι μὴ λίαν λόγοις,
μηδ᾽ ἐνδεὶς τοῦδ᾽ ἀπολέσαιμι τὴν χάριν;
αἰνούμενοι γὰρ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ τρόπον τινὰ
μισοῦσι τοὺς αἰνοῦντας, ἢν αἰνῶσ᾽ ἄγαν.
αἰσχύνομαι δὲ παραφέρουσ᾽ οἰκτροὺς λόγους,
ἰδίᾳ νοσοῦσα: σὺ δ᾽ ἄνοσος κακῶν ἐμῶν.
ἀλλ᾽ οὖν ἔχει τοι σχῆμα, κἂν ἄπωθεν ᾖ
ἀνὴρ ὁ χρηστός, δυστυχοῦντας ὠφελεῖν.
οἴκτιρε δ᾽ ἡμᾶς: οἰκτρὰ γὰρ πεπόνθαμεν:
ἢ πρῶτα μέν σε γαμβρὸν οἰηθεῖσ᾽ ἔχειν,
κενὴν κατέσχον ἐλπίδ᾽: εἶτά σοι τάχα
ὄρνις γένοιτ᾽ ἂν τοῖσι μέλλουσιν γάμοις
θανοῦσ᾽ ἐμὴ παῖς, ὅ σε φυλάξασθαι χρεών.
ἀλλ᾽ εὖ μὲν ἀρχὰς εἶπας, εὖ δὲ καὶ τέλη:
σοῦ γὰρ θέλοντος παῖς ἐμὴ σωθήσεται.

βούλῃ νιν ἱκέτιν σὸν περιπτύξαι γόνυ;
ἀπαρθένευτα μὲν τάδ᾽: εἰ δέ σοι δοκεῖ,
ἥξει, δι᾽ αἰδοῦς ὄμμ᾽ ἔχουσ᾽ ἐλεύθερον.
εἰ δ᾽ οὐ παρούσης ταὐτὰ τεύξομαι σέθεν,
μενέτω κατ᾽ οἴκους: σεμνὰ γὰρ σεμνύνεται.
ὅμως δ᾽ ὅσον γε δυνατὸν αἰδεῖσθαι χρεών.

Ἀχιλλεύς

σὺ μήτε σὴν παῖδ᾽ ἔξαγ᾽ ὄψιν εἰς ἐμήν,
μήτ᾽ εἰς ὄνειδος ἀμαθὲς ἔλθωμεν, γύναι:

στρατὸς γὰρ ἀθρόος, ἀργὸς ὢν τῶν οἴκοθεν,
λέσχας πονηρὰς καὶ κακοστόμους φιλεῖ.
πάντως δέ μ᾽ ἱκετεύοντέ θ᾽ ἥξετ᾽ εἰς ἴσον,
εἴ τ᾽ ἀνικέτευτος: εἷς ἐμοὶ γάρ ἐστ᾽ ἀγὼν
μέγιστος ὑμᾶς ἐξαπαλλάξαι κακῶν.
ὡς ἕν γ᾽ ἀκούσασ᾽ ἴσθι, μὴ ψευδῶς μ᾽ ἐρεῖν:
ψευδῆ λέγων δὲ καὶ μάτην ἐγκερτομῶν,
θάνοιμι: μὴ θάνοιμι δ᾽, ἢν σῴσω κόρην.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ὄναιο συνεχῶς δυστυχοῦντας ὠφελῶν.

Ἀχιλλεύς

ἄκουε δή νυν, ἵνα τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ ἔχῃ καλῶς.

Κλυταιμήστρα

τί τοῦτ᾽ ἔλεξας; ὡς ἀκουστέον γέ σου.

Ἀχιλλεύς

† πειθώμεθ᾽ αὖτις † πατέρα βέλτιον φρονεῖν.

Κλυταιμήστρα

κακός τίς ἐστι καὶ λίαν ταρβεῖ στρατόν.

Ἀχιλλεύς

ἀλλ᾽ οἱ λόγοι γε καταπαλαίουσιν λόγους.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ψυχρὰ μὲν ἐλπίς: ὅ τι δὲ χρή με δρᾶν φράσον.

Ἀχιλλεύς

ἱκέτευ᾽ ἐκεῖνον πρῶτα μὴ κτείνειν τέκνα:
ἢν δ᾽ ἀντιβαίνῃ, πρὸς ἐμέ σοι πορευτέον.
ᾗ γὰρ τὸ χρῄζον ἐπίθετ᾽, οὐ τοὐμὸν χρεὼν
χωρεῖν: ἔχει γὰρ αὐτὸ τὴν σωτηρίαν.
κἀγώ τ᾽ ἀμείνων πρὸς φίλον γενήσομαι,
στρατός τ᾽ ἂν οὐ μέμψαιτό μ᾽, εἰ τὰ πράγματα
λελογισμένως πράσσοιμι μᾶλλον ἢ σθένει.
† καλῶς δὲ κρανθέντων καὶ πρὸς ἡδονὴν φίλοις
σοί τ᾽ ἂν γένοιτο κἂν ἐμοῦ χωρὶς τάδε. †

Κλυταιμήστρα

ὡς σώφρον᾽ εἶπας. δραστέον δ᾽ ἅ σοι δοκεῖ.
ἢν δ᾽ αὖ τι μὴ πράσσωμεν ὧν ἐγὼ θέλω,
ποῦ σ᾽ αὖθις ὀψόμεσθα, ποῦ; χρή μ᾽ ἀθλίαν
ἐλθοῦσαν εὑρεῖν σὴν χέρ᾽ ἐπίκουρον κακῶν;

Ἀχιλλεύς

ἡμεῖς σε φύλακες οὗ χρεὼν φυλάξομεν,
μή τίς σ᾽ ἴδῃ στείχουσαν ἐπτοημένην
Δαναῶν δι᾽ ὄχλου: μηδὲ πατρῷον δόμον
αἴσχυν᾽: ὁ γάρ τοι Τυνδάρεως οὐκ ἄξιος
κακῶς ἀκούειν: ἐν γὰρ Ἕλλησιν μέγας.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἔστιν τάδ᾽: ἄρχε: σοί με δουλεύειν χρεών.
εἰ δ᾽ εἰσὶ θεοί, δίκαιος ὢν ἀνὴρ θεῶν
ἐσθλῶν κυρήσεις: εἰ δὲ μή, τί δεῖ πονεῖν;

Χορός

τίν᾽ ἄρ᾽ Ὑμέναιος διὰ λωτοῦ Λίβυος
μετά τε φιλοχόρου κιθάρας
συρίγγων θ᾽ ὑπὸ καλαμοεσ-
σᾶν ἔστασεν ἰαχάν,
ὅτ᾽ ἀνὰ Πήλιον αἱ καλλιπλόκαμοι

δαιτὶ θεῶν ἔνι Πιερίδες
χρυσεοσάνδαλον ἴχνος
ἐν γᾷ κρούουσαι
Πηλέως ἐς γάμον ἦλθον,
μελῳδοῖς Θέτιν ἀχήμασι τόν τ᾽ Αἰακίδαν,
Κενταύρων ἐν ὄρεσι κλέουσαι
Πηλιάδα καθ᾽ ὕλαν.
ὁ δὲ Δαρδανίδας, Διὸς
λέκτρων τρύφημα φίλον,
χρυσέοισιν ἄφυσσε λοιβὰν
ἐν κρατήρων γυάλοις,
ὁ Φρύγιος Γανυμήδης.
παρὰ δὲ λευκοφαῆ ψάμαθον
εἱλισσόμεναι κύκλια
πεντήκοντα κόραι γάμους
Νηρέως ἐχόρευσαν.

ἀνὰ δ᾽ ἐλάταισι στεφανώδει τε χλόᾳ
θίασος ἔμολεν ἱπποβάτας
Κενταύρων ἐπὶ δαῖτα τὰν
θεῶν κρατῆρά τε Βάκχου.
μέγα δ᾽ ἀνέκλαγον: Ὦ Νηρηὶ κόρα,
παῖδα σὲ Θεσσαλίᾳ μέγα φῶς
μάντις ὁ φοιβάδα μοῦσαν
εἰδὼς γεννάσειν
Χείρων ἐξονόμαζεν,
ὃς ἥξει χθόνα λογχήρεσι σὺν Μυρμιδόνων
ἀσπισταῖς Πριάμοιο κλεινὰν
γαῖαν ἐκπυρώσων,
περὶ σώματι χρυσέων
ὅπλων Ἡφαιστοπόνων
κεκορυθμένος ἔνδυτ᾽, ἐκ θεᾶς
ματρὸς δωρήματ᾽ ἔχων
Θέτιδος, ἅ νιν ἔτικτεν.
μακάριον τότε δαίμονες
τᾶς εὐπάτριδος γάμον

Νηρήδων ἔθεσαν πρώτας
Πηλέως θ᾽ ὑμεναίους.

σὲ δ᾽ ἐπὶ κάρα στέψουσι καλλικόμαν
πλόκαμον Ἀργεῖοι, βαλιὰν
ὥστε πετραίων ἀπ᾽ ἄντρων
† ἐλθοῦσαν ὀρέων †
μόσχον ἀκήρατον, βρότειον
αἱμάσσοντες λαιμόν:
οὐ σύριγγι τραφεῖσαν οὐδ᾽
ἐν ῥοιβδήσεσι βουκόλων,
παρὰ δὲ ματέρι νυμφοκόμον
Ἰναχίδαις γάμον.
ποῦ τὸ τᾶς Αἰδοῦς
ἢ τὸ τᾶς Ἀρετᾶς ἔχει
σθένειν τι πρόσωπον,
ὁπότε τὸ μὲν ἄσεπτον ἔχει
δύνασιν, ἁ δ᾽ Ἀρετὰ κατόπι-
σθεν θνατοῖς ἀμελεῖται,
Ἀνομία δὲ νόμων κρατεῖ,
καὶ μὴ κοινὸς ἀγὼν βροτοῖς
μή τις θεῶν φθόνος ἔλθῃ;

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἐξῆλθον οἴκων προσκοπουμένη πόσιν,
χρόνιον ἀπόντα κἀκλελοιπότα στέγας.
ἐν δακρύοισι δ᾽ ἡ τάλαινα παῖς ἐμή,
πολλὰς ἰεῖσα μεταβολὰς ὀδυρμάτων,
θάνατον ἀκούσασ᾽, ὃν πατὴρ βουλεύεται.
μνήμην δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ εἶχον πλησίον βεβηκότος
Ἀγαμέμνονος τοῦδ᾽, ὃς ἐπὶ τοῖς αὐτοῦ τέκνοις
ἀνόσια πράσσων αὐτίχ᾽ εὑρεθήσεται.

Ἀγαμέμνων

Λήδας γένεθλον, ἐν καλῷ σ᾽ ἔξω δόμων
ηὕρηχ᾽, ἵν᾽ εἴπω παρθένου χωρὶς λόγους

οὓς οὐκ ἀκούειν τὰς γαμουμένας πρέπει.

Κλυταιμήστρα

τί δ᾽ ἔστιν, οὗ σοι καιρὸς ἀντιλάζυται;

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἔκπεμπε παῖδα δωμάτων πατρὸς μέτα:
ὡς χέρνιβες πάρεισιν εὐτρεπισμέναι,
προχύται τε βάλλειν πῦρ καθάρσιον χεροῖν,
μόσχοι τε, πρὸ γάμων ἃς θεᾷ πεσεῖν χρεών.
Ἀρτέμιδι, μέλανος αἵματος φυσήματα.

Κλυταιμήστρα

τοῖς ὀνόμασιν μὲν εὖ λέγεις, τὰ δ᾽ ἔργα σου
οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ὅπως χρή μ᾽ ὀνομάσασαν εὖ λέγειν.
χώρει δέ, θύγατερ, ἐκτός — οἶσθα γὰρ πατρὸς
πάντως ἃ μέλλει — χὑπὸ τοῖς πέπλοις ἄγε
λαβοῦσ᾽ Ὀρέστην, σὸν κασίγνητον, τέκνον.
ἰδοὺ πάρεστιν ἥδε πειθαρχοῦσά σοι.
τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ἐγὼ πρὸ τῆσδε κἀμαυτῆς φράσω.

Ἀγαμέμνων

τέκνον, τί κλαίεις, οὐδ᾽ ἔθ᾽ ἡδέως ὁρᾷς,
ἐς γῆν δ᾽ ἐρείσασ᾽ ὄμμα πρόσθ᾽ ἔχεις πέπλους;

Κλυταιμήστρα

φεῦ:
τίν᾽ ἂν λάβοιμι τῶν ἐμῶν ἀρχὴν κακῶν;
ἅπασι γὰρ πρώτοισι χρήσασθαι πάρα
κἀν ὑστάτοισι κἀν μέσοισι πανταχοῦ.

Ἀγαμέμνων

τί δ᾽ ἔστιν; ὥς μοι πάντες εἰς ἓν ἥκετε,
σύγχυσιν ἔχοντες καὶ ταραγμὸν ὀμμάτων.

Κλυταιμήστρα

εἴφ᾽ ἂν ἐρωτήσω σε γενναίως, πόσι.

Ἀγαμέμνων

οὐδὲν κελευσμοῦ δεῖ σ᾽: ἐρωτᾶσθαι θέλω.

Κλυταιμήστρα

τὴν παῖδα τὴν σὴν τήν τ᾽ ἐμὴν μέλλεις κτενεῖν;

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἔα:
τλήμονά γ᾽ ἔλεξας, ὑπονοεῖς θ᾽ ἃ μή σε χρή.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἔχ᾽ ἥσυχος.
κἀκεῖνό μοι τὸ πρῶτον ἀπόκριναι πάλιν.

Ἀγαμέμνων

σὺ δ᾽, ἢν γ᾽ ἐρωτᾷς εἰκότ᾽, εἰκότ᾽ ἂν κλύοις.

Κλυταιμήστρα

οὐκ ἄλλ᾽ ἐρωτῶ, καὶ σὺ μὴ λέγ᾽ ἄλλα μοι.

Ἀγαμέμνων

ὦ πότνια μοῖρα καὶ τύχη δαίμων τ᾽ ἐμός.

Κλυταιμήστρα

κἀμός γε καὶ τῆσδ᾽, εἷς τριῶν δυσδαιμόνων.

Ἀγαμέμνων

τίν᾽ ἠδίκησαι;

Κλυταιμήστρα
τοῦτ᾽ ἐμοῦ πεύθῃ πάρα;
ὁ νοῦς ὅδ᾽ αὐτὸς νοῦν ἔχων οὐ τυγχάνει.

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἀπωλόμεσθα. προδέδοται τὰ κρυπτά μου.

Κλυταιμήστρα

πάντ᾽ οἶδα, καὶ πεπύσμεθ᾽ ἃ σὺ μέλλεις με δρᾶν:
αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ σιγᾶν ὁμολογοῦντός ἐστί σου
καὶ τὸ στενάζειν: πολλὰ μὴ κάμῃς λέγων.

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἰδοὺ σιωπῶ: τὸ γὰρ ἀναίσχυντον τί δεῖ
ψευδῆ λέγοντα προσλαβεῖν τῇ συμφορᾷ;

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἄκουε δή νυν: ἀνακαλύψω γὰρ λόγους,
κοὐκέτι παρῳδοῖς χρησόμεσθ᾽ αἰνίγμασιν.
πρῶτον μέν, ἵνα σοι πρῶτα τοῦτ᾽ ὀνειδίσω,
ἔγημας ἄκουσάν με κἄλαβες βίᾳ,
τὸν πρόσθεν ἄνδρα Τάνταλον κατακτανών:
βρέφος τε τοὐμὸν σῷ προσούδισας πάλῳ,
μαστῶν βιαίως τῶν ἐμῶν ἀποσπάσας.
καὶ τὼ Διός σε παῖδ᾽, ἐμὼ δὲ συγγόνω,
ἵπποισι μαρμαίροντ᾽ ἐπεστρατευσάτην:
πατὴρ δὲ πρέσβυς Τυνδάρεώς σ᾽ ἐρρύσατο
ἱκέτην γενόμενον, τἀμὰ δ᾽ ἔσχες αὖ λέχη.
οὖ σοι καταλλαχθεῖσα περὶ σὲ καὶ δόμους

συμμαρτυρήσεις ὡς ἄμεμπτος ἦ γυνή,
ἔς τ᾽ Ἀφροδίτην σωφρονοῦσα καὶ τὸ σὸν
μέλαθρον αὔξουσ᾽, ὥστε σ᾽ εἰσιόντα τε
χαίρειν θύραζέ τ᾽ ἐξιόντ᾽ εὐδαιμονεῖν.
σπάνιον δὲ θήρευμ᾽ ἀνδρὶ τοιαύτην λαβεῖν
δάμαρτα: φλαύραν δ᾽ οὐ σπάνις γυναῖκ᾽ ἔχειν.
τίκτω δ᾽ ἐπὶ τρισὶ παρθένοισι παῖδά σοι
τόνδ᾽, ὧν μιᾶς σὺ τλημόνως μ᾽ ἀποστερεῖς.
κἄν τίς σ᾽ ἔρηται τίνος ἑκατί νιν κτενεῖς,
λέξον, τί φήσεις; ἢ ‘μὲ χρὴ λέγειν τὰ σά;
Ἑλένην Μενέλεως ἵνα λάβῃ. καλὸν † γένος †,
κακῆς γυναικὸς μισθὸν ἀποτεῖσαι τέκνα.
τἄχθιστα τοῖσι φιλτάτοις ὠνούμεθα.
ἄγ᾽, εἰ στρατεύσῃ καταλιπών μ᾽ ἐν δώμασιν,
κἀκεῖ γενήσῃ διὰ μακρᾶς ἀπουσίας,
τίν᾽ ἐν δόμοις με καρδίαν ἕξειν δοκεῖς;
ὅταν θρόνους τῆσδ᾽ εἰσίδω πάντας κενούς,
κενοὺς δὲ παρθενῶνας, ἐπὶ δὲ δακρύοις
μόνη κάθωμαι, τήνδε θρηνῳδοῦσ᾽ ἀεί:
Ἀπώλεσέν σ᾽, ὦ τέκνον, ὁ φυτεύσας πατήρ,
αὐτὸς κτανών, οὐκ ἄλλος οὐδ᾽ ἄλλῃ χερί,
τοιόνδε νόστον καταλιπὼν πρὸς τοὺς δόμους.
ἐπεὶ βραχείας προφάσεως ἔδει μόνον,
ἐφ᾽ ᾗ σ᾽ ἐγὼ καὶ παῖδες αἱ λελειμμέναι
δεξόμεθα δέξιν ἥν σε δέξασθαι χρεών.
μὴ δῆτα πρὸς θεῶν μήτ᾽ ἀναγκάσῃς ἐμὲ
κακὴν γενέσθαι περὶ σέ, μήτ᾽ αὐτὸς γένῃ.

εἶέν:
θύσεις † δὲ παῖδ᾽, ἔνθα † τίνας εὐχὰς ἐρεῖς;
τί σοι κατεύξῃ τἀγαθόν, σφάζων τέκνον;
νόστον πονηρόν, οἴκοθέν γ᾽ αἰσχρῶς ἰών;
ἀλλ᾽ ἐμὲ δίκαιον ἀγαθὸν εὔχεσθαί τί σοι;
οὔ τἄρ᾽ ἀσυνέτους τοὺς θεοὺς ἡγοίμεθ᾽ ἄν,
εἰ τοῖσιν αὐθένταισιν εὖ φρονήσομεν;
ἦκων δ᾽ ἂν Ἄργος προσπέσοις τέκνοισι σοῖς;
ἀλλ᾽ οὐ θέμις σοι. τίς δὲ καὶ προσβλέψεται

παίδων σ᾽, ἵν᾽ αὐτῶν προσέμενος κτάνῃς τινά;
ταῦτ᾽ ἦλθες ἤδη διὰ λόγων, ἢ σκῆπτρά σοι
μόνον διαφέρειν καὶ στρατηλατεῖν μέλει;
ὃν χρῆν δίκαιον λόγον ἐν Ἀργείοις λέγειν:
Βούλεσθ᾽, Ἀχαιοί, πλεῖν Φρυγῶν ἐπὶ χθόνα;
κλῆρον τίθεσθε παῖδ᾽ ὅτου θανεῖν χρεών.
ἐν ἴσῳ γὰρ ἦν τόδ᾽, ἀλλὰ μὴ σὲ ἐξαίρετον
σφάγιον παρασχεῖν Δαναΐδαισι παῖδα σήν,
ἢ Μενέλεων πρὸ μητρὸς Ἑρμιόνην κτανεῖν,
οὗπερ τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ ἦν. νῦν δ᾽ ἐγὼ μὲν ἡ τὸ σὸν
σῴζουσα λέκτρον παιδὸς ἐστερήσομαι,
ἡ δ᾽ ἐξαμαρτοῦσ᾽, ὑπότροφον νεάνιδα
Σπάρτῃ κομίζουσ᾽, εὐτυχὴς γενήσεται.
τούτων ἄμειψαί μ᾽ εἴ τι μὴ καλῶς λέγω:
εἰ δ᾽ εὖ λέλεκται, † νῶι μὴ δή γε κτάνῃς †
τὴν σήν τε κἀμὴν παῖδα, καὶ σώφρων ἔσῃ.

Χορός

πιθοῦ. τὸ γάρ τοι τέκνα συνσῴζειν καλόν,
Ἀγάμεμνον: οὐδεὶς πρὸς τάδ᾽ ἀντερεῖ βροτῶν.

Ἰφιγένεια

εἰ μὲν τὸν Ὀρφέως εἶχον, ὦ πάτερ, λόγον,
πείθειν ἐπᾴδουσ᾽, ὥσθ᾽ ὁμαρτεῖν μοι πέτρας,
κηλεῖν τε τοῖς λόγοισιν οὓς ἐβουλόμην,
ἐνταῦθ᾽ ἂν ἦλθον: νῦν δέ, τἀπ᾽ ἐμοῦ σοφά,
δάκρυα παρέξω: ταῦτα γὰρ δυναίμεθ᾽ ἄν.
ἱκετηρίαν δὲ γόνασιν ἐξάπτω σέθεν
τὸ σῶμα τοὐμόν, ὅπερ ἔτικτεν ἥδε σοι,
μή μ᾽ ἀπολέσῃς ἄωρον: ἡδὺ γὰρ τὸ φῶς
βλέπειν: τὰ δ᾽ ὑπὸ γῆς μή μ᾽ ἰδεῖν ἀναγκάσῃς.
πρώτη σ᾽ ἐκάλεσα πατέρα καὶ σὺ παῖδ᾽ ἐμέ:
πρώτη δὲ γόνασι σοῖσι σῶμα δοῦσ᾽ ἐμὸν
φίλας χάριτας ἔδωκα κἀντεδεξάμην.
λόγος δ᾽ ὁ μὲν σὸς ἦν ὅδ᾽: Ἆρά σ᾽, ὦ τέκνον,
εὐδαίμον᾽ ἀνδρὸς ἐν δόμοισιν ὄψομαι,

ζῶσάν τε καὶ θάλλουσαν ἀξίως ἐμοῦ;
οὑμὸς δ᾽ ὅδ᾽ ἦν αὖ περὶ σὸν ἐξαρτωμένης
γένειον, οὗ νῦν ἀντιλάζυμαι χερί:
Τί δ᾽ ἆρ᾽ ἐγὼ σέ; πρέσβυν ἆρ᾽ ἐσδέξομαι
ἐμῶν φίλαισιν ὑποδοχαῖς δόμων, πάτερ,
πόνων τιθηνοὺς ἀποδιδοῦσά σοι τροφάς;
τούτων ἐγὼ μὲν τῶν λόγων μνήμην ἔχω,
σὺ δ᾽ ἐπιλέλησαι, καί μ᾽ ἀποκτεῖναι θέλεις.
μή, πρός σε Πέλοπος καὶ πρὸς Ἀτρέως πατρὸς
καὶ τῆσδε μητρός, ἣ πρὶν ὠδίνουσ᾽ ἐμὲ
νῦν δευτέραν ὠδῖνα τήνδε λαμβάνει.
τί μοι μέτεστι τῶν Ἀλεξάνδρου γάμων
Ἑλένης τε; πόθεν ἦλθ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ὀλέθρῳ τῷμῷ, πάτερ;
βλέψον πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὄμμα δὸς φίλημά τε,
ἵν᾽ ἀλλὰ τοῦτο κατθανοῦσ᾽ ἔχω σέθεν
μνημεῖον, ἢν μὴ τοῖς ἐμοῖς πεισθῇς λόγοις.
ἀδελφέ, μικρὸς μὲν σύ γ᾽ ἐπίκουρος φίλοις,
ὅμως δὲ συνδάκρυσον, ἱκέτευσον πατρὸς
τὴν σὴν ἀδελφὴν μὴ θανεῖν: αἴσθημά τοι
κἀν νηπίοις γε τῶν κακῶν ἐγγίγνεται.
ἰδοὺ σιωπῶν λίσσεταί σ᾽ ὅδ᾽, ὦ πάτερ.
ἀλλ᾽ αἴδεσαί με καὶ κατοίκτιρον βίου.
ναί, πρὸς γενείου σ᾽ ἀντόμεσθα δύο φίλω:
ὃ μὲν νεοσσός ἐστιν, ἣ δ᾽ ηὐξημένη.
ἓν συντεμοῦσα πάντα νικήσω λόγον:
τὸ φῶς τόδ᾽ ἀνθρώποισιν ἥδιστον βλέπειν,
τὰ νέρθε δ᾽ οὐδέν: μαίνεται δ᾽ ὃς εὔχεται
θανεῖν. κακῶς ζῆν κρεῖσσον ἢ καλῶς θανεῖν.

Χορός

ὦ τλῆμον Ἑλένη, διὰ σὲ καὶ τοὺς σοὺς γάμους
ἀγὼν Ἀτρείδαις καὶ τέκνοις ἥκει μέγας.

Ἀγαμέμνων

ἐγὼ τά τ᾽ οἰκτρὰ συνετός εἰμι καὶ τὰ μή,
φιλῶ τ᾽ ἐμαυτοῦ τέκνα: μαινοίμην γὰρ ἄν.

δεινῶς δ᾽ ἔχει μοι ταῦτα τολμῆσαι, γύναι,
δεινῶς δὲ καὶ μή: τοῦτο γὰρ πρᾶξαί με δεῖ.
ὁρᾶθ᾽ ὅσον στράτευμα ναύφρακτον τόδε,
χαλκέων θ᾽ ὅπλων ἄνακτες Ἑλλήνων ὅσοι,
οἷς νόστος οὐκ ἔστ᾽ Ἰλίου πύργους ἔπι,
εἰ μή σε θύσω, μάντις ὡς Κάλχας λέγει,
οὐδ᾽ ἔστι Τροίας ἐξελεῖν κλεινὸν βάθρον.
μέμηνε δ᾽ Ἀφροδίτη τις Ἑλλήνων στρατῷ
πλεῖν ὡς τάχιστα βαρβάρων ἐπὶ χθόνα,
παῦσαί τε λέκτρων ἁρπαγὰς Ἑλληνικῶν:
οἳ τὰς ἐν Ἄργει παρθένους κτενοῦσί μου
ὑμᾶς τε κἀμέ, θέσφατ᾽ εἰ λύσω θεᾶς.
οὐ Μενέλεώς με καταδεδούλωται, τέκνον,
οὐδ᾽ ἐπὶ τὸ κείνου βουλόμενον ἐλήλυθα,
ἀλλ᾽ Ἑλλάς, ᾗ δεῖ, κἂν θέλω κἂν μὴ θέλω,
θῦσαί σε: τούτου δ᾽ ἥσσονες καθέσταμεν.
ἐλευθέραν γὰρ δεῖ νιν ὅσον ἐν σοί, τέκνον,
κἀμοὶ γενέσθαι, μηδὲ βαρβάροις ὕπο
Ἕλληνας ὄντας λέκτρα συλᾶσθαι βίᾳ.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ὦ τέκνον, ὦ ξέναι,
οἳ ‘γὼ θανάτου τοῦ σοῦ μελέα.
φεύγει σε πατὴρ Ἅιδῃ παραδούς.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἰφιγένεια

οἳ ‘γώ, μᾶτερ: ταὐτὸν τόδε γὰρ
μέλος εἰς ἄμφω πέπτωκε τύχης,
κοὐκέτι μοι φῶς
οὐδ᾽ ἀελίου τόδε φέγγος.
ἰὼ ἰώ.
νιφόβολον Φρυγῶν νάπος Ἴδας τ᾽ ὄρεα,
Πρίαμος ὅθι ποτὲ βρέφος ἁπαλὸν ἔβαλε
ματέρος ἀποπρὸ νοσφίσας ἐπὶ μόρῳ

θανατόεντι Πάριν, ὃς Ἰδαῖος Ἰ-
δαῖος ἐλέγετ᾽ ἐλέγετ᾽ ἐν Φρυγῶν πόλει,
μή ποτ᾽ ὤφελες τὸν ἀμφὶ
βουσὶ βουκόλον τραφέντ᾽
Ἀλέξανδρον οἰκίσαι
ἀμφὶ τὸ λευκὸν ὕδωρ, ὅθι κρῆναι
Νυμφᾶν κεῖνται
λειμών τ᾽ ἔρνεσι θάλλων
χλωροῖς καὶ ῥοδόεντ᾽
ἄνθε᾽ ὑακίνθινά τε θεαῖς δρέπειν: ἔνθα ποτὲ
Παλλὰς ἔμολε καὶ δολιόφρων Κύπρις
Ἥρα θ᾽ Ἑρμᾶς θ᾽, ὁ Διὸς ἄγγελος,
ἃ μὲν ἐπὶ πόθῳ τρυφῶσα
Κύπρις, ἃ δὲ δορὶ Παλλάς,
Ἥρα τε Διὸς ἄνακτος
εὐναῖσι βασιλίσιν,
κρίσιν ἐπὶ στυγνὰν ἔριν τε
καλλονᾶς, ἐμοὶ δὲ θάνατον —
ὄνομα μὲν φέροντα Δαναΐ-
δαισιν, ὦ κόραι, πρόθυμα δ᾽
ἔλαβεν Ἄρτεμις πρὸς Ἴλιον.

ὁ δὲ τεκών με τὰν τάλαιναν,
ὦ μᾶτερ ὦ μᾶτερ,
οἴχεται προδοὺς ἔρημον.
ὦ δυστάλαιν᾽ ἐγώ, πικρὰν
πικρὰν ἰδοῦσα δυσελέναν,
φονεύομαι διόλλυμαι
σφαγαῖσιν ἀνοσίοισιν ἀνοσίου πατρός.
μή μοι ναῶν χαλκεμβολάδων
πρύμνας ἄδ᾽ Αὐλὶς δέξασθαι
τούσδ᾽ εἰς ὅρμους ἐς Τροίαν
ὤφελεν ἐλάταν πομπαίαν,
μηδ᾽ ἀνταίαν Εὐρίπῳ
πνεῦσαι πομπὰν Ζεύς, μειλίσσων
αὔραν ἄλλοις ἄλλαν θνατῶν
λαίφεσι χαίρειν,

τοῖσι δὲ λύπαν, τοῖσι δ᾽ ἀνάγκαν,
τοῖς δ᾽ ἐξορμᾶν, τοῖς δὲ στέλλειν,
τοῖσι δὲ μέλλειν.
ἦ πολύμοχθον ἄρ᾽ ἦν γένος, ἦ πολύμοχθον
ἀμερίων, τὸ χρεὼν δέ τι δύσποτμον
ἀνδράσιν ἀνευρεῖν.
ἰὼ ἰώ,
μεγάλα πάθεα, μεγάλα δ᾽ ἄχεα
Δαναΐδαις τιθεῖσα Τυνδαρὶς κόρα.

Χορός

ἐγὼ μὲν οἰκτίρω σε συμφορᾶς κακῆς
τυχοῦσαν, οἵας μήποτ᾽ ὤφελες τυχεῖν.

Ἰφιγένεια

ὦ τεκοῦσα μῆτερ, ἀνδρῶν ὄχλον εἰσορῶ πέλας.

Κλυταιμήστρα

τόν τε τῆς θεᾶς παῖδα, τέκνον, ᾧ σὺ δεῦρ᾽ ἐλήλυθας.

Ἰφιγένεια

διαχαλᾶτέ μοι μέλαθρα, δμῶες, ὡς κρύψω δέμας.

Κλυταιμήστρα

τί δὲ τέκνον, φεύγεις;

Ἰφιγένεια
Ἀχιλλέα τόνδ᾽ ἰδεῖν αἰσχύνομαι.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ὡς τί δή;

Ἰφιγένεια
τὸ δυστυχές μοι τῶν γάμων αἰδῶ φέρει.

Κλυταιμήστρα

οὐκ ἐν ἀβρότητι κεῖσαι πρὸς τὰ νῦν πεπτωκότα.
ἀλλὰ μίμν᾽: οὐ σεμνότητος ἔργον, ἢν ὀνώμεθα.

Ἀχιλλεύς

1345 ὦ γύναι τάλαινα, Λήδας θύγατερ ...

Κλυταιμήστρα
οὐ ψευδῆ θροεῖς.

Ἀχιλλεύς

δείν᾽ ἐν Ἀργείοις βοᾶται ...

Κλυταιμήστρα
τίνα βοήν; σήμαινέ μοι.

Ἀχιλλεύς

ἀμφὶ σῆς παιδός ...

Κλυταιμήστρα
πονηρὸν εἶπας οἰωνὸν λόγον.

Ἀχιλλεύς

ὡς χρεὼν σφάξαι νιν.

Κλυταιμήστρα
οὐδεὶς τοῖσδ᾽ ἐναντίον λέγει;

Ἀχιλλεύς

ἐς θόρυβον ἐγώ τι καὐτὸς ἦλυθον ...

Κλυταιμήστρα
τίν᾽, ὦ ξένε;

Ἀχιλλεύς

σῶμα λευσθῆναι πέτροισι.

Κλυταιμήστρα
μῶν κόρην σῴζων ἐμήν;

Ἀχιλλεύς

αὐτὸ τοῦτο.

Κλυταιμήστρα
τίς δ᾽ ἂν ἔτλη τοῦ σώματος τοῦ σοῦ θιγεῖν;

Ἀχιλλεύς

πάντες Ἕλληνες.

Κλυταιμήστρα
στρατὸς δὲ Μυρμιδὼν οὔ σοι παρῆν;

Ἀχιλλεύς

πρῶτος ἦν ἐκεῖνος ἐχθρός.

Κλυταιμήστρα
δι᾽ ἄρ᾽ ὀλώλαμεν, τέκνον.

Ἀχιλλεύς

οἵ με τὸν γάμων ἀπεκάλουν ἥσσονα.

Κλυταιμήστρα
ἀπεκρίνω δὲ τί;

Ἀχιλλεύς

τὴν ἐμὴν μέλλουσαν εὐνὴν μὴ κτανεῖν ...

Κλυταιμήστρα
δίκαια γάρ.

Ἀχιλλεύς

ἣν ἐφήμισεν πατήρ μοι.

Κλυταιμήστρα
καὶ Ἀργόθεν γ᾽ ἐπέμψατο.

Ἀχιλλεύς

ἀλλ᾽ ἐνικώμην κεκραγμοῦ.

Κλυταιμήστρα
τὸ πολὺ γὰρ δεινὸν κακόν.

Ἀχιλλεύς

ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως ἀρήξομέν σοι.

Κλυταιμήστρα
καὶ μαχῇ πολλοῖσιν εἷς;

Ἀχιλλεύς

εἰσορᾷς τεύχη φέροντας τούσδε;

Κλυταιμήστρα
ὄναιο τῶν φρενῶν.

Ἀχιλλεύς

ἀλλ᾽ ὀνησόμεσθα.

Κλυταιμήστρα
παῖς ἄρ᾽ οὐκέτι σφαγήσεται;

Ἀχιλλεύς

οὔκ, ἐμοῦ γ᾽ ἑκόντος.

Κλυταιμήστρα
ἥξει δ᾽ ὅστις ἅψεται κόρης;

Ἀχιλλεύς

μυρίοι γ᾽, ἄξει δ᾽ Ὀδυσσεύς.

Κλυταιμήστρα
ἆρ᾽ ὁ Σισύφου γόνος;

Ἀχιλλεύς

αὐτὸς οὗτος.

Κλυταιμήστρα
ἴδια πράσσων, ἢ στρατοῦ ταχθεὶς ὕπο;

Ἀχιλλεύς

αἱρεθεὶς ἑκών.

Κλυταιμήστρα
πονηράν γ᾽ αἵρεσιν, μιαιφονεῖν.

Ἀχιλλεύς

ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ σχήσω νιν.

Κλυταιμήστρα
ἄξει δ᾽ οὐχ ἑκοῦσαν ἁρπάσας;

Ἀχιλλεύς

δηλαδὴ ξανθῆς ἐθείρας.

Κλυταιμήστρα
ἐμὲ δὲ δρᾶν τί χρὴ τότε;

Ἀχιλλεύς

ἀντέχου θυγατρός.

Κλυταιμήστρα
ὡς τοῦδ᾽ εἵνεκ᾽ οὐ σφαγήσεται.

Ἀχιλλεύς

ἀλλὰ μὴν ἐς τοῦτό γ᾽ ἥξει.

Ἰφιγένεια

Ἰφιγένεια
μῆτερ, εἰσακούσατε
τῶν ἐμῶν λόγων: μάτην γάρ σ᾽ εἰσορῶ θυμουμένην
σῷ πόσει: τὰ δ᾽ ἀδύναθ᾽ ἡμῖν καρτερεῖν οὐ ῥᾴδιον.
τὸν μὲν οὖν ξένον δίκαιον αἰνέσαι προθυμίας:
ἀλλὰ καὶ σὲ τοῦθ᾽ ὁρᾶν χρή, μὴ διαβληθῇ στρατῷ,
καὶ πλέον πράξωμεν οὐδέν, ὅδε δὲ συμφορᾶς τύχῃ.

οἶα δ᾽ εἰσῆλθέν μ᾽, ἄκουσον, μῆτερ, ἐννοουμένην:
κατθανεῖν μέν μοι δέδοκται: τοῦτο δ᾽ αὐτὸ βούλομαι
εὐκλεῶς πρᾶξαι, παρεῖσά γ᾽ ἐκποδὼν τὸ δυσγενές.
δεῦρο δὴ σκέψαι μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν, μῆτερ, ὡς καλῶς λέγω:
εἰς ἔμ᾽ Ἑλλὰς ἡ μεγίστη πᾶσα νῦν ἀποβλέπει,
κἀν ἐμοὶ πορθμός τε ναῶν καὶ Φρυγῶν κατασκαφαὶ
τάς τε μελλούσας γυναῖκας, ἤν τι δρῶσι βάρβαροι,
μηκέθ᾽ ἁρπάζειν ἐᾶν τούσδ᾽ ὀλβίας ἐξ Ἑλλάδος,
τὸν Ἑλένης τείσαντας ὄλεθρον, ἣν ἀνήρπασεν Πάρις.
ταῦτα πάντα κατθανοῦσα ῥύσομαι, καί μου κλέος,
Ἑλλάδ᾽ ὡς ἠλευθέρωσα, μακάριον γενήσεται.
καὶ γὰρ οὐδέ τοί τι λίαν ἐμὲ φιλοψυχεῖν χρεών:
πᾶσι γάρ μ᾽ Ἕλλησι κοινὸν ἔτεκες, οὐχὶ σοὶ μόνῃ.
ἀλλὰ μυρίοι μὲν ἄνδρες ἀσπίσιν πεφραγμένοι,

μυρίοι δ᾽ ἐρέτμ᾽ ἔχοντες, πατρίδος ἠδικημένης,
δρᾶν τι τολμήσουσιν ἐχθροὺς χὑπὲρ Ἑλλάδος θανεῖν,
ἡ δ᾽ ἐμὴ ψυχὴ μί᾽ οὖσα πάντα κωλύσει τάδε;
τί τὸ δίκαιον τοῦτό γε; ἆρ᾽ ἔχοιμ᾽ ἂν ἀντειπεῖν ἔπος;
κἀπ᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽ ἔλθωμεν: οὐ δεῖ τόνδε διὰ μάχης μολεῖν
πᾶσιν Ἀργείοις γυναικὸς εἵνεκ᾽ οὐδὲ κατθανεῖν.
εἷς γ᾽ ἀνὴρ κρείσσων γυναικῶν μυρίων ὁρᾶν φάος.
εἰ βεβούληται δὲ σῶμα τοὐμὸν Ἄρτεμις λαβεῖν,
ἐμποδὼν γενήσομαι ‘γὼ θνητὸς οὖσα τῇ θεῷ;
ἀλλ᾽ ἀμήχανον: δίδωμι σῶμα τοὐμὸν Ἑλλάδι.
θύετ᾽, ἐκπορθεῖτε Τροίαν. ταῦτα γὰρ μνημεῖά μου
διὰ μακροῦ, καὶ παῖδες οὗτοι καὶ γάμοι καὶ δόξ᾽ ἐμή.
βαρβάρων δ᾽ Ἕλληνας ἄρχειν εἰκός, ἀλλ᾽ οὐ βαρβάρους,
μῆτερ, Ἑλλήνων: τὸ μὲν γὰρ δοῦλον, οἳ δ᾽ ἐλεύθεροι.

Χορός

τὸ μὲν σόν, ὦ νεᾶνι, γενναίως ἔχει:
τὸ τῆς τύχης δὲ καὶ τὸ τῆς θεοῦ νοσεῖ.

Ἀχιλλεύς

Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖ, μακάριόν μέ τις θεῶν
ἔμελλε θήσειν, εἰ τύχοιμι σῶν γάμων.
ζηλῶ δὲ σοῦ μὲν Ἑλλάδ᾽, Ἑλλάδος δὲ σέ.
εὖ γὰρ τόδ᾽ εἶπας ἀξίως τε πατρίδος:
τὸ θεομαχεῖν γὰρ ἀπολιποῦσ᾽, ὅ σου κρατεῖ,
ἐξελογίσω τὰ χρηστὰ τἀναγκαῖά τε.
μᾶλλον δὲ λέκτρων σῶν πόθος μ᾽ ἐσέρχεται
ἐς τὴν φύσιν βλέψαντα: γενναία γὰρ εἶ.
ὅρα δ᾽: ἐγὼ γὰρ βούλομαί σ᾽ εὐεργετεῖν
λαβεῖν τ᾽ ἐς οἴκους: ἄχθομαί τ᾽, ἴστω Θέτις,
εἰ μή σε σώσω Δαναΐδαισι διὰ μάχης
ἐλθών. ἄθρησον: ὁ θάνατος δεινὸν κακόν.

Ἰφιγένεια

λέγω τάδ᾽ οὐδὲν οὐδέν᾽ εὐλαβουμένη.
ἡ Τυνδαρὶς παῖς διὰ τὸ σῶμ᾽ ἀρκεῖ μάχας
ἀνδρῶν τιθεῖσα καὶ φόνους: σὺ δ᾽, ὦ ξένε,
μὴ θνῇσκε δι᾽ ἐμὲ μηδ᾽ ἀποκτείνῃς τινά,
ἔα δὲ σῷσαί μ᾽ Ἑλλάδ᾽, ἢν δυνώμεθα.

Ἀχιλλεύς

ὦ λῆμ᾽ ἄριστον, οὐκ ἔχω πρὸς τοῦτ᾽ ἔτι
λέγειν, ἐπεί σοι τάδε δοκεῖ: γενναῖα γὰρ
φρονεῖς: τί γὰρ τἀληθὲς οὐκ εἴποι τις ἄν;
ὅμως δ᾽, ἴσως γὰρ κἂν μεταγνοίης τάδε,
ὡς οὖν ἂν εἰδῇς τἀπ᾽ ἐμοῦ λελεγμένα,
ἐλθὼν τάδ᾽ ὅπλα θήσομαι βωμοῦ πέλας,
ὡς οὐκ ἐάσων σ᾽ ἀλλὰ κωλύσων θανεῖν.
χρήσῃ δὲ καὶ σὺ τοῖς ἐμοῖς λόγοις τάχα,
ὅταν πέλας σῆς φάσγανον δέρης ἴδῃς.
οὔκουν ἐάσω σ᾽ ἀφροσύνῃ τῇ σῇ θανεῖν:
ἐλθὼν δὲ σὺν ὅπλοις τοῖσδε πρὸς ναὸν θεᾶς
καραδοκήσω σὴν ἐκεῖ παρουσίαν.

Ἰφιγένεια

μῆτερ, τί σιγῇ δακρύοις τέγγεις κόρας;

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἔχω τάλαινα πρόφασιν ὥστ᾽ ἀλγεῖν φρένα.

Ἰφιγένεια

παῦσαι: ‘μὲ μὴ κάκιζε: τάδε δέ μοι πιθοῦ.

Κλυταιμήστρα

λέγ᾽: ὡς παρ᾽ ἡμῶν οὐδὲν ἀδικήσῃ, τέκνον.

Ἰφιγένεια

μήτ᾽ οὖν γε τὸν σὸν πλόκαμον ἐκτέμῃς τριχός,
μήτ᾽ ἀμφὶ σῶμα μέλανας ἀμπίσχῃ πέπλους.

Κλυταιμήστρα

τί δὴ τόδ᾽ εἶπας, τέκνον; ἀπολέσασά σε;

Ἰφιγένεια

οὐ σύ γε: σέσῳσμαι, κατ᾽ ἐμὲ δ᾽ εὐκλεὴς ἔσῃ.

Κλυταιμήστρα

πῶς εἶπας; οὐ πενθεῖν με σὴν ψυχὴν χρεών;

Ἰφιγένεια

ἥκιστ᾽, ἐπεί μοι τύμβος οὐ χωσθήσεται.

Κλυταιμήστρα

τί δαί; τὸ θνῄσκειν, οὐ τάφος, νομίζεται.

Ἰφιγένεια

βωμὸς θεᾶς μοι μνῆμα τῆς Διὸς κόρης.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἀλλ᾽, ὦ τέκνον, σοὶ πείσομαι: λέγεις γὰρ εὖ.

Ἰφιγένεια

ὡς εὐτυχοῦσά γ᾽ Ἑλλάδος τ᾽ εὐεργέτις.

Κλυταιμήστρα

τί δὴ κασιγνήταισιν ἀγγελῶ σέθεν;

Ἰφιγένεια

μηδ᾽ ἀμφὶ κείναις μέλανας ἐξάψῃ πέπλους.

Κλυταιμήστρα

εἶπω δὲ παρὰ σοῦ φίλον ἔπος τι παρθένοις;

Ἰφιγένεια

χαίρειν γε. Ὀρέστην τ᾽ ἔκτρεφ᾽ ἄνδρα τόνδε μοι.

Κλυταιμήστρα

προσέλκυσαί νιν ὕστατον θεωμένη.

Ἰφιγένεια

ὦ φίλτατ᾽, ἐπεκούρησας ὅσον εἶχες φίλοις.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἔσθ᾽ ὅ τι κατ᾽ Ἄργος δρῶσά σοι χάριν φέρω;

Ἰφιγένεια

πατέρα τὸν ἀμὸν μὴ στύγει, πόσιν γε σόν.

Κλυταιμήστρα

δεινοὺς ἀγῶνας διὰ σὲ δεῖ κεῖνον δραμεῖν.

Ἰφιγένεια

ἄκων μ᾽ ὑπὲρ γῆς Ἑλλάδος διώλεσεν.

Κλυταιμήστρα

δόλῳ δ᾽, ἀγεννῶς Ἀτρέως τ᾽ οὐκ ἀξίως.

Ἰφιγένεια

τίς μ᾽ εἶσιν ἄξων πρὶν σπαράσσεσθαι κόμης;

Κλυταιμήστρα

ἐγώ, μετά γε σοῦ ...

Ἰφιγένεια
μὴ σύ γ᾽: οὐ καλῶς λέγεις.

Κλυταιμήστρα

πέπλων ἐχομένη σῶν.

Ἰφιγένεια
ἐμοί, μῆτερ, πιθοῦ:
μέν᾽: ὡς ἐμοί τε σοί τε κάλλιον τόδε.
πατρὸς δ᾽ ὀπαδῶν τῶνδέ τίς με πεμπέτω
Ἀρτέμιδος ἐς λειμῶν᾽, ὅπου σφαγήσομαι.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ὦ τέκνον, οἴχῃ;

Ἰφιγένεια
καὶ πάλιν γ᾽ οὐ μὴ μόλω.

Κλυταιμήστρα

λιποῦσα μητέρα;

Ἰφιγένεια
ὡς ὁρᾷς γ᾽, οὐκ ἀξίως.

Κλυταιμήστρα

σχές, μή με προλίπῃς.

Ἰφιγένεια
οὐκ ἐῶ στάζειν δάκρυ.

ὑμεῖς δ᾽ ἐπευφημήσατ᾽, ὦ νεάνιδες,
παιᾶνα τἠμῇ συμφορᾷ Διὸς κόρην
Ἄρτεμιν: ἴτω δὲ Δαναΐδαις εὐφημία.
κανᾶ δ᾽ ἐναρχέσθω τις, αἰθέσθω δὲ πῦρ
προχύταις καθαρσίοισι, καὶ πατὴρ ἐμὸς
ἐνδεξιούσθω βωμόν: ὡς σωτηρίαν
Ἕλλησι δώσουσ᾽ ἔρχομαι νικηφόρον.

Ἰφιγένεια

ἄγετέ με τὰν Ἰλίου
καὶ Φρυγῶν ἐλέπτολιν.
στέφεα περίβολα δίδοτε, φέρετε
— πλόκαμος ὅδε καταστέφειν —
χερνίβων τε παγάς.
ἑλίσσετ᾽ ἀμφὶ ναὸν
ἀμφὶ βωμὸν Ἄρτεμιν,
τὰν ἄνασσαν Ἄρτεμιν,
τὰν μάκαιραν: ὡς ἐμοῖσιν, εἰ χρεών,
αἵμασι θύμασί τε
θέσφατ᾽ ἐξαλείψω.
ὦ πότνια πότνια μᾶτερ, οὐ δάκρυά γέ σοι
δώσομεν ἀμέτερα:
παρ᾽ ἱεροῖς γὰρ οὐ πρέπει.
ἰὼ ἰὼ νεάνιδες,
συνεπαείδετ᾽ Ἄρτεμιν
Χαλκίδος ἀντίπορον,
ἵνα τε δόρατα μέμονε δάϊ᾽
ὄνομα δι᾽ ἐμὸν τᾶσδ᾽ Αὐλίδος
στενοπόροις ἐν ὅρμοις.
ἰὼ γᾶ μᾶτερ ὦ Πελασγία,
Μυκηναῖαί τ᾽ ἐμαὶ θεράπναι ...

Χορός

καλεῖς πόλισμα Περσέως,
Κυκλωπίων πόνον χερῶν;

Ἰφιγένεια

ἐθρέψαθ᾽ Ἑλλάδι με φάος:
θανοῦσα δ᾽ οὐκ ἀναίνομαι.

Χορός

κλέος γὰρ οὔ σε μὴ λίπῃ.

Ἰφιγένεια

ἰὼ ἰώ.
λαμπαδοῦχος ἁμέρα
Διός τε φέγγος, ἕτερον ἕτερον
αἰῶνα καὶ μοῖραν οἰκήσομεν.
χαῖρέ μοι, φίλον φάος.

Χορός

ἰὼ ἰώ.
ἴδεσθε τὰν Ἰλίου
καὶ Φρυγῶν ἐλέπτολιν
στείχουσαν, ἐπὶ κάρα στέφη
βαλουμέναν χερνίβων τε παγάς,
βωμόν γε δαίμονος θεᾶς
ῥανίσιν αἱματορρύτοις
χρανοῦσαν εὐφυῆ τε σώματος δέρην
σφαγεῖσαν. εὔδροσοι παγαὶ
πατρῷαι μένουσι χέρνιβές τέ σε
στρατός τ᾽ Ἀχαιῶν θέλων
Ἰλίου πόλιν μολεῖν.
ἀλλὰ τὰν Διὸς κόραν
κλῄσωμεν Ἄρτεμιν,
θεῶν ἄνασσαν, ὡς ἐπ᾽ εὐτυχεῖ πότμῳ.
ὦ πότνια, πότνια, θύμασιν βροτησίοις
χαρεῖσα, πέμψον ἐς Φρυγῶν
γαῖαν Ἑλλάνων στρατὸν
† καὶ δολόεντα Τροίας ἕδη,

Ἀγαμέμνονά τε λόγχαις
Ἑλλάδι κλεινότατον στέφανον
δὸς ἀμφὶ κάρα ἐὸν †
κλέος ἀείμνηστον ἀμφιθεῖναι.

Ἄγγελος

ὦ Τυνδαρεία παῖ, Κλυταιμήστρα, δόμων
ἔξω πέρασον, ὡς κλύῃς ἐμῶν λόγων.

Κλυταιμήστρα

φθογγῆς κλύουσα δεῦρο σῆς ἀφικόμην,
ταρβοῦσα τλήμων κἀκπεπληγμένη φόβῳ:
μή μοί τιν᾽ ἄλλην ξυμφορὰν ἥκεις φέρων
πρὸς τῇ παρούσῃ;

Ἄγγελος
σῆς μὲν οὖν παιδὸς πέρι
θαυμαστά σοι καὶ δεινὰ σημῆναι θέλω.

Κλυταιμήστρα

μὴ μέλλε τοίνυν, ἀλλὰ φράζ᾽ ὅσον τάχος.

Ἄγγελος

Ἄγγελος

ἀλλ᾽, ὦ φίλη δέσποινα, πᾶν πεύσῃ σαφῶς.
λέξω δ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς, ἤν τι μὴ σφαλεῖσά μου
γνώμη ταράξῃ γλῶσσαν ἐν λόγοις ἐμήν.
ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἱκόμεσθα τῆς Διὸς κόρης
Ἀρτέμιδος ἄλσος λείμακάς τ᾽ ἀνθεσφόρους,
ἵν᾽ ἦν Ἀχαιῶν σύλλογος στρατεύματος,
σὴν παῖδ᾽ ἄγοντες, εὐθὺς Ἀργείων ὄχλος
ἠθροίζεθ᾽. ὡς δ᾽ ἐσεῖδεν Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ
ἐπὶ σφαγὰς στείχουσαν εἰς ἄλσος κόρην,

ἀνεστέναξε, κἄμπαλιν στρέψας κάρα
δάκρυε, πρόσθεν ὀμμάτων πέπλον προθείς.
ἣ δὲ σταθεῖσα τῷ τεκόντι πλησίον
ἔλεξε τοιάδ᾽: Ὦ πάτερ, πάρειμί σοι:
τοὐμὸν δὲ σῶμα τῆς ἐμῆς ὑπὲρ πάτρας
καὶ τῆς ἁπάσης Ἑλλάδος γαίας ὕπερ
θῦσαι δίδωμ᾽ ἑκοῦσα πρὸς βωμὸν θεᾶς
ἄγοντας, εἴπερ ἐστὶ θέσφατον τόδε.
καὶ τοὐπ᾽ ἔμ᾽ εὐτυχεῖτε: καὶ νικηφόρου
δώρου τύχοιτε πατρίδα τ᾽ ἐξίκοισθε γῆν.
πρὸς ταῦτα μὴ ψαύσῃ τις Ἀργείων ἐμοῦ:
σιγῇ παρέξω γὰρ δέρην εὐκαρδίως.
τοσαῦτ᾽ ἔλεξε: πᾶς δ᾽ ἐθάμβησεν κλύων
εὐψυχίαν τε κἀρετὴν τῆς παρθένου.
στὰς δ᾽ ἐν μέσῳ Ταλθύβιος, ᾧ τόδ᾽ ἦν μέλον,
εὐφημίαν ἀνεῖπε καὶ σιγὴν στρατῷ:
Κάλχας δ᾽ ὁ μάντις ἐς κανοῦν χρυσήλατον
ἔθηκεν ὀξὺ χειρὶ φάσγανον σπάσας
κολεῶν ἔσωθεν, κρᾶτά τ᾽ ἔστεψεν κόρης.
ὁ παῖς δ᾽ ὁ Πηλέως ἐν κύκλῳ βωμὸν θεᾶς
λαβὼν κανοῦν ἔβρεξε χέρνιβάς θ᾽ ὁμοῦ,
ἔλεξε δ᾽: Ὦ παῖ Ζηνός, ὦ θηροκτόνε,
τὸ λαμπρὸν εἰλίσσουσ᾽ ἐν εὐφρόνῃ φάος,
δέξαι τὸ θῦμα τόδ᾽ ὅ γέ σοι δωρούμεθα
στρατός τ᾽ Ἀχαιῶν † Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ θ᾽ ὁμοῦ, †
ἄχραντον αἷμα καλλιπαρθένου δέρης,
καὶ δὸς γενέσθαι πλοῦν νεῶν ἀπήμονα
Τροίας τε πέργαμ᾽ ἐξελεῖν ἡμᾶς δορί.
ἐς γῆν δ᾽ Ἀτρεῖδαι πᾶς στρατός τ᾽ ἔστη βλέπων.

ἱερεὺς δὲ φάσγανον λαβὼν ἐπεύξατο,
λαιμόν τ᾽ ἐπεσκοπεῖθ᾽, ἵνα πλήξειεν ἄν:
ἐμοὶ δέ τ᾽ ἄλγος οὐ μικρὸν εἰσῄει φρενί,
κἄστην νενευκώς: θαῦμα δ᾽ ἦν αἴφνης ὁρᾶν.
πληγῆς κτύπον γὰρ πᾶς τις ᾔσθετ᾽ ἂν σαφῶς,
τὴν παρθένον δ᾽ οὐκ εἶδεν οὗ γῆς εἰσέδυ.
βοᾷ δ᾽ ἱερεύς, ἅπας δ᾽ ἐπήχησε στρατός,

ἄελπτον εἰσιδόντες ἐκ θεῶν τινος
φάσμ᾽, οὗ γε μηδ᾽ ὁρωμένου πίστις παρῆν:
ἔλαφος γὰρ ἀσπαίρουσ᾽ ἔκειτ᾽ ἐπὶ χθονὶ
ἰδεῖν μεγίστη διαπρεπής τε τὴν θέαν,
ἧς αἵματι βωμὸς ἐραίνετ᾽ ἄρδην τῆς θεοῦ.
κἀν τῷδε Κάλχας πῶς δοκεῖς χαίρων ἔφη:
Ὦ τοῦδ᾽ Ἀχαιῶν κοίρανοι κοινοῦ στρατοῦ,
ὁρᾶτε τήνδε θυσίαν, ἣν ἡ θεὸς
προύθηκε βωμίαν, ἔλαφον ὀρειδρόμον;
ταύτην μάλιστα τῆς κόρης ἀσπάζεται,
ὡς μὴ μιάνῃ βωμὸν εὐγενεῖ φόνῳ.
ἡδέως τε τοῦτ᾽ ἐδέξατο, καὶ πλοῦν οὔριον
δίδωσιν ἡμῖν Ἰλίου τ᾽ ἐπιδρομάς.
πρὸς ταῦτα πᾶς τις θάρσος αἶρε ναυβάτης,
χώρει τε πρὸς ναῦν: ὡς ἡμέρᾳ τῇδε δεῖ
λιπόντας ἡμᾶς Αὐλίδος κοίλους μυχοὺς
Αἴγαιον οἶδμα διαπερᾶν.
ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἅπαν
κατηνθρακώθη θῦμ᾽ ἐν Ἡφαίστου φλογί,
τὰ πρόσφορ᾽ ηὔξαθ᾽, ὡς τύχοι νόστου στρατός.
πέμπει δ᾽ Ἀγαμέμνων μ᾽ ὥστε σοι φράσαι τάδε,
λέγειν θ᾽ ὁποίας ἐκ θεῶν μοίρας κυρεῖ
καὶ δόξαν ἔσχεν ἄφθιτον καθ᾽ Ἑλλάδα.
ἐγὼ παρὼν δὲ καὶ τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ ὁρῶν λέγω:
ἡ παῖς σαφῶς σοι πρὸς θεοὺς ἀφίπτατο.
λύπης δ᾽ ἀφαίρει καὶ πόσει πάρες χόλον:
ἀπροσδόκητα δὲ βροτοῖς τὰ τῶν θεῶν,
σώζουσί θ᾽ οὓς φιλοῦσιν. ἦμαρ γὰρ τόδε
θανοῦσαν εἶδε καὶ βλέπουσαν παῖδα σήν.

Χορός

ὡς ἥδομαί τοι ταῦτ᾽ ἀκούσασ᾽ ἀγγέλου:
ζῶν δ᾽ ἐν θεοῖσι σὸν μένειν φράζει τέκος.

Κλυταιμήστρα

ὦ παῖ, θεῶν τοῦ κλέμμα γέγονας;
πῶς σε προσείπω; πῶς δ᾽ οὐ φῶ
παραμυθεῖσθαι τούσδε μάτην μύθους,
ὥς σου πένθους λυγροῦ παυσαίμαν;

Χορός

καὶ μὴν Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ στείχει,
τούσδ᾽ αὐτοὺς ἔχων σοι φράζειν μύθους.

Ἀγαμέμνων

γύναι, θυγατρὸς ἕνεκ᾽ ὄλβιοι γενοίμεθ᾽ ἄν:
ἔχει γὰρ ὄντως ἐν θεοῖς ὁμιλίαν.
χρὴ δέ σε λαβοῦσαν τόνδε μόσχον νεαγενῆ
στείχειν πρὸς οἴκους: ὡς στρατὸς πρὸς πλοῦν ὁρᾷ.
καὶ χαῖρε: χρόνια γε τἀμά σοι προσφθέγματα
Τροίηθεν ἔσται. καὶ γένοιτό σοι καλῶς.

Χορός

χαίρων, Ἀτρείδη, γῆν ἱκοῦ Φρυγίαν,
χαίρων δ᾽ ἐπάνηκε,
κάλλιστά μοι σκῦλ᾽ ἀπὸ Τροίας ἑλών.

RHESUS

Χορός

Βᾶθι πρὸς εὐνὰς τὰς Ἑκτορέους.
Τίς ὑπασπιστῶν ἄγρυπνος βασιλέως,
ἢ τευχοφόρων;
Δέξαιτο νέων κληδόνα μύθων,
[5] οἳ τετράμοιρον νυκτὸς φυλακὴν
πάσης στρατιᾶς προκάθηνται.
Ὄρθου κεφαλὴν πῆχυν ἐρείσας,
λῦσον βλεφάρων γοργωπὸν ἔδραν,
λεῖπε χαμεύνας φυλλοστρώτους,
[10] Ἕκτορ· καιρὸς γὰρ ἀκοῦσαι.

Ἕκτωρ

[11] Τίς ὅδ’; Ἦ φίλιος φθόγγος· τίς ἀνήρ;
Τί τὸ σῆμα; Θρόει·
τίνες ἐκ νυκτῶν τὰς ἡμετέρας
κοίτας πλάθουσ’; Ἐνέπειν χρή.

Χορός

[15] Φύλακες στρατιᾶς.

Ἕκτωρ

Τί φέρῃ θορύβῳ;

Χορός

Θάρσει.

Ἕκτωρ

Θαρσῶ.
μῶν τις λόχος ἐκ νυκτῶν;

Χορός

Οὐκ ἔστι.

Ἕκτωρ

Τί σὺ γὰρ
φυλακὰς προλιπὼν κινεῖς στρατιάν,
εἰ μή τιν' ἔχων νυκτηγορίαν;
Οὐκ οἶσθα δορὸς πέλας Ἀργείου
νυχίαν ἡμᾶς
κοίταν πανόπλους κατέχοντας;

Χορός

Ὅπλίζου χέρα· συμμάχων,
Ἕκτορ, βᾶθι πρὸς εὐνάς,
ὄτρυνον ἔγχος αἴρειν, ἀφύπνισον.
Πέμπε φίλους ἰέναι ποτὶ σὸν λόχον,
ἁρμόσατε ψαλίοις ἵππους.
Τίς εἶσ' ἐπὶ Πανθοί¨δαν,
ἢ τὸν Εὐρώπας, Λυκίων ἀγὸν ἀνδρῶν;
Ποῦ σφαγίων ἔφοροι;
Ποῦ δὲ γυμνήτων μόναρχοι
τοξοφόροι τε Φρυγῶν;
Ζεύγνυτε κερόδετα τόξα νευραῖς.

Ἕκτωρ

Τὰ μὲν ἀγγέλλεις δείματ' ἀκούειν,
τὰ δὲ θαρσύνεις, κοὐδὲν καθαρῶς.
Ἀλλ' ἦ Κρονίου Πανὸς τρομερᾷ
μάστιγι φοβῇ; Φυλακὰς δὲ λιπὼν
κινεῖς στρατιάν. Τί θροεῖς; Τί σε φῶ

νέον ἀγγέλλειν; Πολλὰ γὰρ εἰπὼν
οὐδὲν τρανῶς ἀπέδειξας.

Χορός

Πύρ᾽ αἴθει στρατὸς Ἀργόλας,
Ἕκτορ, πᾶσαν ἀν᾽ ὄρφναν,
διειπετῆ δὲ ναῶν πυρσοῖς σταθμά.
Πᾶς δ᾽ Ἀγαμεμνονίαν προσέβα στρατὸς
ἐννύχιος θορύβῳ σκηνάν,
νέαν τιν᾽ ἐφιέμενοι
βάξιν. Οὐ γάρ πω πάρος ὧδ᾽ ἐφοβήθη
ναυσιπόρος στρατιά.
Σοὶ δ᾽, ὑποπτεύων τὸ μέλλον,
ἦλυθον ἄγγελος, ὡς
μήποτ᾽ ἐς ἐμέ τινα μέμψιν εἴπῃς.

Ἕκτωρ

Ἐς καιρὸν ἥκεις, καίπερ ἀγγέλλων φόβον·
ἄνδρες γὰρ ἐκ γῆς τῆσδε νυκτέρῳ πλάτῃ
λαθόντες ὄμμα τοὐμὸν ἀρεῖσθαι φυγὴν
μέλλουσι· σαίνει μ᾽ ἔννυχος φρυκτωρία.
Ὦ δαῖμον, ὅστις μ᾽ εὐτυχοῦντ᾽ ἐνόσφισας
θοίνης λέοντα, πρὶν τὸν Ἀργείων στρατὸν
σύρδην ἅπαντα τῷδ᾽ ἀναλῶσαι δορί.
Εἰ γὰρ φαεννοὶ μὴ ξυνέσχον ἡλίου
λαμπτῆρες, οὗτἂν ἔσχον εὐτυχοῦν δόρυ,
πρὶν ναῦς πυρῶσαι καὶ διὰ σκηνῶν μολεῖν
κτείνων Ἀχαιοὺς τῇδε πολυφόνῳ χερί.
Κἀγὼ μὲν ἦ πρόθυμος ἰέναι δόρυ
ἐν νυκτὶ χρῆσθαί τ᾽ εὐτυχεῖ ῥύμῃ θεοῦ·
ἀλλ᾽ οἱ σοφοί με καὶ τὸ θεῖον εἰδότες
μάντεις ἔπεισαν ἡμέρας μεῖναι φάος
κἄπειτ᾽ Ἀχαιῶν μηδέν᾽ ἐν χέρσῳ λιπεῖν.
Οἳ δ᾽ οὐ μένουσι τῶν ἐμῶν θυοσκόων
βουλάς· ἐν ὄρφνῃ δραπέτης μέγα σθένει.
Ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα χρὴ παραγγέλλειν στρατῷ

τεύχη πρόχειρα λαμβάνειν λῆξαί θ’ ὕπνου,
ὡς ἄν τις αὐτῶν καὶ νεὼς θρῴσκων ἔπι
νῶτον χαραχθεὶς κλίμακας ῥάνῃ φόνῳ,
οἳ δ’ ἐν βρόχοισι δέσμιοι λελημμένοι
[75] Φρυγῶν ἀρούρας ἐκμάθωσι γαπονεῖν.

Χορός

[76] Ἕκτορ, ταχύνεις πρὶν μαθεῖν τὸ δρώμενον·
ἄνδρες γὰρ εἰ φεύγουσιν οὐκ ἴσμεν τορῶς.

Ἕκτωρ

Τίς γὰρ πύρ’ αἴθειν πρόφασις Ἀργείων στρατόν;

Χορός

Οὐκ οἶδ’· ὕποπτον δ’ ἐστὶ κάρτ’ ἐμῇ φρενί.

Ἕκτωρ

[80] Πάντ’ ἂν φοβηθεὶς ἴσθι, δειμαίνων τόδε.

Χορός

Οὔπω πρὶν ἦψαν πολέμιοι τοσόνδε φῶς.

Ἕκτωρ

Οὐδ’ ὧδέ γ’ αἰσχρῶς ἔπεσον ἐν τροπῇ δορός.

Χορός

Σὺ ταῦτ’ ἔπραξας· καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ νῦν σκόπει.

Ἕκτωρ

Ἁπλοῦς ἐπ’ ἐχθροῖς μῦθος ὁπλίζειν χέρα.

Χορός

[85] Καὶ μὴν ὅδ’ Αἰνέας καὶ μάλα σπουδῇ ποδὸς
στείχει, νέον τι πρᾶγμ’ ἔχων φίλοις φράσαι.

Αἰνείας

[87] Ἕκτορ, τί χρῆμα νύκτεροι κατὰ στρατὸν
τὰς σὰς πρὸς εὐνὰς φύλακες ἐλθόντες φόβῳ
νυκτηγοροῦσι καὶ κεκίνηται· στρατός;

Ἕκτωρ

[90] Αἰνέα, πύκαζε τεύχεσιν δέμας σέθεν.

Αἰνείας

Τί δ’ ἔστι; Μῶν τις πολεμίων ἀγγέλλεται
δόλος κρυφαῖος ἑστάναι κατ’ εὐφρόνην;

Ἕκτωρ

Φεύγουσιν ἄνδρες κἀπιβαίνουσιν νεῶν.

Αἰνείας

Τί τοῦδ’ ἂν εἴποις ἀσφαλὲς τεκμήριον;

Ἕκτωρ

[95] Αἴθουσι πᾶσαν νύκτα λαμπάδας πυρός·
καί μοι δοκοῦσιν οὐ μενεῖν ἐς αὔριον,
ἀλλ’ ἐκκέαντες πύρσ’ ἐπ’ εὐσέλμων νεῶν
φυγῇ πρὸς οἴκους τῆσδ’ ἀφορμήσειν χθονός.

Αἰνείας

Σὺ δ’ ὡς τί δράσων πρὸς τάδ’ ὁπλίζῃ χέρας;

Ἕκτωρ

Φεύγοντας αὐτοὺς κἀπιθρῴσκοντας νεῶν
λόγχῃ καθέξω κἀπικείσομαι βαρύς·
αἰσχρὸν γὰρ ἡμῖν, καὶ πρὸς αἰσχύνῃ κακόν,
θεοῦ διδόντος πολεμίους ἄνευ μάχης
φεύγειν ἐᾶσαι πολλὰ δράσαντας κακά.

Αἰνείας

Εἴθ' ἦσθ' ἀνὴρ εὔβουλος ὡς δρᾶσαι χερί.
Ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ αὐτὸς πάντ' ἐπίστασθαι βροτῶν
πέφυκεν· ἄλλῳ δ' ἄλλο πρόσκειται γέρας,
σὲ μὲν μάχεσθαι, τοὺς δὲ βουλεύειν καλῶς·
ὅστις πυρὸς λαμπτῆρας ἐξήρθης κλύων
φλέγειν Ἀχαιούς, καὶ στρατὸν μέλλεις ἄγειν
τάφρους ὑπερβὰς νυκτὸς ἐν καταστάσει.
Καίτοι περάσας κοῖλον αὐλώνων βάθος,
εἰ μὴ κυρήσεις πολεμίους ἀπὸ χθονὸς
φεύγοντας, ἀλλὰ σὸν βλέποντας ἐς δόρυ,
νικώμενος μὲν οὔτι μὴ μόλῃς πάλιν·
πῶς γὰρ περάσει σκόλοπας ἐν τροπῇ στρατός;
Πῶς δ' αὖ γεφύρας διαβαλοῦσ' ἱππηλάται,
ἢν ἆρα μὴ θραύσαντες ἀντύγων χνόας;
Νικῶν δ' ἔφεδρον παῖδ' ἔχεις τὸν Πηλέως,
ὅς σ' οὐκ ἐάσει ναυσὶν ἐμβαλεῖν φλόγα,
οὐδ' ὧδ' Ἀχαιούς, ὡς δοκεῖς, ἀναρπάσαι.
Αἴθων γὰρ ἀνὴρ καὶ πεπύργωται χερί.
Ἀλλὰ στρατὸν μὲν ἥσυχον παρ' ἀσπίδας
εὕδειν ἐῶμεν ἐκ κόπων ἀρειφάτων,
κατάσκοπον δὲ πολεμίων, ὃς ἂν θέλῃ,
πέμπειν δοκεῖ μοι· κἂν μὲν αἴρωνται φυγήν,
στείχοντες ἐμπέσωμεν Ἀργείων στρατῷ·
εἰ δ' ἐς δόλον τιν' ἥδ' ἄγει φρυκτωρία,
μαθόντες ἐχθρῶν μηχανὰς κατασκόπου
βουλευσόμεσθα· τήνδ' ἔχω γνώμην, ἄναξ.

Χορός

Τάδε δοκεῖ, τάδε μεταθέμενος νόει.
Σφαλερὰ δ’ οὐ φιλῶ στρατηγῶν κράτη.
Τί γὰρ ἄμεινον ἢ
ταχυβάταν νεῶν κατόπταν μολεῖν
[135] πέλας ὅ τί ποτ’ ἄρα δαΐ¨οις
πυρὰ κατ’ ἀντίπρῳρα ναυστάθμων δαίεται;

Ἕκτωρ

[137] Νικᾶτ’, ἐπειδὴ πᾶσιν ἀνδάνει τάδε.
Στείχων δὲ κοίμα συμμάχους· τάχ’ ἂν στρατὸς
κινοῖτ’ ἀκούσας νυκτέρους ἐκκλησίας.
[140] Ἐγὼ δὲ πέμψω πολεμίων κατάσκοπον.
Κἂν μέν τιν’ ἐχθρῶν μηχανὴν πυθώμεθα,
σὺ πάντ’ ἀκούσῃ καὶ παρὼν εἴσῃ λόγον·
ἐὰν δ’ ἀπαίρωσ’ ἐς φυγὴν ὁρμώμενοι,
σάλπιγγος αὐδὴν προσδοκῶν καραδόκει,
[145] ὡς οὐ μενοῦντά μ’· ἀλλὰ προσμείξω νεῶν
ὁλκοῖσι νυκτὸς τῆσδ’ ἐπ’ Ἀργείων στρατῷ.

Αἰνείας

Πέμφ’ ὡς τάχιστα· νῦν γὰρ ἀσφαλῶς φρονεῖς.
Σὺν σοὶ δ’ ἔμ’ ὄψῃ καρτεροῦνθ’, ὅταν δέῃ.

Ἕκτωρ

[149] Τίς δῆτα Τρώων οἳ πάρεισιν ἐν λόγῳ
[150] θέλει κατόπτης ναῦς ἐπ’ Ἀργείων μολεῖν;
Τίς ἂν γένοιτο τῆσδε γῆς εὐεργέτης;
Τίς φησιν; Οὗτοι πάντ’ ἐγὼ δυνήσομαι
πόλει πατρῴᾳ συμμάχοις θ’ ὑπηρετεῖν.

Δόλων

Ἐγὼ πρὸ γαίας τόνδε κίνδυνον θέλω
[155] ῥίψας κατόπτης ναῦς ἐπ’ Ἀργείων μολεῖν,

καὶ πάντ’ Ἀχαιῶν ἐκμαθὼν βουλεύματα
ἥξω· ἐπὶ τούτοις τόνδ’ ὑφίσταμαι πόνον.

Ἕκτωρ

Ἐπώνυμος μὲν κάρτα καὶ φιλόπτολις
Δόλων· πατρὸς δὲ καὶ πρὶν εὐκλεᾶ δόμον
[160] νῦν δὶς τόσως ἔθηκας εὐκλεέστερον.

Δόλων

Οὐκοῦν πονεῖν μὲν χρή, πονοῦντα δ’ ἄξιον
μισθὸν φέρεσθαι. Παντὶ γὰρ προσκείμενον
κέρδος πρὸς ἔργῳ τὴν χάριν τίκτει διπλῆν.

Ἕκτωρ

Ναί, καὶ δίκαια ταῦτα κοὐκ ἄλλως λέγω.
[165] Τάξαι δὲ μισθόν, πλὴν ἐμῆς τυραννίδος.

Δόλων

Οὐ σῆς ἐρῶμεν πολιόχου τυραννίδος.

Ἕκτωρ

Σὺ δ’ ἀλλὰ γήμας Πριαμιδῶν γαμβρὸς γενοῦ.

Δόλων

Οὐδ’ ἐξ ἐμαυτοῦ μειζόνων γαμεῖν θέλω.

Ἕκτωρ

Χρυσὸς πάρεστιν, εἰ τόδ’ αἰτήσεις γέρας.

Δόλων

[170] Ἀλλ’ ἔστ’ ἐν οἴκοις· οὐ βίου σπανίζομεν.

Ἕκτωρ

Τί δῆτα χρῄζεις ὧν κέκευθεν Ἴλιος;

Δόλων

Ἑλὼν Ἀχαιοὺς δῶρά μοι ξυναίνεσον.

Ἕκτωρ

Δώσω· σὺ δ’ αἴτει πλὴν στρατηλάτας νεῶν.

Δόλων

Κτεῖν’, οὗ σ’ ἀπαιτῶ Μενέλεω σχέσθαι χέρα.

Ἕκτωρ

[175] Οὐ μὴν τὸν Ἰλέως παῖδά μ’ ἐξαιτῇ λαβεῖν;

Δόλων

Κακαὶ γεωργεῖν χεῖρες εὖ τεθραμμέναι.

Ἕκτωρ

Τίν’ οὖν Ἀχαιῶν ζῶντ’ ἀποινᾶσθαι θέλεις;

Δόλων

Καὶ πρόσθεν εἶπον· ἔστι χρυσὸς ἐν δόμοις.

Ἕκτωρ

Καὶ μὴν λαφύρων γ’ αὐτὸς αἱρήσῃ παρών.

Δόλων

[180] Θεοῖσιν αὐτὰ πασσάλευε πρὸς δόμοις.

Ἕκτωρ

Τί δῆτα μεῖζον τῶνδέ μ’ αἰτήσεις γέρας;

Δόλων

Ἵππους Ἀχιλλέως· χρὴ δ’ ἐπ’ ἀξίοις πονεῖν
ψυχὴν προβάλλοντ’ ἐν κύβοισι δαίμονος.

Ἕκτωρ

[184] Καὶ μὴν ἐρῶντί γ’ ἀντερᾷς ἵππων ἐμοί·
[185] ἐξ ἀφθίτων γὰρ ἄφθιτοι πεφυκότες
τὸν Πηλέως φέρουσι θούριον γόνον·
δίδωσι δ’ αὐτοὺς πωλοδαμνήσας ἄναξ
Πηλεῖ Ποσειδῶν, ὡς λέγουσι, πόντιος.
Ἀλλ’ οὔ σ’ ἐπάρας ψεύσομαι· δώσω δέ σοι,
[190] κάλλιστον οἴκοις κτῆμ’, Ἀχιλλέως ὄχον.

Δόλων

Αἰνῶ· λαβὼν δ’ ἄν φημι κάλλιστον Φρυγῶν
δῶρον δέχεσθαι τῆς ἐμῆς εὐσπλαγχνίας.
Σὲ δ’ οὐ φθονεῖν χρή· μυρί’ ἔστιν ἄλλα σοι,
ἐφ’ οἷσι τέρψῃ τῆσδ’ ἀριστεύων χθονός.

Χορός

[195] Μέγας ἀγών, μεγάλα δ’ ἐπινοεῖς ἑλεῖν·
μακάριός γε μὴν κυρήσας ἔσῃ.
Πόνος ὅδ’ εὐκλεής·
μέγα δὲ κοιράνοισι γαμβρὸν πέλειν.
Τὰ θεόθεν ἐπιδέτω Δίκα,
[200] τὰ δὲ παρ’ ἀνδράσιν τέλειά σοι φαίνεται.

Δόλων

Στείχοιμ’ ἄν· ἐλθὼν <δ’> ἐς δόμους ἐφέστιος
σκευῇ πρεπόντως σῶμ’ ἐμὸν καθάψομαι,

κἀκεῖθεν ἥσω ναῦς ἐπ᾽ Ἀργείων πόδα.

Χορός

Ἐπεὶ τίν᾽ ἄλλην ἀντὶ τῆσδ᾽ ἕξεις στολήν;

Δόλων

Πρέπουσαν ἔργῳ κλωπικοῖς τε βήμασι.

Χορός

Σοφοῦ παρ᾽ ἀνδρὸς χρὴ σοφόν τι μανθάνειν·
λέξον, τίς ἔσται τοῦδε σώματος σαγή;

Δόλων

Λύκειον ἀμφὶ νῶτ᾽ ἐνάψομαι δορὰν
καὶ χάσμα θηρὸς ἀμφ᾽ ἐμῷ θήσω κάρᾳ,
βάσιν τε χερσὶ προσθίαν καθαρμόσας
καὶ κῶλα κώλοις, τετράπουν μιμήσομαι
λύκου κέλευθον πολεμίοις δυσεύρετον,
τάφροις πελάζων καὶ νεῶν προβλήμασιν.
Ὅταν δ᾽ ἔρημον χῶρον ἐμβαίνω ποδί,
δίβαμος εἶμι· τῇδε σύγκειται δόλος.

Χορός

Ἀλλ᾽ εὖ σ᾽ ὁ Μαίας παῖς ἐκεῖσε καὶ πάλιν
πέμψειεν Ἑρμῆς, ὅς γε φηλητῶν ἄναξ.
Ἔχεις δὲ τοὔργον· εὐτυχεῖν μόνον σε δεῖ.

Δόλων

Σωθήσομαί γε καὶ κτανὼν Ὀδυσσέως
οἴσω κάρα σοι σύμβολον δ᾽ ἔχων σαφὲς
φήσεις Δόλωνα ναῦς ἐπ᾽ Ἀργείων μολεῖν
ἢ παῖδα Τυδέως· οὐδ᾽ ἀναιμάκτῳ χερὶ
ἥξω πρὸς οἴκους πρὶν φάος μολεῖν χθόνα.

Χορός

[224] Θυμβραῖε καὶ Δάλιε καὶ Λυκίας
[225] ναὸν ἐμβατεύων
Ἄπολλον, ὦ δία κεφαλά, μόλε τοξή-
ρης, ἱκοῦ ἐννύχιος
[229] καὶ γενοῦ σωτήριος ἀνέρι πομπᾶς
[230] ἀγεμὼν καὶ ξύλλαβε Δαρδανίδαις,
ὦ παγκρατές, ὦ Τροί¨ας
τείχη παλαιὰ δείμας.

Μόλοι δὲ ναυκλήρια, καὶ στρατιᾶς
Ἑλλάδος διόπτας
[235] ἵκοιτο, καὶ κάμψειε πάλιν θυμέλας οἴ-
κων πατρὸς Ἰλιάδας.
Φθιάδων δ' ἵππων ποτ' ἐπ' ἄντυγα βαίη,
δεσπότου πέρσαντος Ἀχαιὸν Ἄρη,
[240] τὰς πόντιος Αἰακίδᾳ
Πηλεῖ δίδωσι δαίμων.

[243] Ἐπεὶ πρό τ' οἴκων πρό τε γᾶς ἔτλα μόνος
ναύσταθμα βὰς κατιδεῖν· ἄγαμαι
[245] λήματος· ἦ σπανία <τις>
τῶν ἀγαθῶν, ὅταν ᾖ
δυσάλιος ἐν πελάγει
καὶ σαλεύῃ
[250] πόλις. Ἔστι Φρυγῶν τις ἔστιν ἄλκιμος·
ἔνι δὲ θράσος ἐν αἰχ-
μᾷ· πόθι Μυσῶν ὃς ἐμὰν
συμμαχίαν ἀτίζει;

Τίν' ἄνδρ' Ἀχαιῶν ὁ πεδοστιβὴς σφαγεὺς
[255] οὐτάσει ἐν κλισίαις, τετράπουν
μῖμον ἔχων ἐπιγαίου
θηρός; Ἕλοι Μενέλαν,
κτανὼν δ' Ἀγαμεμνόνιον
κρᾶτ' ἐνέγκοι
[260] Ἑλένᾳ κακόγαμβρον ἐς χέρας γόον,

ὃς ἐπὶ πόλιν, ὃς ἐπὶ
γᾶν Τροί¨αν χιλιόναυν
ἤλυθ᾽ ἔχων στρατείαν.

Ἄγγελος Ποιμήν

[264] Ἄναξ, τοιούτων δεσπόταισιν ἄγγελος
[265] εἴην τὸ λοιπὸν οἷά σοι φέρω μαθεῖν.

Ἕκτωρ

Ἦ πόλλ᾽ ἀγρώταις σκαιὰ πρόσκειται φρενί·
καὶ γὰρ σὺ ποίμνας δεσπόταις τευχεσφόροις
ἥκειν ἔοικας ἀγγελῶν ἵν᾽ οὐ πρέπει.
Οὐκ οἶσθα δῶμα τοὐμὸν ἢ θρόνους πατρός,
[270] οἳ χρῆν γεγωνεῖν σ᾽ εὐτυχοῦντα ποίμνια;

Ἄγγελος

Σκαιοὶ βοτῆρές ἐσμεν· οὐκ ἄλλως λέγω.
Ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν ἧσσον σοι φέρω κεδνοὺς λόγους.

Ἕκτωρ

Παῦσαι λέγων μοι τὰς προσαυλείους τύχας·
μάχας πρὸ χειρῶν καὶ δόρη βαστάζομεν.

Ἄγγελος

[275] Τοιαῦτα κἀγὼ σημανῶν ἐλήλυθα·
ἀνὴρ γὰρ ἀλκῆς μυρίας στρατηλατῶν
στείχει φίλος σοὶ σύμμαχός τε τῇδε γῇ.

Ἕκτωρ

Ποίας πατρῴας γῆς ἐρημώσας πέδον;

Ἄγγελος

Θρῄκης· πατρὸς δὲ Στρυμόνος κικλήσκεται.

Ἕκτωρ

[280] Ῥῆσον τιθέντ᾽ ἔλεξας ἐν Τροίᾳ πόδα;

Ἄγγελος

Ἔγνως· λόγου δὲ δὶς τόσου μ᾽ ἐκούφισας.

Ἕκτωρ

Καὶ πῶς πρὸς Ἴδης ὀργάδας πορεύεται,
πλαγχθεὶς πλατείας πεδιάδος θ᾽ ἁμαξιτοῦ;

Ἄγγελος

[284] Οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ἀκριβῶς· εἰκάσαι γε μὴν πάρα.
[285] Νυκτὸς γὰρ οὔτι φαῦλον ἐμβαλεῖν στρατόν,
κλύοντα πλήρη πεδία πολεμίας χερός.
Φόβον δ᾽ ἀγρώσταις, οἳ κατ᾽ Ἰδαῖον λέπας
οἰκοῦμεν αὐτόρριζον ἑστίαν χθονός,
παρέσχε δρυμὸν νυκτὸς ἔνθηρον μολών.
[290] Πολλῇ γὰρ ἠχῇ Θρῄκιος ῥέων στρατὸς
ἔστειχε· θάμβει δ᾽ ἐκπλαγέντες ἵεμεν
ποίμνας πρὸς ἄκρας, μή τις Ἀργείων μόλῃ
λεηλατήσων καὶ σὰ πορθήσων σταθμά,
πρὶν δὴ δι᾽ ὤτων γῆρυν οὐχ Ἑλληνικὴν
[295] ἐδεξάμεσθα καὶ μετέστημεν φόβου.
Στείχων δ᾽ ἄνακτος προυξερευνητὰς ὁδοῦ
ἀνιστόρησα Θρῃκίοις προσφθέγμασι,
Τίς ὁ στρατηγὸς καὶ τίνος κεκλημένος
στείχει πρὸς ἄστυ Πριαμίδαισι σύμμαχος;
[300] Καὶ πάντ᾽ ἀκούσας ὧν ἐφιέμην μαθεῖν,
ἔστην· ὁρῶ δὲ Ῥῆσον ὥστε δαίμονα
ἑστῶτ᾽ ἐν ἵπποις Θρῃκίοις τ᾽ ὀχήμασι.
Χρυσῆ δὲ πλάστιγξ αὐχένα ζυγηφόρον
πώλων ἔκλῃε χιόνος ἐξαυγεστέρων.

[305] Πέλτη δ’ ἐπ’ ὤμων χρυσοκολλήτοις τύποις
ἔλαμπε· Γοργὼν δ’ ὡς ἐπ’ αἰγίδος θεᾶς
χαλκῆ μετώποις ἱππικοῖσι πρόσδετος
πολλοῖσι σὺν κώδωσιν ἐκτύπει φόβον.
Στρατοῦ δὲ πλῆθος οὐδ’ ἂν ἐν ψήφου λόγῳ
[310] θέσθαι δυναίμην, ὡς ἄπλατον ἦν ἰδεῖν,
πολλοὶ μὲν ἱππῆς, πολλὰ πελταστῶν τέλη,
πολλοὶ δ’ ἀτράκτων τοξόται, πολὺς δ’ ὄχλος
γυμνὴς ὁμαρτῇ, Θρῃκίαν ἔχων στολήν.
Τοιόσδε Τροίᾳ σύμμαχος πάρεστ’ ἀνήρ,
[315] ὃν οὔτε φεύγων οὔθ’ ὑποσταθεὶς δορὶ
ὁ Πηλέως παῖς ἐκφυγεῖν δυνήσεται.

Χορός

Ὅταν πολίταις εὐσταθῶσι δαίμονες,
ἔρπει κατάντης ξυμφορὰ πρὸς τἀγαθά.

Ἕκτωρ

[319] Πολλούς, ἐπειδὴ τοὐμὸν εὐτυχεῖ δόρυ
[320] καὶ Ζεὺς πρὸς ἡμῶν ἐστιν, εὑρήσω φίλους.
Ἀλλ’ οὐδὲν αὐτῶν δεόμεθ’, οἵτινες πάλαι
μὴ ξυμπονοῦσιν, ἡνίκ’ ἐξώστης Ἄρης
ἔθραυε λαίφη τῆσδε γῆς μέγας πνέων.
Ῥῆσος δ’ ἔδειξεν οἷος ἦν Τροίᾳ φίλος·
[325] ἥκει γὰρ ἐς δαῖτ’, οὐ παρὼν κυνηγέταις
αἱροῦσι λείαν οὐδὲ συγκαμὼν δορί.

Χορός

Ὀρθῶς ἀτίζεις κἀπίμομφος εἶ φίλοις·
δέχου δὲ τοὺς θέλοντας ὠφελεῖν πόλιν.

Ἕκτωρ

Ἀρκοῦμεν οἱ σῴζοντες Ἴλιον πάλαι.

Χορός

[330] Πέποιθας ἤδη πολεμίους ᾑρηκέναι;

Ἕκτωρ

Πέποιθα· δείξει τοὐπιὸν σέλας θεοῦ.

Χορός

Ὅρα τὸ μέλλον· πόλλ᾽ ἀναστρέφει θεός.

Ἕκτωρ

Μισῶ φίλοισιν ὕστερον βοηδρομεῖν.
[336] Ὃ δ᾽ οὖν, ἐπείπερ ἦλθε, σύμμαχος μὲν οὔ,
ξένος δὲ πρὸς τράπεζαν ἡκέτω ξένων·
χάρις γὰρ αὐτῷ Πριαμιδῶν διώλετο.

Χορός

[334] Ἄναξ, ἀπωθεῖν συμμάχους ἐπίφθονον.

Ἄγγελος

[335] Φόβος γένοιτ᾽ ἂν πολεμίοις ὀφθεὶς μόνον.

Ἕκτωρ

[339] Σύ τ᾽ εὖ παραινεῖς καὶ σὺ καιρίως σκοπεῖς.
[340] Ὁ χρυσοτευχὴς δ᾽ οὕνεκ᾽ ἀγγέλου λόγων
Ῥῆσος παρέστω τῇδε σύμμαχος χθονί.

Χορός

[342] Ἀδράστεια μὲν ἁ Διὸς
παῖς εἴργοι στομάτων φθόνον·
φράσω γὰρ δὴ ὅσον μοι ψυχᾷ
[345] προσφιλές ἐστιν εἰπεῖν.

Ἥκεις, ὦ ποταμοῦ παῖ,
ἥκεις, ἐπλάθης Φιλίου πρὸς αὐλὰν
ἀσπαστός, ἐπεί σε χρόνῳ
Πιερὶς μάτηρ ὅ τε καλλιγέφυ-
[350] ρος ποταμὸς πορεύει

Στρυμών, ὅς ποτε τᾶς μελῳ-
δοῦ Μούσας δι᾽ ἀκηράτων
δινηθεὶς ὑδροειδὴς κόλπων
σὰν ἐφύτευσεν ἅβαν.
[355] Σύ μοι Ζεὺς ὁ φαναῖος
ἥκεις διφρεύων βαλιαῖσι πώλοις.
Νῦν, ὦ πατρὶς ὦ Φρυγία,
ξὺν θεῷ νῦν σοι τὸν ἐλευθέριον
Ζῆνα πάρεστιν εἰπεῖν.

[360] Ἆρά ποτ᾽ αὖθις ἀ παλαιὰ Τροί¨α
τοὺς προπότας παναμερεύ-
σει θιάσους ἐρώτων
ψαλμοῖσι καὶ κυλίκων οἰνοπλανή-
τοις ὑποδεξίαις ἀμίλ-
[365] λαις κατὰ πόντον Ἀτρειδᾶν
Σπάρταν οἰχομένων
Ἰλιάδος παρ᾽ ἀκτᾶς;
Ἦ φίλος, εἴθε μοι
σᾷ χερὶ καὶ σῷ δορὶ πρά-
[369β] ξας τάδ᾽ ἐς οἶκον ἔλθοις.

[370] Ἐλθέ, φάνηθι, τὰν ζάχρυσον προβαλοῦ
Πηλεί¨δα κατ᾽ ὄμμα πέλ-
ταν δοχμίαν πεδαίρων
σχιστὰν παρ᾽ ἄντυγα, πώλους ἐρεθί-
ζων δίβολόν τ᾽ ἄκοντα πάλ-
[375] λων. Σὲ γὰρ οὔτις ὑποστὰς
Ἀργείας ποτ᾽ ἐν Ἥ-
ρας δαπέδοις χορεύσει·
[377β] ἀλλά νιν ἅδε γᾶ

καπφθίμενον Θρῃκὶ μόρῳ
[378β] φίλτατον ἄχθος οἴσει.

Ἰὼ ἰώ, μέγας ὦ βασιλεῦ.
[380] Καλόν, ὦ Θρῄκη,
σκύμνον ἔθρεψας πολίαρχον ἰδεῖν.
Ἴδε χρυσόδετον σώματος ἀλκήν,
κλύε καὶ κόμπους κωδωνοκρότους
παρὰ πορπάκων κελαδοῦντας.
[385] Θεός, ὦ Τροία, θεός, αὐτὸς Ἄρης
ὁ Στρυμόνιος πῶλος ἀοιδοῦ
Μούσης ἥκων καταπνεῖ σε.

Ῥῆσος

[388] Χαῖρ', ἐσθλὸς ἐσθλοῦ παῖς, τύραννε τῆσδε γῆς,
Ἕκτορ· παλαιᾷ σ' ἡμέρᾳ προσεννέπω.
[390] ;Αίρω δέ σ' εὐτυχοῦντα καὶ προσήμενον
πύργοισιν ἐχθρῶν· συγκατασκάψων δ' ἐγὼ
τείχη πάρειμι καὶ νεῶν πρήσων σκάφη.

Ἕκτωρ

Παῖ τῆς μελῳδοῦ μητέρος Μουσῶν μιᾶς
Θρῃκός τε ποταμοῦ Στρυμόνος, φιλῶ λέγειν
[395] τἀληθὲς αἰεὶ κοὐ διπλοῦς πέφυκ' ἀνήρ.
Πάλαι πάλαι χρῆν τῇδε συγκάμνειν χθονὶ
ἐλθόντα, καὶ μὴ τοὐπί σ' Ἀργείων ὕπο
Τροίαν ἐᾶσαι πολεμίῳ πεσεῖν δορί.
Οὐ γάρ τι λέξεις ὡς ἄκλητος ὢν φίλοις
[400] οὐκ ἦλθες οὐδ' ἤμυνας οὐδ' ἐπεστράφης.
Τίς γάρ σε κῆρυξ ἢ γερουσία Φρυγῶν
ἐλθοῦσ' ἀμύνειν οὐκ ἐπέσκηψεν πόλει;
Ποῖον δὲ δώρων κόσμον οὐκ ἐπέμψαμεν;
Σὺ δ' ἐγγενὴς ὢν βάρβαρός τε βαρβάρους
[405] Ἕλλησιν ἡμᾶς προύπιες τὸ σὸν μέρος.
Καίτοι σε μικρᾶς ἐκ τυραννίδος μέγαν
Θρῃκῶν ἄνακτα τῇδ' ἔθηκ' ἐγὼ χερί,

ὅτ᾽ ἀμφὶ Πάγγαιόν τε Παιόνων τε γῆν
Θρῃκῶν ἀρίστοις ἐμπεσὼν κατὰ στόμα
ἔρρηξα πέλτην, σοὶ δὲ δουλώσας λεὼν
παρέσχον· ὧν σὺ λακτίσας πολλὴν χάριν,
φίλων νοσούντων ὕστερος βοηδρομεῖς.
Οἱ δ᾽ οὐδὲν ἡμῖν ἐν γένει πεφυκότες,
πάλαι παρόντες, οἳ μὲν ἐν χωστοῖς τάφοις
κεῖνται πεσόντες, πίστις οὐ σμικρὰ πόλει,
οἳ δ᾽ ἔν θ᾽ ὅπλοισι καὶ παρ᾽ ἱππείοις ὄχοις
ψυχρὰν ἄησιν δίψιόν τε πῦρ θεοῦ
μένουσι καρτεροῦντες, οὐκ ἐν δεμνίοις
πυκνὴν ἄμυστιν ὡς σὺ δεξιούμενοι.
Ταῦθ᾽, ὡς ἂν εἰδῇς Ἕκτορ᾽ ὄντ᾽ ἐλεύθερον,
καὶ μέμφομαί σοι καὶ λέγω κατ᾽ ὄμμα σόν.

Ῥῆσος

Τοιοῦτός εἰμι καὐτός, εὐθεῖαν λόγων
τέμνων κέλευθον, κοὐ διπλοῦς πέφυκ᾽ ἀνήρ.
Ἐγὼ δὲ μεῖζον ἢ σὺ τῆσδ᾽ ἀπὼν χθονὸς
λύπῃ πρὸς ἦπαρ δυσφορῶν ἐτειρόμην·
ἀλλ᾽ ἀγχιτέρμων γαῖά μοι, Σκύθης λεώς,
μέλλοντι νόστον τὸν πρὸς Ἴλιον περᾶν
ξυνῆψε πόλεμον· Εὐξένου δ᾽ ἀφικόμην
πόντου πρὸς ἀκτάς, Θρῇκα πορθμεύσων στρατόν.
Ἔνθ᾽ αἱματηρὸς πέλανος ἐς γαῖαν Σκύθης
ἠντλεῖτο λόγχῃ Θρῄξ τε συμμιγὴς φόνος.
Τοιάδε τοί μ᾽ ἀπεῖργε συμφορὰ πέδον
Τροίας ἱκέσθαι σύμμαχόν τέ σοι μολεῖν.
Ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἔπερσα, τῶνδ᾽ ὁμηρεύσας τέκνα
τάξας <τ᾽> ἔτειον δασμὸν ἐς δόμους φέρειν,
ἧκω περάσας ναυσὶ πόντιον στόμα,
τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλα πεζὸς γῆς περῶν ὁρίσματα
οὐχ ὡς σὺ κομπεῖς τὰς ἐμὰς ἀμύστιδας,
οὐδ᾽ ἐν ζαχρύσοις δώμασιν κοιμώμενος,
ἀλλ᾽ οἷα πόντον Θρῄκιον φυσήματα
κρυσταλλόπηκτα Παιόνας τ᾽ ἐπεζάρει,

ξὺν τοῖσδ’ ἄυπνος οἶδα τλὰς πορπάμασιν.
Ἀλλ’ ὕστερος μὲν ἦλθον, ἐν καιρῷ δ’ ὅμως·
σὺ μὲν γὰρ ἤδη δέκατον αἰχμάζεις ἔτος
κοὐδὲν περαίνεις, ἡμέραν δ’ ἐξ ἡμέρας
πίπτεις κυβεύων τὸν πρὸς Ἀργείους Ἄρη·
ἐμοὶ δὲ φῶς ἓν ἡλίου καταρκέσει
πέρσαντι πύργους ναυστάθμοις ἐπεσπεσεῖν
κτεῖναί τ’ Ἀχαιούς· θατέρᾳ δ’ ἀπ’ Ἰλίου
πρὸς οἶκον εἶμι, συντεμὼν τοὺς σοὺς πόνους,
ὑμῶν δὲ μή τις ἀσπίδ’ ἄρηται χερί·
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἕξω τοὺς μέγ’ αὐχοῦντας δορὶ
πέρσας Ἀχαιούς, καίπερ ὕστερος μολών.

Χορός

Ἰὼ ἰώ.
Φίλα θροεῖς, φίλος Διόθεν εἶ· μόνον
φθόνον ἄμαχον ὕπατος
Ζεὺς θέλοι ἀμφὶ σοῖς λόγοισιν εἴργειν.
Τὸ δὲ νάιον Ἀργόθεν δόρυ
οὔτε πρίν τιν’ οὔτε νῦν
ἀνδρῶν ἐπόρευσε σέθεν κρείσσω. Πῶς μοι
Ἀχιλεὺς τὸ σὸν ἔγχος ἂν δύναιτο,
πῶς δ’ Αἴας ὑπομεῖναι;
Εἰ γὰρ ἐγὼ τόδ’ ἦμαρ εἰσίδοιμ’, ἄναξ,
ὅτῳ πολυφόνου
χειρὸς ἀποινάσαιο λόγχᾳ.

Ῥῆσος

Τοιαῦτα μέν σοι τῆς μακρᾶς ἀπουσίας
πρᾶξαι παρέξω σὺν δ’ Ἀδραστείᾳ λέγω
ἐπειδὰν ἐχθρῶν τήνδ’ ἐλευθέραν πόλιν
θῶμεν θεοῖσί τ’ ἀκροθίνι’ ἐξέλῃς,
ξὺν σοὶ στρατεύειν γῆν ἐπ’ Ἀργείων θέλω
καὶ πᾶσαν ἐλθὼν Ἑλλάδ’ ἐκπέρσαι δορί,
ὡς ἂν μάθωσιν ἐν μέρει πάσχειν κακῶς.

Ἕκτωρ

Εἰ τοῦ παρόντος τοῦδ’ ἀπαλλαχθεὶς κακοῦ
πόλιν νεμοίμην ὡς τὸ πρίν ποτ’ ἀσφαλῆ,
ἦ κάρτα πολλὴν θεοῖς ἂν εἰδείην χάριν.
Τὰ δ’ ἀμφί τ’ Ἄργος καὶ νομὸν τὸν Ἑλλάδος
οὐχ ὧδε πορθεῖν ῥᾴδι’, ὡς λέγεις, δορί.

Ῥῆσος

Οὐ τούσδ’ ἀριστέας φασὶν Ἑλλήνων μολεῖν;

Ἕκτωρ

Κοὐ μεμφόμεσθά γ’, ἀλλ’ ἄδην ἐλαύνομεν.

Ῥῆσος

Οὐκ οὖν κτανόντες τούσδε πᾶν εἰργάσμεθα;

Ἕκτωρ

Μή νυν τὰ πόρρω τἀγγύθεν μεθεὶς σκόπει.

Ῥῆσος

Ἀρκεῖν ἔοικέ σοι παθεῖν, δρᾶσαι δὲ μή.

Ἕκτωρ

Πολλῆς γὰρ ἄρχω κἀνθάδ’ ὢν τυραννίδος.
Ἀλλ’ εἴτε λαιὸν εἴτε δεξιὸν κέρας
εἴτ’ ἐν μέσοισι συμμάχοις πάρεστί σοι
πέλτην ἐρεῖσαι καὶ καταστῆσαι στρατόν.

Ῥῆσος

Μόνος μάχεσθαι πολεμίοις, Ἕκτορ, θέλω.
Εἰ δ’ αἰσχρὸν ἡγῇ μὴ συνεμπρῆσαι νεῶν

πρύμνας, πονήσας τὸν πάρος πολὺν χρόνον,
τάξον μ᾽ Ἀχιλλέως καὶ στρατοῦ κατὰ στόμα.

Ἕκτωρ

Οὐκ ἔστ᾽ ἐκείνῳ θοῦρον ἐντάξαι δόρυ.

Ῥῆσος

Καὶ μὴν λόγος γ᾽ ἦν ὡς ἔπλευσ᾽ ἐπ᾽ Ἴλιον.

Ἕκτωρ

Ἔπλευσε καὶ πάρεστιν· ἀλλὰ μηνίων
στρατηλάταισιν οὐ συναίρεται δόρυ.

Ῥῆσος

Τίς δὴ μετ᾽ αὐτὸν ἄλλος εὐδοξεῖ στρατοῦ;

Ἕκτωρ

Αἴας ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐδὲν ἡσσᾶσθαι δοκεῖ
χὠ Τυδέως παῖς· ἔστι δ᾽ αἱμυλώτατον
κρότημ᾽ Ὀδυσσεύς, λῆμά τ᾽ ἀρκούντως θρασὺς
καὶ πλεῖστα χώραν τήνδ᾽ ἀνὴρ καθυβρίσας·
ὃς εἰς Ἀθάνας σηκὸν ἔννυχος μολὼν
κλέψας ἄγαλμα ναῦς ἐπ᾽ Ἀργείων φέρει.
Ἤδη δ᾽ ἀγύρτης πτωχικὴν ἔχων στολὴν
ἐσῆλθε πύργους, πολλὰ δ᾽ Ἀργείοις κακὰ
ἠρᾶτο, πεμφθεὶς Ἰλίου κατάσκοπος·
κτανὼν δὲ φρουροὺς καὶ παραστάτας πυλῶν
ἐξῆλθεν· αἰεὶ δ᾽ ἐν λόχοις εὑρίσκεται
Θυμβραῖον ἀμφὶ βωμὸν ἄστεως πέλας
θάσσων· κακῷ δὲ μερμέρῳ παλαίομεν.

Ῥῆσος

[510] Οὐδεὶς ἀνὴρ εὔψυχος ἀξιοῖ λάθρᾳ
κτεῖναι τὸν ἐχθρόν, ἀλλ’ ἰὼν κατὰ στόμα.
Τοῦτον δ’ ὃν ἵζειν φὴς σὺ κλωπικὰς ἕδρας
καὶ μηχανᾶσθαι, ζῶντα συλλαβὼν ἐγὼ
πυλῶν ἐπ’ ἐξόδοισιν ἀμπείρας ῥάχιν
[515] στήσω πετεινοῖς γυψὶ θοινατήριον.
Λῃστὴν γὰρ ὄντα καὶ θεῶν ἀνάκτορα
συλῶντα δεῖ νιν τῷδε κατθανεῖν μόρῳ.

Ἕκτωρ

Νῦν μὲν καταυλίσθητε· καὶ γὰρ εὐφρόνη.
Δείξω δ’ ἐγώ σοι χῶρον, ἔνθα χρὴ στρατὸν
[520] τὸν σὸν νυχεῦσαι τοῦ τεταγμένου δίχα.
Ξύνθημα δ’ ἡμῖν Φοῖβος, ἢν τι καὶ δέῃ·
μέμνησ’ ἀκούσας, Θρῃκί τ’ ἄγγειλον στρατῷ.
Ὑμᾶς δὲ βάντας χρὴ προταινὶ τάξεων
φρουρεῖν ἐγερτὶ καὶ νεῶν κατάσκοπον
[525] δέχθαι Δόλωνα· καὶ γάρ, εἴπερ ἐστὶ σῶς,
ἤδη πελάζει στρατοπέδοισι Τρωικοῖς.

Χορός

[527] Τίνος ἁ φυλακά; Τίς ἀμείβει
τὰν ἐμάν; Πρῶτα
δύεται σημεῖα καὶ ἑπτάποροι
[530] Πλειάδες αἰθέριαι· μέσα δ’ αἰετὸς οὐρανοῦ ποτᾶται.
[532] Ἔγρεσθε, τί μέλλετε; Κοιτᾶν
ἔγρεσθε πρὸς φυλακάν.
Οὐ λεύσσετε μηνάδος αἴγλαν;
[535] Ἀὼς δὴ πέλας, ἀὼς
γίγνεται, καί τις προδρόμων
ὅδε γ’ ἐστὶν ἀστήρ.
Τίς ἐκηρύχθη πρώτην φυλακήν;
Μυγδόνος υἱόν φασι Κόροιβον.
[540] Τίς γὰρ ἐπ’ αὐτῷ;
Κίλικας Παίων
στρατὸς ἤγειρεν, Μυσοὶ δ’ ἡμᾶς.

[543] Οὐκ οὖν Λυκίους πέμπτην φυλακὴν
βάντας ἐγείρειν
[545] καιρὸς κλήρου κατὰ μοῖραν;

[547] Καὶ μὴν ἀί¨ω· Σιμόεντος
ἡμένα κοίτας
φοινίας ὑμνεῖ πολυχορδοτάτᾳ
[550] γήρυι¨ παιδολέτωρ μελοποιὸν ἀηδονὶς μέριμναν.
Ἤδη δὲ νέμουσι κατ᾽ Ἴδαν
ποίμνια· νυκτιβρόμου
σύριγγος ἰὰν κατακούω.
Θέλγει δ᾽ ὄμματος ἕδραν
[555] ὕπνος· ἄδιστος γὰρ ἔβα
βλεφάροις πρὸς ἀοῦς.
Τί ποτ᾽ οὐ πλάθει σκοπός, ὃν ναῶν
Ἕκτωρ ὤτρυνε κατόπταν;
Ταρβῶ· χρόνιος γὰρ ἄπεστιν.
[560] Ἀλλ᾽ ἦ κρυπτὸν λόχον ἐσπαίσας
διόλωλε;
Τάχ᾽ ἄν. Φοβερόν μοι.
Αὐδῶ Λυκίους πέμπτην φυλακὴν
βάντας ἐγείρειν
ἡμᾶς κλήρου κατὰ μοῖραν.

Ὀδυσσεύς

[565] Διόμηδες, οὐκ ἤκουσας ἢ κενὸς ψόφος
στάζει δι᾽ ὤτων; Τευχέων τινὰ κτύπον;

Διομήδης

Οὔκ, ἀλλὰ δεσμὰ πωλικῶν ἐξ ἀντύγων
κλάζει σιδήρου· κἀμέ τοι, πρὶν ᾐσθόμην
δεσμῶν ἀραγμὸν ἱππικῶν, ἔδυ φόβος.

Ὀδυσσεύς

[570] Ὄρα κατ᾽ ὄρφνην μὴ φύλαξιν ἐντύχῃς.

Διομήδης

Φυλάξομαί τοι κἀν σκότῳ τιθεὶς πόδα.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἦν δ’ οὖν ἐγείρῃς, οἶσθα σύνθημα στρατοῦ;

Διομήδης

<Φοῖβον> Δόλωνος οἶδα σύμβολον κλύων.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἔα·
εὐνὰς ἐρήμους τάσδε πολεμίων ὁρῶ.

Διομήδης

[575] Καὶ μὴν Δόλων γε τάσδ’ ἔφραζεν Ἕκτορος
κοίτας, ἐφ’ ᾧπερ ἔγχος εἴλκυσται τόδε.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Τί δῆτ’ ἂν εἴη; Μῶν λόχος βέβηκέ ποι;

Διομήδης

Ἴσως ἐφ’ ἡμῖν μηχανὴν στήσων τινά.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Θρασὺς γὰρ Ἕκτωρ νῦν, ἐπεὶ κρατεῖ, θρασύς.

Διομήδης

[580] Τί δῆτ’, Ὀδυσσεῦ, δρῶμεν; Οὐ γὰρ ηὕρομεν
τὸν ἄνδρ’ ἐν εὐναῖς, ἐλπίδων δ’ ἡμάρτομεν.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Στείχωμεν ὡς τάχιστα ναυστάθμων πέλας.
Σῴζει γὰρ αὐτὸν ὅστις εὐτυχῆ θεῶν
τίθησιν· ἡμῖν δ᾽ οὐ βιαστέον τύχην.

Διομήδης

Οὐκ οὖν ἐπ᾽ Αἰνέαν ἢ τὸν ἔχθιστον Φρυγῶν
Πάριν μολόντε χρὴ καρατομεῖν ξίφει;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Πῶς οὖν ἐν ὄρφνῃ πολεμίων ἀνὰ στρατὸν
ζητῶν δυνήσῃ τούσδ᾽ ἀκινδύνως κτανεῖν;

Διομήδης

Αἰσχρόν γε μέντοι ναῦς ἐπ᾽ Ἀργείων μολεῖν
δράσαντε μηδὲν πολεμίους νεώτερον.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Πῶς δ᾽ οὐ δέδρακας; Οὐ κτανόντε ναυστάθμων
κατάσκοπον Δόλωνα σῴζομεν τάδε
σκυλεύματ᾽; Ἢ πᾶν στρατόπεδον πέρσειν δοκεῖς;

Διομήδης

Πείθεις, πάλιν στείχωμεν· εὖ δ᾽ εἴη τυχεῖν.

Ἀθήνα

Ποῖ δὴ λιπόντες Τρωικῶν ἐκ τάξεων
χωρεῖτε, λύπῃ καρδίαν δεδηγμένοι,
εἰ μὴ κτανεῖν σφῷν Ἕκτορ᾽ ἢ Πάριν θεὸς
δίδωσιν; Ἄνδρα δ᾽ οὐ πέπυσθε σύμμαχον
Τροίᾳ μολόντα Ῥῆσον οὐ φαύλῳ τρόπῳ.
Ὃς εἰ διοίσει νύκτα τήνδ᾽ ἐς αὔριον,

οὔτε σφ’ Ἀχιλλεὺς οὔτ’ ἂν Αἴαντος δόρυ
μὴ πάντα πέρσαι ναύσταθμ’ Ἀργείων σχέθοι,
τείχη κατασκάψαντα καὶ πυλῶν ἔσω
λόγχῃ πλατεῖαν ἐσδρομὴν ποιούμενον.
[605] Τοῦτον κατακτὰς πάντ’ ἔχεις. Τὰς δ’ Ἕκτορος
εὐνὰς ἔασον καὶ καρατόμους σφαγάς·
ἔσται γὰρ αὐτῷ θάνατος ἐξ ἄλλης χερός.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Δέσποιν’ Ἀθάνα, φθέγματος γὰρ ᾐσθόμην
τοῦ σοῦ συνήθη γῆρυν· ἐν πόνοισι γὰρ
[610] παροῦσ’ ἀμύνεις τοῖς ἐμοῖς ἀεί ποτε·
τὸν ἄνδρα δ’ ἡμῖν, ποῦ κατηύνασται, φράσον·
πόθεν τέτακται βαρβάρου στρατεύματος;

Ἀθήνα

[613] Ὅδ’ ἐγγὺς ἦσται κοὐ συνήθροισται στρατῷ,
ἀλλ’ ἐκτὸς αὐτὸν τάξεων κατηύνασεν
[615] Ἕκτωρ, ἕως ἂν νὺξ ἀμείψηται φάος.
Πέλας δὲ πῶλοι Θρῃκίων ἐξ ἁρμάτων
λευκαὶ δέδενται, διαπρεπεῖς ἐν εὐφρόνῃ·
στίλβουσι δ’ ὥστε ποταμίου κύκνου πτερόν.
Ταύτας, κτανόντες δεσπότην, κομίζετε,
[620] κάλλιστον οἴκοις σκῦλον· οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ’ ὅπου
τοιόνδ’ ὄχημα χθὼν κέκευθε πωλικόν.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Διόμηδες, ἢ σὺ κτεῖνε Θρῄκιον λεών,
ἢ ‘μοὶ πάρες γε, σοὶ δὲ χρὴ πώλους μέλειν.

Διομήδης

Ἐγὼ φονεύσω, πωλοδαμνήσεις δὲ σύ·
[625] τρίβων γὰρ εἶ τὰ κομψὰ καὶ νοεῖν σοφός.
Χρὴ δ’ ἄνδρα τάσσειν οὗ μάλιστ’ ἂν ὠφελοῖ.

Ἀθήνα

Καὶ μὴν καθ’ ἡμᾶς τόνδ’ Ἀλέξανδρον βλέπω
στείχοντα, φυλάκων ἔκ τινος πεπυσμένον
δόξας ἀσήμους πολεμίων μεμβλωκότων.

Διομήδης

Πότερα σὺν ἄλλοις ἢ μόνος πορεύεται;

Ἀθήνα

Μόνος· πρὸς εὐνὰς δ’, ὡς ἔοικεν, Ἕκτορος
χωρεῖ, κατόπτας σημανῶν ἥκειν στρατοῦ.

Διομήδης

Οὐκ οὖν ὑπάρχειν τόνδε κατθανόντα χρή;

Ἀθήνα

Οὐκ ἂν δύναιο τοῦ πεπρωμένου πλέον.
Τοῦτον δὲ πρὸς σῆς χειρὸς οὐ θέμις θανεῖν.
Ἀλλ’ ᾧπερ ἥκεις μορσίμους φέρων σφαγάς,
τάχυν’· ἐγὼ δέ, τῷδε σύμμαχος Κύπρις
δοκοῦσ’ ἀρωγὸς ἐν πόνοις παραστατεῖν,
σαθροῖς λόγοισιν ἐχθρὸν ἄνδρ’ ἀμείψομαι.
Καὶ ταῦτ’ ἐγὼ μὲν εἶπον· ὃν δὲ χρὴ παθεῖν,
οὐκ οἶδεν οὐδ’ ἤκουσεν ἐγγὺς ὢν λόγου.

Ἀλέξανδρος

Σὲ τὸν στρατηγὸν καὶ κασίγνητον λέγω,
Ἕκτορ, καθεύδεις; Οὐκ ἐγείρεσθαί σε χρῆν;
Ἐχθρῶν τις ἡμῖν χρίμπτεται στρατεύματι,
ἢ κλῶπες ἄνδρες ἢ κατάσκοποί τινες.

Ἀθήνα

Θάρσει· φυλάσσει σ’ ἥδε πρευμενὴς Κύπρις.
Μέλει δ’ ὁ σός μοι πόλεμος, οὐδ’ ἀμνημονῶ
τιμῆς, ἐπαινῶ δ’ εὖ παθοῦσα πρὸς σέθεν.
Καὶ νῦν ἐπ’ εὐτυχοῦντι Τρωικῷ στρατῷ
ἥκω πορεύουσ’ ἄνδρα σοι μέγαν φίλον,
τῆς ὑμνοποιοῦ παῖδα Θρῄκιον θεᾶς
Μούσης· πατρὸς δὲ Στρυμόνος κικλήσκεται.

Ἀλέξανδρος

Αἰεί ποτ’ εὖ φρονοῦσα τυγχάνεις πόλει
κἀμοί, μέγιστον δ’ ἐν βίῳ κειμήλιον
κρίνας σέ φημι τῇδε προσθέσθαι πόλει.
Ἥκω δ’ ἀκούσας οὐ τορῶς φήμη δέ τις
φύλαξιν ἐμπέπτωκεν ὡς κατάσκοποι
ἥκουσ’ Ἀχαιῶν. Χὠ μὲν οὐκ ἰδὼν λέγει,
ὃ δ’ εἰσιδὼν μολόντας οὐκ ἔχει φράσαι·
ὧν οὕνεκ’ εὐνὰς ἤλυθον πρὸς Ἕκτορος.

Ἀθήνα

Μηδὲν φοβηθῇς· οὐδὲν ἐν στρατῷ νέον·
Ἕκτωρ δὲ φροῦδος Θρῇκα κοιμήσων στρατόν.

Ἀλέξανδρος

Σύ τοί με πείθεις, σοῖς δὲ πιστεύων λόγοις
τάξιν φυλάξων εἶμ’ ἐλεύθερος φόβου.

Ἀθήνα

Χώρει· μέλειν γὰρ πάντ’ ἐμοὶ δόκει τὰ σά,
ὥστ’ εὐτυχοῦντας συμμάχους ἐμοὺς ὁρᾶν.
Γνώσῃ δὲ καὶ σὺ τὴν ἐμὴν προθυμίαν.
Ὑμᾶς δ’ αὐτῶ τοὺς ἄγαν ἐρρωμένους,
Λαερτίου παῖ, θηκτὰ κοιμίσαι ξίφη.
Κεῖται γὰρ ἡμῖν Θρῄκιος στρατηλάτης,
ἵπποι τ’ ἔχονται, πολέμιοι δ’ ἠσθημένοι

χωροῦσ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς· ἀλλ᾽ ὅσον τάχιστα χρὴ
φεύγειν πρὸς ὁλκοὺς ναυστάθμων. Τί μέλλετε
σκηπτοῦ ‘πιόντος πολεμίων σῷσαι βίον;

Χορός

[675] Ἔα ἔα·
βάλε βάλε βάλε βάλε.
Θένε θένε.
Τίς ἀνήρ; Λεύσσετε· τοῦτον αὐδῶ.
Κλῶπες οἵτινες κατ᾽ ὄρφνην τόνδε κινοῦσι στρατόν.
[680] Δεῦρο δεῦρο πᾶς.
Τούσδ᾽ ἔχω, τούσδ᾽ ἔμαρψα.
Τίς ὁ λόχος; Πόθεν ἔβας; Ποδαπὸς εἶ;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Οὔ σε χρὴ εἰδέναι· θανῇ γὰρ σήμερον δράσας κακῶς.

Χορός

Οὐκ ἐρεῖς ξύνθημα, λόγχην πρὶν διὰ στέρνων μολεῖν;

Ὀδυσσεύς

[685] Ἵστω. Θάρσει.

Χορός

Πέλας ἴθι. Παῖε πᾶς.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἦ σὺ δὴ Ῥῆσον κατέκτας;

Χορός

Ἀλλὰ τὸν κτενοῦντα σὲ . . .

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἴσχε πᾶς τις.

Χορός

Οὐ μὲν οὖν.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἆ· φίλιον ἄνδρα μὴ θένῃς.

Χορός

Καὶ τί δὴ τὸ σῆμα;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Φοῖβος.

Χορός

Ἔμαθον· ἴσχε πᾶς δόρυ.
οἶσθ᾽ ὅποι βεβᾶσιν ἄνδρες;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Τῇδέ πῃ κατείδομεν.

Χορός

[690] Ἕρπω πᾶς κατ᾽ ἴχνος αὐτῶν.
Ἢ βοὴν ἐγερτέον;
Ἀλλὰ συμμάχους ταράσσειν δεινὸν ἐκ νυκτῶν φόβῳ.

Χορός

[692] Τίς ἀνδρῶν ὁ βάς;
Τίς ὁ μέγα θρασὺς ἐπεύξεται

χέρα φυγὼν ἐμάν;
Πόθεν νιν κυρήσω;
Τίνι προσεικάσω,
ὅστις δι᾽ ὄρφνης ἦλθ᾽ ἀδειμάντῳ ποδὶ
διά τε τάξεων καὶ φυλάκων ἕδρας;
Θεσσαλὸς ἢ
παραλίαν Λοκρῶν νεμόμενος πόλιν;
Ἢ νησιώτην σποράδα κέκτηται βίον;
Τίς ἦν; Πόθεν; Ποίας πάτρας;
Ποῖον δ᾽ εὔχεται τὸν ὕπατον θεῶν;
Ἆρ᾽ ἔστ᾽ Ὀδυσσέως τοὔργον ἢ τίνος τόδε;
Εἰ τοῖς πάροιθε χρὴ τεκμαίρεσθαι· τί μήν;
Δοκεῖς γάρ;
Τί μὴν οὔ;
Θρασὺς γοῦν ἐς ἡμᾶς.
Τίν᾽ ἀλκήν; Τίν᾽ αἰνεῖς;
Ὀδυσσῆ.
Μὴ κλωπὸς αἴνει φωτὸς αἱμύλον δόρυ.

Ἔβα καὶ πάρος
κατὰ πόλιν, ὕπαφρον ὄμμ᾽ ἔχων,
ῥακοδύτῳ στολᾷ
πυκασθείς, ξιφήρης
κρύφιος ἐν πέπλοις.
Βίον δ᾽ ἐπαιτῶν εἶρπ᾽ ἀγύρτης τις λάτρις,
ψαφαρόχρουν κάρα πολυπινές τ᾽ ἔχων·
πολλὰ δὲ τὰν
βασιλίδ᾽ ἑστίαν Ἀτρειδᾶν κακῶς
ἔβαζε δῆθεν ἐχθρὸς ὢν στρατηλάταις.
Ὄλοιτ᾽ ὄλοιτο πανδίκως,
πρὶν ἐπὶ γᾶν Φρυγῶν ποδὸς ἴχνος βαλεῖν.
Εἴτ᾽ οὖν Ὀδυσσέως εἴτε μή, φόβος μ᾽ ἔχει·
Ἕκτωρ γὰρ ἡμῖν τοῖς φύλαξι μέμψεται.
Τί λάσκων;
Δυσοίζων.
Τί δρᾶσαι; Τί ταρβεῖς;
Καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς περᾶσαι . . .

τίν’ ἀνδρῶν;
Οἳ τῆσδε νυκτὸς ἦλθον ἐς Φρυγῶν στρατόν.

Ἠνίοχος

[729] Ἰὼ, ἰώ, δαίμονος τύχα βαρεῖα. Φεῦ φεῦ.

Χορός

Ἔα, ἔα·
[730] σῖγα πᾶς ὕφιζ’· ἴσως γὰρ ἐς βόλον τις ἔρχεται.

Ἠνίοχος

Ἰὼ ἰώ,
συμφορὰ βαρεῖα Θρῃκῶν.

Χορός

Συμμάχων τις ὁ στένων.

Ἠνίοχος

[733] Ἰὼ ἰώ,
δύστηνος ἐγώ· σύ τ’, ἄναξ Θρῃκῶν,
ὦ στυγνοτάτην Τροίαν ἐσιδών,
[735] οἶόν σε βίου τέλος εἶλεν.

Χορός

Τίς εἶ ποτ’ ἀνδρῶν συμμάχων; Κατ’ εὐφρόνην
ἀμβλῶπες αὐγαὶ κοὔ σε γιγνώσκω τορῶς.

Ἠνίοχος

Ποῦ τιν’ ἀνάκτων Τρωικῶν εὕρω;
Ποῦ δῆθ’ Ἕκτωρ
[740] τὸν ὑπασπίδιον κοῖτον ἰαύει;
Τίνι σημήνω διόπων στρατιᾶς

οἷα πεπόνθαμεν, οἷά τις ἡμᾶς
δράσας ἀφανῆ φροῦδος, φανερὸν
Θρῃξὶν πένθος τολυπεύσας;

Χορός

[745] Κακὸν κυρεῖν τι Θρῃκίῳ στρατεύματι
ἔοικεν, οἷα τοῦδε γιγνώσκω κλύων.

Ἠνίοχος

[747] Ἔρρει στρατιά, πέπτωκεν ἄναξ
δολίῳ πληγῇ.
Ἆ ᾆ ᾆ ᾆ,
[750] οἵα μ' ὀδύνη τείρει φονίου
τραύματος εἴσω. Πῶς ἂν ὀλοίμην;
Χρῆν γάρ μ' ἀκλεῶς Ῥῆσόν τε θανεῖν,
Τροίᾳ κέλσαντ' ἐπίκουρον;

Χορός

Τάδ' οὐκ ἐν αἰνιγμοῖσι σημαίνει κακά·
[755] σαφῶς γὰρ αὐδᾷ συμμάχους ὀλωλότας.

Ἠνίοχος

[756] Κακῶς πέπρακται κἀπὶ τοῖς κακοῖσι πρὸς
αἴσχιστα· καίτοι δὶς τόσον κακὸν τόδε·
θανεῖν γὰρ εὐκλεῶς μέν, εἰ θανεῖν χρεών,
λυπρὸν μὲν οἶμαι τῷ θανόντι πῶς γὰρ οὔ;
[760] Τοῖς ζῶσι δ' ὄγκος καὶ δόμων εὐδοξία.
Ἡμεῖς δ' ἀβούλως κἀκλεῶς ὀλώλαμεν.
Ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἡμᾶς ηὗνασ' Ἑκτόρεια χείρ,
ξύνθημα λέξας, ηὕδομεν πεδοστιβεῖ
κόπῳ δαμέντες, οὐδ' ἐφρουρεῖτο στρατὸς
[765] φυλακαῖσι νυκτέροισιν, οὐδ' ἐν τάξεσιν
ἔκειτο τεύχη, πλῆκτρά τ' οὐκ ἐπὶ ζυγοῖς
ἵππων καθήρμοσθ', ὡς ἄναξ ἐπεύθετο

κρατοῦντας ὑμᾶς κἀφεδρεύοντας νεῶν
πρύμναισι· φαύλως δ’ ηὔδομεν πεπτωκότες.
Κἀγὼ μελούσῃ καρδίᾳ λήξας ὕπνου
πώλοισι χόρτον, προσδοκῶν ἑωθινὴν
ζεύξειν ἐς ἀλκήν, ἀφθόνῳ μετρῶ χερί.
Λεύσσω δὲ φῶτε περιπολοῦνθ’ ἡμῶν στρατὸν
πυκνῆς δι’ ὄρφνης· ὡς δ’ ἐκινήθην ἐγώ,
ἐπτηξάτην τε κἀνεχωρείτην πάλιν·
ἤπυσα δ’ αὐτοῖς μὴ πελάζεσθαι στρατῷ,
κλῶπας δοκήσας συμμάχων πλάθειν τινάς.
Οἳ δ’ οὐδέν· οὐ μὴν οὐδ’ ἐγὼ τὰ πλείονα.
Ἡδον δ’ ἀπελθὼν αὖθις ἐς κοίτην πάλιν.

Καί μοι καθ’ ὕπνον δόξα τις παρίσταται·
ἵππους γὰρ ἃς ἔθρεψα κἀδιφρηλάτουν
Ῥήσῳ παρεστώς, εἶδον, ὡς ὄναρ δοκῶν,
λύκους ἐπεμβεβῶτας ἑδραίαν ῥάχιν·
θείνοντε δ’ οὐρᾷ πωλικῆς ῥινοῦ τρίχα
ἤλαυνον, αἳ δ’ ἔρρεγκον ἐξ ἀντηρίδων
θυμὸν πνέουσαι κἀνεχαίτιζον φόβῳ.
Ἐγὼ δ’ ἀμύνων θῆρας ἐξεγείρομαι
πώλοισιν· ἔννυχος γὰρ ἐξώρμα φόβος.
Κλύω δ’ ἐπάρας κρᾶτα μυχθισμὸν νεκρῶν.
Θερμὸς δὲ κρουνὸς δεσπότου πάρα σφαγαῖς
βάλλει με δυσθνῄσκοντος αἵματος νέου.
Ὀρθὸς δ’ ἀνᾴσσω χειρὶ σὺν κενῇ δορός.
Καί μ’ ἔγχος αὐγάζοντα καὶ θηρώμενον
παίει παραστὰς νεῖραν ἐς πλευρὰν ξίφει
ἀνὴρ ἀκμάζων· φασγάνου γὰρ ᾐσθόμην
πληγῆς, βαθεῖαν ἄλοκα τραύματος λαβών.
Πίπτω δὲ πρηνής· οἳ δ’ ὄχημα πωλικὸν
λαβόντες ἵππων ἵεσαν φυγῇ πόδα.
Ἆ ἆ.
Ὀδύνη με τείρει, κοὐκέτ’ ὀρθοῦμαι τάλας.
Καὶ ξυμφορὰν μὲν οἶδ’ ὁρῶν, τρόπῳ δ’ ὅτῳ
τεθνᾶσιν οἱ θανόντες οὐκ ἔχω φράσαι,

οὐδ’ ἐξ ὁποίας χειρός. Εἰκάσαι δέ μοι
πάρεστι λυπρὰ πρὸς φίλων πεπονθέναι.

Χορός

Ἠνίοχε Θρῃκὸς τοῦ κακῶς πεπραγότος,
μηδὲν δυσοίζου· πολέμιοι ῎δρασαν τάδε.
Ἕκτωρ δὲ καὐτὸς συμφορᾶς πεπυσμένος
χωρεῖ· συναλγεῖ δ’, ὡς ἔοικε, σοῖς κακοῖς.

Ἕκτωρ

Πῶς, ὦ μέγιστα πήματ’ ἐξειργασμένοι,
μολόντες ὑμᾶς πολεμίων κατάσκοποι
λήθουσιν αἰσχρῶς, καὶ κατεσφάγη στρατός,
κοὔτ’ εἰσιόντας στρατόπεδ’ ἐξαπώσατε
οὔτ’ ἐξιόντας; Τῶνδε τίς τείσει δίκην
πλὴν σοῦ; Σὲ γὰρ δὴ φύλακά φημ’ εἶναι στρατοῦ.
Φροῦδοι δ’ ἄπληκτοι, τῇ Φρυγῶν κακανδρίᾳ
πόλλ’ ἐγγελῶντες τῷ στρατηλάτῃ τ’ ἐμοί.
Εὖ νυν τόδ’ ἴστε Ζεὺς ὀμώμοται πατήρ
ἤτοι μάραγνά γ’ ἢ καρανιστὴς μόρος
μένει σε δρῶντα τοιάδ’, ἢ τὸν Ἕκτορα
τὸ μηδὲν εἶναι καὶ κακὸν νομίζετε.

Χορός

Ἰὼ ἰώ,
μετὰ σέ, ναί, μετὰ σέ, ὦ πολίοχον κράτος,
τότ’ ἄρ’ ἔμολον, ὅτε σοι
ἄγγελος ἦλθον ἀμφὶ ναῦς πύρ’ αἴθειν·
ἐπεὶ ἄγρυπνον ὄμμ’ ἐν εὐφρόνῃ
οὔτ’ ἐκοίμισ’ οὔτ’ ἔβριξ’,
οὐ τὰς Σιμοεντιάδας πηγάς· μή μοι
κότον, ὦ ἄνα, θῇς· ἀναίτιος γὰρ
. . . ἔγωγε πάντων.
Εἰ δὲ χρόνῳ παράκαιρον ἔργον ἢ λόγον

πύθῃ, κατά με γᾶς
ζῶντα πόρευσον· οὐ παραιτοῦμαι.

Ἠνίοχος

Τί τοῖσδ’ ἀπειλεῖς βάρβαρός τε βαρβάρου
γνώμην ὑφαιρῇ τὴν ἐμήν, πλέκων λόγους;
Σὺ ταῦτ’ ἔδρασας· οὐδέν’ ἂν δεξαίμεθα
οὔθ’ οἱ θανόντες οὔτ’ ἂν οἱ τετρωμένοι
ἄλλον· μακροῦ γε δεῖ σε καὶ σοφοῦ λόγου,
ὅτῳ με πείσεις μὴ φίλους κατακτανεῖν,
ἵππων ἐρασθείς, ὧν ἕκατι συμμάχους
τοὺς σοὺς φονεύεις, πόλλ’ ἐπισκήπτων μολεῖν.
Ἦλθον, τεθνᾶσιν· εὐπρεπέστερον Πάρις
ξενίαν κατῄσχυν’ ἢ σὺ συμμάχους κτανών.
Μὴ γάρ τι λέξῃς ὥς τις Ἀργείων μολὼν
διώλεσ’ ἡμᾶς· τίς δ’ ὑπερβαλὼν λόχους
Τρώων ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς ἦλθεν, ὥστε καὶ λαθεῖν;
Σὺ πρόσθεν ἡμῶν ἦσο καὶ Φρυγῶν στρατός.
Τίς οὖν τέτρωται, τίς τέθνηκε συμμάχων
τῶν σῶν, μολόντων ὧν σὺ πολεμίων λέγεις;
Ἡμεῖς δ’ ἑκὰς τετρώμεθ’, οἳ δὲ μειζόνως
παθόντες οὐχ ὁρῶσιν ἡλίου φάος.
Ἁπλῶς δ’ Ἀχαιῶν οὐδέν’ αἰτιώμεθα.
Τίς δ’ ἂν χαμεύνας πολεμίων κατ’ εὐφρόνην
Ῥήσου μολὼν ἐξηῦρεν, εἰ μή τις θεῶν
ἔφραζε τοῖς κτανοῦσιν; Οὐδ’ ἀφιγμένον
τὸ πάμπαν ἦσαν· ἀλλὰ μηχανᾷ τάδε.

Ἕκτωρ

Χρόνον μὲν ἤδη συμμάχοισι χρώμεθα
ὅσονπερ ἐν γῇ τῇδ’ Ἀχαιικὸς λεώς,
κοὐδὲν πρὸς αὐτῶν οἶδα πλημμελὲς κλύων·
ἐν σοὶ δ’ ἂν ἀρχοίμεσθα. Μή μ’ ἔρως ἕλοι
τοιοῦτος ἵππων ὥστ’ ἀποκτείνειν φίλους.
Καὶ ταῦτ’ Ὀδυσσεύς· τίς γὰρ ἄλλος ἄν ποτε
ἔδρασεν ἢ ‘βούλευσεν Ἀργείων ἀνήρ;

Δέδοικα δ’ αὐτὸν καί τί μου θράσσει φρένας,
μὴ καὶ Δόλωνα συντυχὼν κατακτάνῃ·
[865] χρόνον γὰρ ἤδη φροῦδος ὢν οὐ φαίνεται.

Ἠνίοχος

Οὐκ οἶδα τοὺς σοὺς οὓς λέγεις Ὀδυσσέας·
ἡμεῖς δ’ ὑπ’ ἐχθρῶν οὐδενὸς πεπλήγμεθα.

Ἕκτωρ

Σὺ δ’ οὖν νόμιζε ταῦτ’, ἐπείπερ σοι δοκεῖ.

Ἠνίοχος

Ὦ γαῖα πατρίς, πῶς ἂν ἐνθάνοιμί σοι;

Ἕκτωρ

[870] Μὴ θνῇσχ’· ἅλις γὰρ τῶν τεθνηκότων ὄχλος.

Ἠνίοχος

Ποῖ δὴ τράπωμαι δεσποτῶν μονούμενος;

Ἕκτωρ

Οἶκός σε κεύθων οὑμὸς ἐξιάσεται.

Ἠνίοχος

Καὶ πῶς με κηδεύσουσιν αὐθεντῶν χέρες;

Ἕκτωρ

Ὅδ’ αὖ τὸν αὐτὸν μῦθον οὐ λήξει λέγων.

Ἠνίοχος

[875] Ὄλοιθ’ ὁ δράσας. Οὐ γὰρ ἐς σὲ τείνεται
γλῶσσ’, ὡς σὺ κομπεῖς· ἡ Δίκη δ’ ἐπίσταται.

Ἕκτωρ

[877] Λάζυσθ’· ἄγοντες <δ’> αὐτὸν ἐς δόμους ἐμούς,
οὕτως ὅπως ἂν μὴ ‘γκαλῇ πορσύνετε·
ὑμᾶς δ’ ἰόντας τοῖσιν ἐν τείχει χρεὼν
[880] Πριάμῳ τε καὶ γέρουσι σημῆναι νεκροὺς
θάπτειν κελεύθου λεωφόρου πρὸς ἑκτροπάς.

Χορός

Τί ποτ’ εὐτυχίας ἐκ τῆς μεγάλης
Τροίαν ἀνάγει πάλιν ἐς πένθη
δαίμων ἄλλος, τί φυτεύων;
[885] Ἔα ἔα. Ἆ ᾦ.
Τίς ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς θεός, ᾦ βασιλεῦ,
τὸν νεόκμητον νεκρὸν ἐν χειροῖν
φοράδην πέμπει;
Ταρβῶ, λεύσσων τόδε, πῆμα.

Μοῦσα

[890] Ὁρᾶν πάρεστι, Τρῶες· ἡ γὰρ ἐν σοφοῖς
τιμὰς ἔχουσα Μοῦσα συγγόνων μία
πάρειμι, παῖδα τόνδ’ ὁρῶσ’ οἰκτρῶς φίλον
θανόνθ’ ὑπ’ ἐχθρῶν· ὅν ποθ’ ὁ κτείνας χρόνῳ
δόλιος Ὀδυσσεὺς ἀξίαν τείσει δίκην.

[895] Ἰαλέμῳ αὐθιγενεῖ,
τέκνον, σ’ ὀλοφύρομαι, ᾦ
ματρὸς ἄλγος, οἵαν
ἔκελσας ὁδὸν ποτὶ Τροίαν·
ἦ δυσδαίμονα καὶ μελέαν,
[900] ἀπομεμφομένας ἐμοῦ πορευθείς,
ἀπὸ δ’ ἀντομένου πατρὸς βιαίως.

Ὤμοι ἐγὼ σέθεν, ὦ φιλία
φιλία κεφαλά, τέκνον, ὤμοι.

Χορός

Ὅσον προσήκει μὴ γένους κοινωνίαν
[905] ἔχοντι λύπῃ τὸν σὸν οἰκτίρω γόνον.

Μοῦσα

[906] Ὄλοιτο μὲν Οἰνεί¨δας,
ὄλοιτο δὲ Λαρτιάδας,
ὅς μ’ ἄπαιδα γέννας
ἔθηκεν ἀριστοτόκοιο·
[910] ἃ θ’ Ἕλλανα λιποῦσα δόμον
Φρυγίων λεχέων ἔπλευσε πλαθεῖσ’
ὑπ’ Ἰλίῳ ὤλεσε μὲν σ’ ἕκατι Τροίας,
φίλτατε, μυριάδας τε πόλεις
ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐκένωσεν.

[915] Ἦ πολλὰ μὲν ζῶν, πολλὰ δ’ εἰς Ἅιδου μολών,
Φιλάμμονος παῖ, τῆς ἐμῆς ἥψω φρενός·
ὕβρις γάρ, ἥ σ’ ἔσφηλε, καὶ Μουσῶν ἔρις
τεκεῖν μ’ ἔθηκε τόνδε δύστηνον γόνον.
Περῶσα γὰρ δὴ ποταμίους διὰ ῥοὰς
[920] λέκτροις ἐπλάθην Στρυμόνος φυταλμίοις,
ὅτ’ ἤλθομεν γῆς χρυσόβωλον ἐς λέπας
Πάγγαιον ὀργάνοισιν ἐξησκημέναι
Μοῦσαι μεγίστην εἰς ἔριν μελῳδίας
κείνῳ σοφιστῇ Θρῃκί, κἀκτυφλώσαμεν
[925] Θάμυριν, ὃς ἡμῶν πόλλ’ ἐδέννασεν τέχνην.

Κἀπεὶ σὲ τίκτω, συγγόνους αἰδουμένη
καὶ παρθενείαν, ἦκ’ ἐς εὐύδρου πατρὸς
δίνας· τρέφειν δέ σ’ οὐ βρότειον ἐς χέρα
Στρυμὼν δίδωσιν, ἀλλὰ πηγαίαις κόραις.
[930] Ἔνθ’ ἐκτραφεὶς κάλλιστα Παρθένων ὕπο,
Θρῄκης ἀνάσσων πρῶτος ἦσθ’ ἀνδρῶν, τέκνον.

Καί σ’ ἀμφὶ γῆν μὲν πατρίαν φιλαιμάτους
ἀλκὰς κορύσσοντ’ οὐκ ἐδείμαινον θανεῖν·
Τροίας δ’ ἀπηύδων ἄστυ μὴ κέλσαι ποτε,
εἰδυῖα τὸν σὸν πότμον· ἀλλά σ’ Ἕκτορος
πρεσβεύμαθ’ αἵ τε μυρίαι γερουσίαι
ἔπεισαν ἐλθεῖν κἀπικουρῆσαι φίλοις.

Καὶ τοῦδ’, Ἀθάνα, παντὸς αἰτία μόρου,
οὐδὲν δ’ Ὀδυσσεὺς οὐδ’ ὁ Τυδέως τόκος
ἔδρασε δράσας μὴ δόκει λεληθέναι.
καίτοι πόλιν σὴν σύγγονοι πρεσβεύομεν
Μοῦσαι μάλιστα κἀπιχρώμεθα χθονί,
μυστηρίων τε τῶν ἀπορρήτων φανὰς
ἔδειξεν Ὀρφεύς, αὐτανέψιος νεκροῦ
τοῦδ’ ὃν κατακτείνεις σύ: Μουσαῖόν τε, σὸν
σεμνὸν πολίτην κἀπὶ πλεῖστον ἄνδρ’ ἕνα
ἐλθόντα, Φοῖβος σύγγονοί τ’ ἠσκήσαμεν.
καὶ τῶνδε μισθὸν παῖδ’ ἔχουσ’ ἐν ἀγκάλαις
θρηνῶ: σοφιστὴν δ’ ἄλλον οὐκ ἐπάξομαι.

Χορός

Μάτην ἄρ’ ἡμᾶς Θρῄκιος τροχηλάτης
ἐδέννασ’, Ἕκτορ, τῷδε βουλεῦσαι φόνον.

Ἕκτωρ

Ἤδη τάδ’· οὐδὲν μάντεων ἔδει φράσαι
Ὀδυσσέως τέχναισι τόνδ’ ὀλωλότα.
Ἐγὼ δὲ γῆς ἔφεδρον Ἑλλήνων στρατὸν
λεύσσων, τί μὴν ἔμελλον οὐ πέμψειν φίλοις
κήρυκας, ἐλθεῖν κἀπικουρῆσαι χθονί;
Ἔπεμψ’· ὀφείλων δ’ ἦλθε συμπονεῖν ἐμοί.
Οὐ μὴν θανόντι γ’ οὐδαμῶς συνήδομαι.
Καὶ νῦν ἕτοιμος τῷδε καὶ τεῦξαι τάφον
καὶ ξυμπυρῶσαι μυρίων πέπλων χλιδήν·
φίλος γὰρ ἐλθὼν δυστυχῶς ἀπέρχεται.

Μοῦσα

Οὐκ εἶσι γαίας ἐς μελάγχιμον πέδον·
τοσόνδε Νύμφην τὴν ἔνερθ' αἰτήσομαι,
τῆς καρποποιοῦ παῖδα Δήμητρος θεᾶς,
ψυχὴν ἀνεῖναι τοῦδ'· ὀφειλέτις δέ μοι
τοὺς Ὀρφέως τιμῶσα φαίνεσθαι φίλους.
Κἀμοὶ μὲν ὡς θανών τε κοὐ λεύσσων φάος
ἔσται τὸ λοιπόν· οὐ γὰρ ἐς ταὐτόν ποτε
οὔτ' εἶσιν οὔτε μητρὸς ὄψεται δέμας·
κρυπτὸς δ' ἐν ἄντροις τῆς ὑπαργύρου χθονὸς
ἀνθρωποδαίμων κείσεται βλέπων φάος,
Βάκχου προφήτης ὥστε Παγγαίου πέτραν
ᾤκησε, σεμνὸς τοῖσιν εἰδόσιν θεός.
Ῥᾷον δὲ πένθος τῆς θαλασσίας θεοῦ
οἴσω· θανεῖν γὰρ καὶ τὸν ἐκ κείνης χρεών.
Θρήνοις δ' ἀδελφαὶ πρῶτα μὲν σὲ ὑμνήσομεν,
ἔπειτ' Ἀχιλλέα Θέτιδος ἐν πένθει ποτέ.
Οὐ ῥύσεταί νιν Παλλάς, ἥ σ' ἀπέκτανεν·
τοῖον φαρέτρα Λοξίου σῴζει βέλος.
Ὦ παιδοποιοὶ συμφοραί, πόνοι βροτῶν·
ὡς ὅστις ὑμᾶς μὴ κακῶς λογίζεται,
ἄπαις διοίσει κοὐ τεκὼν θάψει τέκνα.

Χορός

Οὗτος μὲν ἤδη μητρὶ κηδεύειν μέλει·
σὺ δ' εἴ τι πράσσειν τῶν προκειμένων θέλεις,
Ἕκτορ, πάρεστι· φῶς γὰρ ἡμέρας τόδε.

Ἕκτωρ

Χωρεῖτε, συμμάχους δ' ὁπλίζεσθαι τάχος
ἄνωχθε πληροῦν τ' αὐχένας ξυνωρίδων.
Πανοὺς δ' ἔχοντας χρὴ μένειν Τυρσηνικῆς
σάλπιγγος αὐδήν· ὡς ὑπερβαλὼν στρατὸν
τείχη τ' Ἀχαιῶν ναυσὶν αἶθον ἐμβαλεῖν

πέποιθα Τρωσί θ’ ἡμέραν ἐλευθέραν
ἀκτῖνα τὴν στείχουσαν ἡλίου φέρειν.

Χορός

Πείθου βασιλεῦ· στείχωμεν ὅπλοις
κοσμησάμενοι καὶ ξυμμαχίᾳ
[995] τάδε φράζωμεν· τάχα δ’ ἂν νίκην
δοίη δαίμων ὁ μεθ’ ἡμῶν.

CYCLOPS

Σιληνός

Ὦ Βρόμιε, διὰ σὲ μυρίους ἔχω πόνους
νῦν χὤτ’ ἐν ἥβῃ τοὐμὸν εὐσθένει δέμας·
πρῶτον μὲν ἡνίκ’ ἐμμανὴς Ἥρας ὕπο
Νύμφας ὀρείας ἐκλιπὼν ᾤχου τροφούς·
ἔπειθ’ ὅτ’ ἀμφὶ γηγενῆ μάχην δορὸς
ἐνδέξιος σῷ ποδὶ παρασπιστὴς βεβὼς
Ἐγκέλαδον ἰτέαν ἐς μέσην θενὼν δορὶ
ἔκτειναὠφέρ’ ἴδω, τοῦτ’ ἰδὼν ὄναρ λέγω;
Οὐ μὰ Δί’, ἐπεὶ καὶ σκῦλ’ ἔδειξα Βακχίῳ.
Καὶ νῦν ἐκείνων μείζον’ ἐξαντλῶ πόνον.
Ἐπεὶ γὰρ Ἥρα σοι γένος Τυρσηνικὸν
λῃστῶν ἐπῶρσεν, ὡς ὁδηθείης μακράν,
<ἐγὼ> πυθόμενος σὺν τέκνοισι ναυστολῶ
σέθεν κατὰ ζήτησιν. Ἐν πρύμνῃ δ’ ἄκρᾳ
αὐτὸς βεβὼς ηὔθυνον ἀμφῆρες δόρυ,
παῖδες δ’ <ἐπ’> ἐρετμοῖς ἥμενοι γλαυκὴν ἅλα
ῥοθίοισι λευκαίνοντες ἐζήτουν σ’, ἄναξ.
Ἤδη δὲ Μαλέας πλησίον πεπλευκότας
ἀπηλιώτης ἄνεμος ἐμπνεύσας δορὶ
ἐξέβαλεν ἡμᾶς τήνδ’ ἐς Αἰτναίαν πέτραν,
ἵν’ οἱ μονῶπες ποντίου παῖδες θεοῦ
Κύκλωπες οἰκοῦσ’ ἄντρ’ ἔρημ’ ἀνδροκτόνοι.
Τούτων ἑνὸς ληφθέντες ἐσμὲν ἐν δόμοις
δοῦλοι· καλοῦσι δ’ αὐτὸν ᾧ λατρεύομεν
Πολύφημον· ἀντὶ δ’ εὐίων βακχευμάτων
ποίμνας Κύκλωπος ἀνοσίου ποιμαίνομεν.
Παῖδες μὲν οὖν μοι κλειτύων ἐν ἐσχάτοις
νέμουσι μῆλα νέα νέοι πεφυκότες,
ἐγὼ δὲ πληροῦν πίστρα καὶ σαίρειν στέγας
μένων τέταγμαι τάσδε, τῷδε δυσσεβεῖ
Κύκλωπι δείπνων ἀνοσίων διάκονος.
Καὶ νῦν, τὰ προσταχθέντ’, ἀναγκαίως ἔχει

σαίρειν σιδηρᾷ τῇδέ μ’ ἁρπάγῃ δόμους,
ὡς τόν τ’ ἀπόντα δεσπότην Κύκλωπ’ ἐμὸν
καθαροῖσιν ἄντροις μῆλά τ’ ἐσδεχώμεθα.
Ἤδη δὲ παῖδας προσνέμοντας εἰσορῶ
ποίμνας. Τί ταῦτα; Μῶν κρότος σικινίδων
ὁμοῖος ὑμῖν νῦν τε χὥτε Βακχίῳ
κῶμος συνασπίζοντες Ἀλθαίας δόμους
προσῇτ’ ἀοιδαῖς βαρβίτων σαυλούμενοι;

Χορός

Παῖ γενναίων μὲν πατέρων
γενναίων δ’ ἐκ τοκάδων,
πᾷ δή μοι νίσῃ σκοπέλους;
Οὐ τᾷδ’ ὑπήνεμος αὖ-
ρα καὶ ποιηρὰ βοτάνα;
Δινᾶέν δ’ ὕδωρ ποταμῶν
ἐν πίστραις κεῖται πέλας ἄν-
τρων, οὗ σοι βλαχαὶ τεκέων.

Ψύττ’· οὐ τᾷδ’, οὔ;
Οὐ τᾷδε νεμῇ κλειτὺν δροσεράν;
Ὠή, ῥίψω πέτρον τάχα σου·
ὔπαγ’ ὦ ὔπαγ’ ὦ κεράστα
μηλοβότα στασιωρὲ
Κύκλωπος ἀγροβάτα.

Σπαργῶντας μαστοὺς χάλασον·
δέξαι θηλαῖσι τροφὰς
ἃς λείπεις ἀρνῶν θαλάμοις.
Ποθοῦσί σ’ ἀμερόκοι-
τοι βλαχαὶ σμικρῶν τεκέων.
Εἰς αὐλὰν πότ’ ἀμφιλαφῆ
ποιηροὺς λιποῦσα νομοὺς
Αἰτναίων εἴσει σκοπέλων;

Οὐ τάδε Βρόμιος, οὐ τάδε χοροὶ
βακχεῖαί τε θυρσοφόροι,

οὐ τυμπάνων ἀλαλαγ-
μοὶ κρήναις παρ’ ὑδροχύτοις,
οὐκ οἴνου χλωραὶ σταγόνες·
οὐδ’ ἐν Νύσᾳ μετὰ Νυμ-
φᾶν ἴακχον ἴακχον ᾠ-
δὰν μέλπω πρὸς τὰν Ἀφροδί-
ταν, ἂν θηρεύων πετόμαν
βάκχαις σὺν λευκόποσιν.
Ὦ φίλος ὦναξ Βακχεῖε, ποῖ οἰ-
οπολῶν ξανθὰν χαίταν σείεις;
Ἐγὼ δ’ ὁ σὸς πρόπολος
Κύκλωπι θητεύω
τῷ μονοδέρκτᾳ δοῦλος ἀλαίνων
σὺν τᾷδε τράγου χλαίνᾳ μελέᾳ
σᾶς χωρὶς φιλίας.

Σιληνός

Σιγήσατ’, ὦ τέκν’, ἄντρα δ’ ἐς πετρηρεφῆ
ποίμνας ἀθροῖσαι προσπόλους κελεύσατε.

Χορός

Χωρεῖτ’· ἀτὰρ δὴ τίνα, πάτερ, σπουδὴν ἔχεις;

Σιληνός

Ὁρῶ πρὸς ἀκταῖς ναὸς Ἑλλάδος σκάφος
κώπης τ’ ἄνακτας σὺν στρατηλάτῃ τινὶ
στείχοντας ἐς τόδ’ ἄντρον· ἀμφὶ δ’ αὐχέσιν
τεύχη φέρονται κενά, βορᾶς κεχρημένοι,
κρωσσούς θ’ ὑδρηλούς. Ὦ ταλαίπωροι ξένοι·
τίνες ποτ’ εἰσίν; Οὐκ ἴσασι δεσπότην
Πολύφημον οἷός ἐστιν ἄξενόν τε γῆν
τήνδ’ ἐμβεβῶτες καὶ Κυκλωπίαν γνάθον
τὴν ἀνδροβρῶτα δυστυχῶς ἀφιγμένοι.
Ἀλλ’ ἥσυχοι γίγνεσθ’, ἵν’ ἐκπυθώμεθα
πόθεν πάρεισι Σικελὸν Αἰτναῖον πάγον.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ξένοι, φράσαιτ’ ἂν νᾶμα ποτάμιον πόθεν
δίψης ἄκος λάβοιμεν εἴ τέ τις θέλει
βορὰν ὀδῆσαι ναυτίλοις κεχρημένοις;
<Ἔα·> τί χρῆμα; Βρομίου πόλιν ἔοιγμεν ἐσβαλεῖν·
Σατύρων πρὸς ἄντροις τόνδ’ ὅμιλον εἰσορῶ.
Χαίρειν προσεῖπον πρῶτα τὸν γεραίτατον.

Σιληνός

Χαῖρ’, ὦ ξέν’· ὅστις δ’ εἶ φράσον πάτραν τε σήν.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἴθακος Ὀδυσσεύς, γῆς Κεφαλλήνων ἄναξ.

Σιληνός

Οἶδ’ ἄνδρα, κρόταλον δριμύ, Σισύφου γένος.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἐκεῖνος αὐτός εἰμι· λοιδόρει δὲ μή.

Σιληνός

Πόθεν Σικελίαν τήνδε ναυστολῶν πάρει;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἐξ Ἰλίου γε κἀπὸ Τρωϊ̈κῶν πόνων.

Σιληνός

Πῶς; Πορθμὸν οὐκ ᾔδησθα πατρῴας χθονός;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἀνέμων θύελλαι δεῦρό μ’ ἥρπασαν βίᾳ.

Σιληνός

Παπαῖ· τὸν αὐτὸν δαίμον’ ἐξαντλεῖς ἐμοί.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἦ καὶ σὺ δεῦρο πρὸς βίαν ἀπεστάλης;

Σιληνός

Ληστὰς διώκων οἳ Βρόμιον ἀνήρπασαν.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Τίς δ’ ἥδε χώρα καὶ τίνες ναίουσί νιν;

Σιληνός

Αἰτναῖος ὄχθος Σικελίας ὑπέρτατος.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Τείχη δὲ ποῦ ‘στι καὶ πόλεως πυργώματα;

Σιληνός

Οὐκ ἔστ’· ἔρημοι πρῶνες ἀνθρώπων, ξένε.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Τίνες δ’ ἔχουσι γαῖαν; Ἦ θηρῶν γένος;

Σιληνός

Κύκλωπες, ἄντρ’ οἰκοῦντες, οὐ στέγας δόμων.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Τίνος κλύοντες; Ἢ δεδήμευται κράτος;

Σιληνός

Μονάδες· ἀκούει δ’ οὐδὲν οὐδεὶς οὐδενός.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Σπείρουσι δ’ ἢ τῷ ζῶσι; Δήμητρος στάχυν;

Σιληνός

Γάλακτι καὶ τυροῖσι καὶ μήλων βορᾷ.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Βρομίου δὲ πῶμ’ ἔχουσιν, ἀμπέλου ῥοάς;

Σιληνός

Ἥκιστα· τοιγὰρ ἄχορον οἰκοῦσι χθόνα.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Φιλόξενοι δὲ χὤσιοι περὶ ξένους;

Σιληνός

Γλυκύτατά φασι τὰ κρέα τοὺς ξένους φορεῖν.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Τί φῄς; Βορᾷ χαίρουσιν ἀνθρωποκτόνῳ;

Σιληνός

Οὐδεὶς μολὼν δεῦρ’ ὅστις οὐ κατεσφάγη.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Αὐτὸς δὲ Κύκλωψ ποῦ ‘στιν; ᾿Η δόμων ἔσω;

Σιληνός

Φροῦδος, πρὸς Αἴτνῃ θῆρας ἰχνεύων κυσίν.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Οἶσθ’ οὖν ὃ δρᾶσον, ὡς ἀπαίρωμεν χθονός;

Σιληνός

Οὐκ οἶδ’, Ὀδυσσεῦ· πᾶν δέ σοι δρᾠημεν ἄν.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ὅδησον ἡμῖν σῖτον, οὗ σπανίζομεν.

Σιληνός

Οὐκ ἔστιν, ὥσπερ εἶπον, ἄλλο πλὴν κρέας.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἀλλ’ ἡδὺ λιμοῦ καὶ τόδε σχετήριον.

Σιληνός

Καὶ τυρὸς ὀπίας ἔστι καὶ βοὸς γάλα.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἐκφέρετε· φῶς γὰρ ἐμπολήμασιν πρέπει.

Σιληνός

Σὺ δ’ ἀντιδώσεις, εἰπέ μοι, χρυσὸν πόσον;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Οὐ χρυσὸν ἀλλὰ πῶμα Διονύσου φέρω.

Σιληνός

[140] Ὦ φίλτατ᾽ εἰπών, οὗ σπανίζομεν πάλαι.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Καὶ μὴν Μάρων μοι πῶμ᾽ ἔδωκε, παῖς θεοῦ.

Σιληνός

Ἂν ἐξέθρεψα ταῖσδ᾽ ἐγώ ποτ᾽ ἀγκάλαις;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ὁ Βακχίου παῖς, ὡς σαφέστερον μάθῃς.

Σιληνός

Ἐν σέλμασιν νεώς ἐστιν, ἢ φέρεις σύ νιν;

Ὀδυσσεύς

[145] Ὅδ᾽ ἀσκὸς ὃς κεύθει νιν, ὡς ὁρᾷς, γέρον.

Σιληνός

Οὗτος μὲν οὐδ᾽ ἂν τὴν γνάθον πλήσειέ μου.

Ὀδυσσεύς

<Τοῦτον μὲν οὖν τὸν ἀσκὸν οὐκ ἂν ἐκπίοις.>

Σιληνός

<Φύει γὰρ ἀσκὸς οἶνον ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάλιν;>

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ναί, δὶς τόσον πῶμ’ ὅσον ἂν ἐξ ἀσκοῦ ῥυῇ.

Σιληνός

Καλήν γε κρήνην εἶπας ἡδεῖάν τ’ ἐμοί.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Βούλῃ σε γεύσω πρῶτον ἄκρατον μέθυ;

Σιληνός

[150] Δίκαιον· ἦ γὰρ γεῦμα τὴν ὠνὴν καλεῖ.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Καὶ μὴν ἐφέλκω καὶ ποτῆρ’ ἀσκοῦ μέτα.

Σιληνός

Φέρ’ ἐγκάναξον, ὡς ἀναμνησθῶ πιών.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἰδού.

Σιληνός

Παπαιάξ, ὡς καλὴν ὀσμὴν ἔχει.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Εἶδες γὰρ αὐτήν;

Σιληνός

Οὐ μὰ Δί’, ἀλλ’ ὀσφραίνομαι.

Ὀδυσσεύς

[155] Γεῦσαί νυν, ὡς ἂν μὴ λόγῳ ‘παινῇς μόνον.

Σιληνός

Βαβαί· χορεῦσαι παρακαλεῖ μ’ ὁ Βάκχιος.
Ἄ ἆ ἆ.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Μῶν τὸν λάρυγγα διεκάναξέ σου καλῶς;

Σιληνός

Ὥστ’ εἰς ἄκρους γε τοὺς ὄνυχας ἀφίκετο.

Ὀδυσσεύς

[160] Πρὸς τῷδε μέντοι καὶ νόμισμα δώσομεν.

Σιληνός

Χάλα τὸν ἀσκὸν μόνον· ἔα τὸ χρυσίον.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἐκφέρετέ νυν τυρεύματ’ ἢ μήλων τόκον.

Σιληνός

[163] Δράσω τάδ’, ὀλίγον φροντίσας γε δεσποτῶν.
Ὡς ἐκπιεῖν κἂν κύλικα βουλοίμην μίαν,
[165] πάντων Κυκλώπων ἀντιδοὺς βοσκήματα,
ῥῖψαι τ’ ἐς ἅλμην Λευκάδος πέτρας ἄπο
ἅπαξ μεθυσθεὶς καταβαλών τε τὰς ὀφρῦς.
Ὡς ὅς γε πίνων μὴ γέγηθε μαίνεται·
ἵν’ ἔστι τουτί τ’ ὀρθὸν ἐξανιστάναι
[170] μαστοῦ τε δραγμὸς καὶ παρεσκευασμένον
ψαῦσαι χεροῖν λειμῶνος ὀρχηστύς θ’ ἅμα
κακῶν τε λῆστις. Εἶτ’ ἐγὼ <οὐ> κυνήσομαι

τοιόνδε πῶμα, τὴν Κύκλωπος ἀμαθίαν
κλαίειν κελεύων καὶ τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν μέσον;

Χορός

[175] Ἄκου’, Ὀδυσσεῦ· διαλαλήσωμέν τί σοι.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Καὶ μὴν φίλοι γε προσφέρεσθε πρὸς φίλον.

Χορός

Ἐλάβετε Τροίαν τὴν Ἑλένην τε χειρίαν;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Καὶ πάντα γ’ οἶκον Πριαμιδῶν ἐπέρσαμεν.

Χορός

[179] Οὔκουν, ἐπειδὴ τὴν νεᾶνιν εἵλετε,
[180] ἅπαντες αὐτὴν διεκροτήσατ’ ἐν μέρει,
ἐπεί γε πολλοῖς ἥδεται γαμουμένη,
τὴν προδότιν; Ἢ τοὺς θυλάκους τοὺς ποικίλους
περὶ τοῖν σκελοῖν ἰδοῦσα καὶ τὸν χρύσεον
κλῳὸν φοροῦντα περὶ μέσον τὸν αὐχένα
[185] ἐξεπτοήθη, Μενέλεων, ἀνθρώπιον
λῷστον λιποῦσα. Μηδαμοῦ γένος ποτὲ
φῦναι γυναικῶν ὤφελ’, εἰ μὴ ‘μοὶ μόνῳ.

Σιληνός

[188] Ἰδού· τάδ’ ὑμῖν ποιμνίων βοσκήματα,
ἄναξ Ὀδυσσεῦ, μηκάδων ἀρνῶν τροφαί,
[190] πηκτοῦ γάλακτός τ’ οὐ σπάνια τυρεύματα.
Φέρεσθε· χωρεῖθ’ ὡς τάχιστ’ ἄντρων ἄπο,
βότρυος ἐμοὶ πῶμ’ ἀντιδόντες εὐίου.
Οἴμοι· Κύκλωψ ὅδ’ ἔρχεται· τί δράσομεν;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἀπολώλαμέν τἄρ’, ὦ γέρον· ποῖ χρὴ φυγεῖν;

Σιληνός

[195] Ἔσω πέτρας τῆσδ’, οὗπερ ἂν λάθοιτέ γε.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Δεινὸν τόδ’ εἶπας, ἀρκύων μολεῖν ἔσω.

Σιληνός

Οὐ δεινόν· εἰσὶ καταφυγαὶ πολλαὶ πέτρας.

Ὀδυσσεύς

[198] Οὐ δῆτ’· ἐπεί τἂν μεγάλα γ’ ἡ Τροία στένοι,
εἰ φευξόμεσθ’ ἕν’ ἄνδρα, μυρίον δ’ ὄχλον
[200] Φρυγῶν ὑπέστην πολλάκις σὺν ἀσπίδι.
Ἀλλ’, εἰ θανεῖν δεῖ, κατθανούμεθ’ εὐγενῶς
ἢ ζῶντες αἶνον τὸν πάρος συσσώσομεν.

Κύκλωψ

[203] Ἄνεχε πάρεχε· τί τάδε; Τίς ἡ ῥᾳθυμία;
Τί βακχιάζετ’; Οὐχὶ Διόνυσος τάδε,
[205] οὐ κρόταλα χαλκοῦ τυμπάνων τ’ ἀράγματα.
Πῶς μοι κατ’ ἄντρα νεόγονα βλαστήματα;
Ἦ πρός τε μαστοῖς εἰσι χὐπὸ μητέρων
πλευρὰς τρέχουσι, σχοινίνοις τ’ ἐν τεύχεσιν
πλήρωμα τυρῶν ἐστιν ἐξημελγμένον;
[210] Τί φατε; Τί λέγετε; Τάχα τις ὑμῶν τῷ ξύλῳ
δάκρυα μεθήσει. Βλέπετ’ ἄνω καὶ μὴ κάτω.

Χορός

Ἰδού· πρὸς αὐτὸν τὸν Δί᾽ ἀνακεκύφαμεν
τά τ᾽ ἄστρα, καὶ τὸν Ὠρίωνα δέρκομαι.

Κύκλωψ

Ἄριστόν ἐστιν εὖ παρεσκευασμένον;

Χορός

Πάρεστιν. Ὁ φάρυγξ εὐτρεπὴς ἔστω μόνον.

Κύκλωψ

Ἦ καὶ γάλακτός εἰσι κρατῆρες πλέῳ;

Χορός

Ὥστ᾽ ἐκπιεῖν γέ σ᾽, ἢν θέλῃς, ὅλον πίθον.

Κύκλωψ

Μήλειον ἢ βόειον ἢ μεμιγμένον;

Χορός

Ὃν ἂν θέλῃς σύ· μὴ ‘μὲ καταπίῃς μόνον.

Κύκλωψ

Ἥκιστ᾽· ἐπεί μ᾽ ἂν ἐν μέσῃ τῇ γαστέρι
πηδῶντες ἀπολέσαιτ᾽ ἂν ὑπὸ τῶν σχημάτων.
Ἔα· τίν᾽ ὄχλον τόνδ᾽ ὁρῶ πρὸς αὐλίοις;
Λῃσταί τινες κατέσχον ἢ κλῶπες χθόνα;
Ὁρῶ γέ τοι τούσδ᾽ ἄρνας ἐξ ἄντρων ἐμῶν
στρεπταῖς λύγοισι σῶμα συμπεπλεγμένους,
τεύχη τε τυρῶν συμμιγῆ γέροντά τε
πληγαῖς μέτωπον φαλακρὸν ἐξῳδηκότα.

Σιληνός

Ὤμοι, πυρέσσω συγκεκομμένος τάλας.

Κύκλωψ

Ὑπὸ τοῦ; Τίς ἐς σὸν κρᾶτ᾽ ἐπύκτευσεν, γέρον;

Σιληνός

[230] Ὑπὸ τῶνδε, Κύκλωψ, ὅτι τὰ σ᾽ οὐκ εἴων φέρειν.

Κύκλωψ

Οὐκ ᾖσαν ὄντα θεόν με καὶ θεῶν ἄπο;

Σιληνός

[232] Ἔλεγον ἐγὼ τάδ᾽· οἱ δ᾽ ἐφόρουν τὰ χρήματα,
καὶ τόν τε τυρὸν οὐκ ἐῶντος ἤσθιον
τούς τ᾽ ἄρνας ἐξεφοροῦντο· δήσαντες δὲ σὲ
[235] κλῳῷ τριπήχει κατὰ τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν μέσον
τὰ σπλάγχν᾽ ἔφασκον ἐξαμήσεσθαι βίᾳ,
μάστιγί τ᾽ εὖ τὸ νῶτον ἀπολέψειν σέθεν,
κἄπειτα συνδήσαντες ἐς θἀδώλια
τῆς ναὸς ἐμβαλόντες ἀποδώσειν τινὶ
[240] πέτρους μοχλεύειν, ἢ ‘ς μυλῶνα καταβαλεῖν.

Κύκλωψ

[241] Ἀληθες; Οὔκουν κοπίδας ὡς τάχιστ᾽ ἰὼν
θήξεις μαχαίρας καὶ μέγαν φάκελον ξύλων
ἐπιθεὶς ἀνάψεις; Ὡς σφαγέντες αὐτίκα
πλήσουσι νηδὺν τὴν ἐμὴν ἀπ᾽ ἄνθρακος
[245] θερμὴν διδόντες δαῖτα τῷ κρεανόμῳ,
τὰ δ᾽ ἐκ λέβητος ἐφθὰ καὶ τετηκότα.
Ὡς ἔκπλεώς γε δαιτός εἰμ᾽ ὀρεσκόου·
ἅλις λεόντων ἐστί μοι θοινωμένῳ
ἐλάφων τε, χρόνιος δ᾽ εἶμ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ἀνθρώπων βορᾶς.

Σιληνός

Τὰ καινά γ’ ἐκ τῶν ἠθάδων, ὦ δέσποτα,
ἡδίον’ ἐστίν. Οὐ γὰρ οὖν νεωστί γε
ἄλλοι πρὸς οἴκους σοὺς ἀφίκοντο ξένοι.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Κύκλωψ, ἄκουσον ἐν μέρει καὶ τῶν ξένων.
Ἡμεῖς βορᾶς χρῄζοντες ἐμπολὴν λαβεῖν
σῶν ἧσσον ἄντρων ἤλθομεν νεὼς ἄπο.
Τοὺς δ’ ἄρνας ἡμῖν οὗτος ἀντ’ οἴνου σκύφου
ἀπημπόλα τε κἀδίδου πιεῖν λαβὼν
ἑκὼν ἑκοῦσι, κοὐδὲν ἦν τούτων βίᾳ.
Ἀλλ’ οὗτος ὑγιὲς οὐδὲν ὧν φησιν λέγει,
ἐπεί γ’ ἐλήφθη σοῦ λάθρᾳ πωλῶν τὰ σά.

Σιληνός

Ἐγώ; Κακῶς γ’ ἄρ’ ἐξόλοι’.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Εἰ ψεύδομαι.

Σιληνός

Μὰ τὸν Ποσειδῶ τὸν τεκόντα σ’, ὦ Κύκλωψ,
μὰ τὸν μέγαν Τρίτωνα καὶ τὸν Νηρέα,
μὰ τὴν Καλυψὼ τάς τε Νηρέως κόρας,
μὰ θαἰερὰ κύματ’ ἰχθύων τε πᾶν γένος,
ἀπώμοσ’, ὦ κάλλιστον ὦ Κυκλώπιον,
ὦ δεσποτίσκε, μὴ τὰ σ’ ἐξοδᾶν ἐγὼ
ξένοισι χρήματ’. Ἢ κακῶς οὗτοι κακοὶ
οἱ παῖδες ἀπόλοιντ’, οὓς μάλιστ’ ἐγὼ φιλῶ.

Χορός

Αὐτὸς ἔχ’. Ἔγωγε τοῖς ξένοις τὰ χρήματα
περνάντα σ’ εἶδον· εἰ δ’ ἐγὼ ψευδῆ λέγω,

ἀπόλοιθ’ ὁ πατήρ μου· τοὺς ξένους δὲ μὴ ἀδίκει.

Κύκλωψ

Ψεύδεσθ’· ἔγωγε τῷδε τοῦ Ῥαδαμάνθυος
μᾶλλον πέποιθα καὶ δικαιότερον λέγω.
[275] Θέλω δ’ ἐρέσθαι· πόθεν ἐπλεύσατ’, ὦ ξένοι;
Ποδαποί; Τίς ὑμᾶς ἐξεπαίδευσεν πόλις;

Ὀδυσσεύς

[277] Ἰθακήσιοι μὲν τὸ γένος, Ἰλίου δ’ ἄπο,
πέρσαντες ἄστυ, πνεύμασιν θαλασσίοις
σὴν γαῖαν ἐξωσθέντες ἥκομεν, Κύκλωψ.

Κύκλωψ

[280] Ἦ τῆς κακίστης οἳ μετήλθεθ’ ἁρπαγὰς
Ἑλένης Σκαμάνδρου γείτον’ Ἰλίου πόλιν;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Οὗτοι, πόνον τὸν δεινὸν ἐξηντληκότες.

Κύκλωψ

Αἰσχρὸν στράτευμά γ’, οἵτινες μιᾶς χάριν
γυναικὸς ἐξεπλεύσατ’ ἐς γαῖαν Φρυγῶν.

Ὀδυσσεύς

[285] Θεοῦ τὸ πρᾶγμα· μηδέν’ αἰτιῶ βροτῶν.
Ἡμεῖς δέ σ’, ὦ θεοῦ ποντίου γενναῖε παῖ,
ἱκετεύομέν τε καὶ ψέγομεν ἐλευθέρως·
μὴ τλῇς πρὸς οἴκους σοὺς ἀφιγμένους φίλους
κτανεῖν βοράν τε δυσσεβῆ θέσθαι γνάθοις·
[290] οἳ τὸν σόν, ὦναξ, πατέρ’ ἔχειν ναῶν ἕδρας
ἐρρυσάμεσθα γῆς ἐν Ἑλλάδος μυχοῖς·
ἱερᾶς τ’ ἄθραυστος Ταινάρου μένει λιμὴν

Μαλέας τ’ ἄκρας κευθμῶνες ἥ τε Σουνίου
δίας Ἀθάνας σῶς ὑπάργυρος πέτρα
Γεραίστιοί τε καταφυγαί· τά θ’ Ἑλλάδος
δύσφρον’ ὀνείδη Φρυξὶν οὐκ ἐδώκαμεν.
Ὧν καὶ σὺ κοινοῦ· γῆς γὰρ Ἑλλάδος μυχοὺς
οἰκεῖς ὑπ’ Αἴτνῃ, τῇ πυριστάκτῳ πέτρᾳ.

Νόμος δὲ θνητοῖς, εἰ λόγους ἀποστρέφῃ,
ἱκέτας δέχεσθαι ποντίους ἐφθαρμένους
ξένιά τε δοῦναι καὶ πέπλους ἐπαρκέσαι·
<τούτων δίκαιόν σου τυχεῖν ἡμᾶς, ἄναξ,>
Οὐκ ἀμφὶ βουπόροισι πηχθέντας μέλη
ὀβελοῖσι νηδὺν καὶ γνάθον πλῆσαι σέθεν.
Ἅλις δὲ Πριάμου γαῖ’ ἐχήρωσ’ Ἑλλάδα,
πολλῶν νεκρῶν πιοῦσα δοριπετῆ φόνον,
ἀλόχους τ’ ἀνάνδρους γραῦς τ’ ἄπαιδας ὤλεσεν
πολιούς τε πατέρας. Εἰ δὲ τοὺς λελειμμένους
σὺ συμπυρώσας δαῖτ’ ἀναλώσεις πικράν,
ποῖ τρέψεταί τις; Ἀλλ’ ἐμοὶ πιθοῦ, Κύκλωψ·
πάρες τὸ μάργον σῆς γνάθου, τὸ δ’ εὐσεβὲς
τῆς δυσσεβείας ἀνθελοῦ· πολλοῖσι γὰρ
κέρδη πονηρὰ ζημίαν ἠμείψατο.

Σιληνός

Παραινέσαι σοι βούλομαι· τῶν γὰρ κρεῶν
μηδὲν λίπῃς τοῦδ’, ἤν τε τὴν γλῶσσαν δάκῃς,
κομψὸς γενήσῃ καὶ λαλίστατος, Κύκλωψ.

Κύκλωψ

Ὁ πλοῦτος, ἀνθρωπίσκε, τοῖς σοφοῖς θεός,
τὰ δ’ ἄλλα κόμποι καὶ λόγων εὐμορφία.
Ἄκρας δ’ ἐναλίας αἷς καθίδρυται πατὴρ
χαίρειν κελεύω· τί τάδε προυστήσω λόγῳ;
Ζηνὸς δ’ ἐγὼ κεραυνὸν οὐ φρίσσω, ξένε,
οὐδ’ οἶδ’ ὅ τι Ζεύς ἐστ’ ἐμοῦ κρείσσων θεός.
<Ἀλλ’ εἴ τι τοῦδε καὶ πάροιθ’ ἐφρόντισα,>[4]

οὔ μοι μέλει τὸ λοιπόν· ὡς δ’ οὔ μοι μέλει
ἄκουσον· ὅταν ἄνωθεν ὄμβρον ἐκχέῃ,
ἐν τῇδε πέτρᾳ στέγν’ ἔχων σκηνώματα,
ἢ μόσχον ὀπτὸν ἤ τι θήρειον δάκος
δαινύμενος ἑστιῶ τι γαστέρ’ ὑπτίαν,
εἶτ’ ἐκπιὼν γάλακτος ἀμφορέα πλέων
κρούω, Διὸς βρονταῖσιν εἰς ἔριν κτυπῶν.
Ὅταν δὲ βορέας χιόνα Θρῄκιος χέῃ,
δοραῖσι θηρῶν σῶμα περιβαλὼν ἐμὸν
καὶ πῦρ ἀναίθων, χιόνος οὐδέν μοι μέλει.
Ἡ γῆ δ’ ἀνάγκῃ, κἂν θέλῃ κἂν μὴ θέλῃ,
τίκτουσα ποίαν τἀμὰ πιαίνει βοτά.
Ἀγὼ οὔτινι θύω πλὴν ἐμοί, θεοῖσι δ’ οὔ,
καὶ τῇ μεγίστῃ, γαστρὶ τῇδε, δαιμόνων.
Ὡς τοὐμπιεῖν γε καὶ φαγεῖν τοὐφ’ ἡμέραν,
Ζεὺς οὗτος ἀνθρώποισι τοῖσι σώφροσιν,
λυπεῖν δὲ μηδὲν αὐτόν. Οἳ δὲ τοὺς νόμους
ἔθεντο ποικίλλοντες ἀνθρώπων βίον,
κλαίειν ἄνωγα· τὴν <δ’> ἐμὴν ψυχὴν ἐγὼ
οὐ παύσομαι δρῶν εὖ, κατεσθίων γε σέ.
Ξένια δὲ λήψῃ τοιάδ’, ὡς ἄμεμπτος ὦ,
πῦρ καὶ πατρῷον ἅλα λέβητά θ’, ὃς ζέσας
σὴν σάρκα δυσφάρωτον ἀμφέξει καλῶς.
Ἀλλ’ ἕρπετ’ εἴσω, τοῦ κατ’ αὔλιον θεοῦ
ἵν’ ἀμφὶ βωμὸν στάντες εὐωχῆτέ με.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Αἰαῖ, πόνους μὲν Τρωϊ¨κοὺς ὑπεξέδυν
θαλασσίους τε, νῦν δ’ ἐς ἀνδρὸς ἀνοσίου
ὠμὴν κατέσχον ἀλίμενόν τε καρδίαν.
Ὦ Παλλάς, ὦ δέσποινα Διογενὲς θεά,
νῦν νῦν ἄρηξον· κρείσσονας γὰρ Ἰλίου
πόνους ἀφῖγμαι κἀπὶ κινδύνου βάθη.
Σύ τ’, ὦ φαεννὰς ἀστέρων οἰκῶν ἕδρας
Ζεῦ ξένι’, ὅρα τάδ’· εἰ γὰρ αὐτὰ μὴ βλέπεις,
ἄλλως νομίζῃ Ζεὺς τὸ μηδὲν ὢν θεός.

Χορός

[356] Εὐρείας λάρυγγος, ὦ Κύκλωψ,
ἀναστόμου τὸ χεῖλος· ὡς ἕτοιμά σοι
ἑφθὰ καὶ ὀπτὰ καὶ ἀνθρακιᾶς ἄπο <θερμὰ>
χναύειν βρύκειν
κρεοκοπεῖν μέλη ξένων
[360] δασυμάλλῳ ἐν αἰγίδι κλινομένῳ.

Μὴ ‘μοὶ μὴ προσδίδου·
μόνος μόνῳ γέμιζε πορθμίδος σκάφος.
Χαιρέτω μὲν αὖλις ἅδε,
χαιρέτω δὲ θυμάτων
[365] ἀποβώμιος ἂν ἀνέχει θυσία
Κύκλωψ Αἰτναῖος ξενικῶν
κρεῶν κεχαρμένος βορᾷ.

[370] Νηλής, τλᾶμον, ὅστε δωμάτων
ἐφεστίους ἱκτῆρας ἐκθύει ξένους,
[373] ἑφθά τε δαινύμενος, μυσαροῖσί τ’ ὀδοῦσιν
[372] κόπτων βρύκων
[374] θέρμ’ ἀπ’ ἀνθράκων κρέα

Ὀδυσσεύς

[375] Ὦ Ζεῦ, τί λέξω, δείν’ ἰδὼν ἄντρων ἔσω
κοὐ πιστά, μύθοις εἰκότ’ οὐδ’ ἔργοις βροτῶν;

Χορός

Τί δ’ ἔστ’, Ὀδυσσεῦ; Μῶν τεθοίναται σέθεν
φίλους ἑταίρους ἀνοσιώτατος Κύκλωψ;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Δισσούς γ’ ἀθρήσας κἀπιβαστάσας χεροῖν,
[380] οἳ σαρκὸς εἶχον εὐτραφέστατον πάχος.

Χορός

Πῶς, ὦ ταλαίπωρ’, ἦτε πάσχοντες τάδε;

Ὀδυσσεύς

[382] Ἐπεὶ πετραίαν τήνδ’ ἐσήλθομεν στέγην,
ἀνέκαυσε μὲν πῦρ πρῶτον, ὑψηλῆς δρυὸς
κορμοὺς πλατείας ἐσχάρας βαλὼν ἔπι,
[385] τρισσῶν ἁμαξῶν ὡς ἀγώγιμον βάρος,
[392] καὶ χάλκεον λέβητ’ ἐπέζεσεν πυρί,
[386] ἔπειτα φύλλων ἐλατίνων χαμαιπετῆ
ἔστρωσεν εὐνὴν πλησίον πυρὸς φλογί.
Κρατῆρα δ’ ἐξέπλησεν ὡς δεκάμφορον,
μόσχους ἀμέλξας, λευκὸν ἐσχέας γάλα,
[390] σκύφος τε κισσοῦ παρέθετ’ εἰς εὖρος τριῶν
πήχεων, βάθος δὲ τεσσάρων ἐφαίνετο,
[393] ὀβελούς τ’, ἄκρους μὲν ἐγκεκαυμένους πυρί,
ξεστοὺς δὲ δρεπάνῳ τἄλλα, παλιούρου κλάδων,
[395] Αἰτναῖά τε σφαγεῖα πελέκεων γνάθοις.
Ὡς δ’ ἦν ἕτοιμα πάντα τῷ θεοστυγεῖ
Ἅιδου μαγείρῳ, φῶτε συμμάρψας δύο
[399] τὸν μὲν λέβητος ἐς κύτος χαλκήλατον
[398] ἔσφαζ’ ἑταίρων τῶν ἐμῶν ῥυθμῷ τινι,
[400] τὸν δ’ αὖ, τένοντος ἁρπάσας ἄκρου ποδός,
παίων πρὸς ὀξὺν στόνυχα πετραίου λίθου
ἐγκέφαλον ἐξέρρανε· καὶ διαρταμῶν
λάβρῳ μαχαίρᾳ σάρκας ἐξώπτα πυρί,
τὰ δ’ ἐς λέβητ’ ἐφῆκεν ἕψεσθαι μέλη.
[405] Ἐγὼ δ’ ὁ τλήμων δάκρυ’ ἀπ’ ὀφθαλμῶν χέων
ἐχριμπτόμην Κύκλωπι κἀδιακόνουν·
ἄλλοι δ’ ὅπως ὄρνιθες ἐν μυχοῖς πέτρας
πτήξαντες εἶχον, αἷμα δ’ οὐκ ἐνῆν χροί¨.
Ἐπεὶ δ’ ἑταίρων τῶν ἐμῶν πλησθεὶς βορᾶς
[410] ἀνέπεσε, φάρυγος αἰθέρ’ ἐξανεὶς βαρύν,
ἐσῆλθέ μοί τι θεῖον· ἐμπλήσας σκύφος
Μάρωνος αὐτῷ τοῦδε προσφέρω πιεῖν,

λέγων τάδ'· Ὦ τοῦ ποντίου θεοῦ Κύκλωψ,
σκέψαι τόδ' οἷον Ἑλλὰς ἀμπέλων ἄπο
θεῖον κομίζει πῶμα, Διονύσου γάνος.
Ὁ δ' ἔκπλεως ὢν τῆς ἀναισχύντου βορᾶς
ἐδέξατ' ἔσπασέν <τ'> ἄμυστιν ἑλκύσας
κἀπῄνεσ' ἄρας χεῖρα· Φίλτατε ξένων,
καλὸν τὸ πῶμα δαιτὶ πρὸς καλῇ δίδως.
Ἡσθέντα δ' αὐτὸν ὡς ἐπῃσθόμην ἐγώ,
ἄλλην ἔδωκα κύλικα, γιγνώσκων ὅτι
τρώσει νιν οἶνος καὶ δίκην δώσει τάχα.
Καὶ δὴ πρὸς ᾠδὰς εἶρπ'. Ἐγὼ δ' ἐπεγχέων
ἄλλην ἐπ' ἄλλῃ σπλάγχν' ἐθέρμαινον ποτῷ.
Ἄδει δὲ παρὰ κλαίουσι συνναύταις ἐμοῖς
ἄμουσ', ἐπηχεῖ δ' ἄντρον. Ἐξελθὼν δ' ἐγὼ
σιγῇ σὲ σῶσαι κἄμ', ἐὰν βούλῃ, θέλω.
Ἀλλ' εἴπατ' εἴτε χρῄζετ' εἴτ' οὐ χρῄζετε
φεύγειν ἄμεικτον ἄνδρα καὶ τὰ Βακχίου
ναίειν μέλαθρα Ναΐ¨δων νυμφῶν μέτα.
Ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἔνδον σὸς πατὴρ τάδ' ᾔνεσεν·
ἀλλ' ἀσθενὴς γὰρ κἀποκερδαίνων ποτοῦ
ὥσπερ πρὸς ἰξῷ τῇ κύλικι λελημμένος
πτέρυγας ἀλύει· σὺ δέ νεανίας γὰρ εἶ
σώθητι μετ' ἐμοῦ καὶ τὸν ἀρχαῖον φίλον
Διόνυσον ἀνάλαβ', οὐ Κύκλωπι προσφερῆ.

Χορός

Ὦ φίλτατ', εἰ γὰρ τήνδ' ἴδοιμεν ἡμέραν
Κύκλωπος ἐκφυγόντες ἀνόσιον κάρα.
Ὡς διὰ μακροῦ γε τὸν σίφωνα τὸν φίλον
χηρεύομεν τόνδ' οὐκ ἔχομεν καταφαγεῖν.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἄκουε δή νυν ἣν ἔχω τιμωρίαν
θηρὸς πανούργου σῆς τε δουλείας φυγήν.

Χορός

Λέγ’, ὡς Ἀσιάδος οὐκ ἂν ἥδιον ψόφον
κιθάρας κλύοιμεν ἢ Κύκλωπ’ ὀλωλότα.

Ὀδυσσεύς

[445] Ἐπὶ κῶμον ἕρπειν πρὸς κασιγνήτους θέλει
Κύκλωπας ἡσθεὶς τῷδε Βακχίου ποτῷ.

Χορός

Ξυνῆκ’· ἔρημον ξυλλαβὼν δρυμοῖσί νιν
σφάξαι μενοινᾷς ἢ πετρῶν ὦσαι κάτα.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Οὐδὲν τοιοῦτον· δόλιος ἡ προθυμία.

Χορός

[450] Πῶς δαί; Σοφόν τοί σ’ ὄντ’ ἀκούομεν πάλαι.

Ὀδυσσεύς

[451] Κώμου μὲν αὐτὸν τοῦδ’ ἀπαλλάξαι, λέγων
ὡς οὐ Κύκλωψι πῶμα χρὴ δοῦναι τόδε,
μόνον δ’ ἔχοντα βίοτον ἡδέως ἄγειν.
Ὅταν δ’ ὑπνώσσῃ Βακχίου νικώμενος,
[455] ἀκρεμὼν ἐλαίας ἔστιν ἐν δόμοισί τις,
ὃν φασγάνῳ τῷδ’ ἐξαποξύνας ἄκρον
ἐς πῦρ καθήσω· κᾆθ’ ὅταν κεκαυμένον
ἴδω νιν, ἄρας θερμὸν ἐς μέσην βαλῶ
Κύκλωπος ὄψιν ὄμμα τ’ ἐκτήξω πυρί.
[460] Ναυπηγίαν δ’ ὡσεί τις ἁρμόζων ἀνὴρ
διπλοῖν χαλινοῖν τρύπανον κωπηλατεῖ,
οὕτω κυκλώσω δαλὸν ἐν φαεσφόρῳ
Κύκλωπος ὄψει καὶ συναυανῶ κόρας.

Χορός

Ἰοὺ ἰού·
γέγηθα μαινόμεσθα τοῖς εὑρήμασιν.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Κἄπειτα καὶ σὲ καὶ φίλους γέροντά τε
νεὼς μελαίνης κοῖλον ἐμβήσας σκάφος
διπλαῖσι κώπαις τῆσδ᾽ ἀποστελῶ χθονός.

Χορός

Ἔστ᾽ οὖν ὅπως ἂν ὡσπερεὶ σπονδῆς θεοῦ
κἀγὼ λαβοίμην τοῦ τυφλοῦντος ὄμματα
δαλοῦ; Φόνου γὰρ τοῦδε κοινωνεῖν θέλω.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Δεῖ γοῦν· μέγας γὰρ δαλός, οὗ ξυλληπτέον.

Χορός

Ὡς κἂν ἁμαξῶν ἑκατὸν ἀραίμην βάρος,
εἰ τοῦ Κύκλωπος τοῦ κακῶς ὀλουμένου
ὀφθαλμὸν ὥσπερ σφηκιὰν ἐκθύψομεν.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Σιγᾶτέ νυν· δόλον γὰρ ἐξεπίστασαι·
χὤταν κελεύω, τοῖσιν ἀρχιτέκτοσιν
πείθεσθ᾽. Ἐγὼ γὰρ ἄνδρας ἀπολιπὼν φίλους
τοὺς ἔνδον ὄντας οὐ μόνος σωθήσομαι.
Καίτοι φύγοιμ᾽ ἂν κἀκβέβηκ᾽ ἄντρου μυχῶν·
ἀλλ᾽ οὐ δίκαιον ἀπολιπόντ᾽ ἐμοὺς φίλους
ξὺν οἷσπερ ἦλθον δεῦρο σωθῆναι μόνον.

Χορός

Ἄγε, τίς πρῶτος, τίς δ᾽ ἐπὶ πρώτῳ
ταχθεὶς δαλοῦ κώπην ὀχμάσαι

[485] Κύκλωπος ἔσω βλεφάρων ὥσας
λαμπρὰν ὄψιν διακναίσει;
Ὢδὴ ἔνδοθεν

Σίγα σίγα. καὶ δὴ μεθύων
Ἄχαριν κέλαδον μουσιζόμενος
[490] σκαιὸς ἀπῳδὸς καὶ κλαυσόμενος
χωρεῖ πετρίνων ἔξω μελάθρων.
Φέρε νιν κώμοις παιδεύσωμεν
τὸν ἀπαίδευτον·
πάντως μέλλει τυφλὸς εἶναι.

[495] Μάκαρ ὅστις εὐιάζει
βοτρύων φίλαισι πηγαῖς
ἐπὶ κῶμον ἐκπετασθεὶς
φίλον ἄνδρ' ὑπαγκαλίζων
ἐπὶ δεμνίοισί τ' ἄνθος
[500] χλιδανᾶς ἔχων ἑταίρας,
μυρόχριστον λιπαρὸς βό-
στρυχον, αὐδᾷ δέ· Θύραν τίς οἴξει μοι;

Κύκλωψ

[503] Παπαπαῖ· πλέως μὲν οἴνου,
γάνυμαι <δὲ> δαιτὸς ἥβᾳ,
[505] σκάφος ὁλκὰς ὡς γεμισθεὶς
ποτὶ σέλμα γαστρὸς ἄκρας.
Ὑπάγει μ' ὁ φόρτος εὔφρων
ἐπὶ κῶμον ἦρος ὥραις
ἐπὶ Κύκλωπας ἀδελφούς.
[510] Φέρε μοι, ξεῖνε, φέρ', ἀσκὸν ἔνδος μοι.

Χορός

Καλὸν ὄμμασιν δεδορκὼς
καλὸς ἐκπερᾷ μελάθρων
<κελαδῶν·> Φιλεῖ τις ἡμᾶς.
Λύχνα δ' ἀμμένειν ἔασον·

χρόα χὡς τέρεινα νύμφα
δροσερῶν ἔσωθεν ἄντρων.
Στεφάνων δ’ οὐ μία χροιὰ
περὶ σὸν κρᾶτα τάχ’ ἐξομιλήσει.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Κύκλωψ, ἄκουσον· ὡς ἐγὼ τοῦ Βακχίου
τούτου τρίβων εἶμ’, ὃν πιεῖν ἔδωκά σοι.

Κύκλωψ

ὁ Βάκχιος δὲ τίς; Θεὸς νομίζεται;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Μέγιστος ἀνθρώποισιν ἐς τέρψιν βίου.

Κύκλωψ

Ἐρυγγάνω γοῦν αὐτὸν ἡδέως ἐγώ.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Τοιόσδ’ ὁ δαίμων· οὐδένα βλάπτει βροτῶν.

Κύκλωψ

Θεὸς δ’ ἐν ἀσκῷ πῶς γέγηθ’ οἴκους ἔχων;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ὅπου τιθῇ τις, ἐνθάδ’ ἐστὶν εὐπετής.

Κύκλωψ

Οὐ τοὺς θεοὺς χρῆν σῶμ’ ἔχειν ἐν δέρμασιν.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Τί δ’, εἴ σε τέρπει γ’; Ἦ τὸ δέρμα σοι πικρόν;

Κύκλωψ

Μισῶ τὸν ἀσκόν· τὸ δὲ ποτὸν φιλῶ τόδε.

Ὀδυσσεύς

[530] Μένων νυν αὐτοῦ πῖνε κεὐθύμει, Κύκλωψ.

Κύκλωψ

Οὐ χρή μ’ ἀδελφοῖς τοῦδε προσδοῦναι ποτοῦ;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἔχων γὰρ αὐτὸς τιμιώτερος φανῇ.

Κύκλωψ

Διδοὺς δὲ τοῖς φίλοισι χρησιμώτερος.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Πυγμὰς ὁ κῶμος λοίδορόν τ’ ἔριν φιλεῖ.

Κύκλωψ

[535] Μεθύω μέν, ἔμπας δ’ οὔτις ἂν ψαύσειέ μου.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ὦ τᾶν, πεπωκότ’ ἐν δόμοισι χρὴ μένειν.

Κύκλωψ

Ἠλίθιος ὅστις μὴ πιὼν κῶμον φιλεῖ.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ὅς δ’ ἂν μεθυσθείς γ’ ἐν δόμοις μείνῃ σοφός.

Κύκλωψ

Τί δρῶμεν, ὦ Σιληνέ; Σοὶ μένειν δοκεῖ;

Σιληνός

[540] Δοκεῖ· τί γὰρ δεῖ συμποτῶν ἄλλων, Κύκλωψ;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Καὶ μὴν λαχνῶδές γ’ οὖδας ἀνθηρᾶς χλόης.

Σιληνός

Καὶ πρός γε θάλπος ἡλίου πίνειν καλόν.
Κλίθητί νύν μοι πλευρὰ θεὶς ἐπὶ χθονός.

Κύκλωψ

Ἰδού.
[545] Τί δῆτα τὸν κρατῆρ’ ὄπισθ’ ἐμοῦ τίθης;

Σιληνός

Ὡς μὴ παριών τις καταβάλῃ.

Κύκλωψ

Πίνειν μὲν οὖν
κλέπτων σὺ βούλῃ· κάτθες αὐτὸν ἐς μέσον.
Σὺ δ’, ὦ ξέν’, εἰπὲ τοὔνομ’ ὅ τι σε χρὴ καλεῖν.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Οὖτιν· χάριν δὲ τίνα λαβών σ’ ἐπαινέσω;

Κύκλωψ

[550] Πάντων σ’ ἑταίρων ὕστερον θοινάσομαι.

Σιληνός

Καλόν γε τὸ γέρας τῷ ξένῳ δίδως, Κύκλωψ.

Κύκλωψ

Οὗτος, τί δρᾷς; Τὸν οἶνον ἐκπίνεις λάθρᾳ;

Σιληνός

Οὔκ, ἀλλ’ ἔμ’ οὗτος ἔκυσεν ὅτι καλὸν βλέπω.

Κύκλωψ

Κλαύσῃ, φιλῶν τὸν οἶνον οὐ φιλοῦντα σέ.

Σιληνός

[555] Οὐ μὰ Δί’, ἐπεί μού φησ’ ἐρᾶν ὄντος καλοῦ.

Κύκλωψ

Ἔγχει, πλέων δὲ τὸν σκύφον δίδου μόνον.

Σιληνός

Πῶς οὖν κέκραται; Φέρε διασκεψώμεθα.

Κύκλωψ

Ἀπολεῖς· δὸς οὕτως.

Σιληνός

Οὐ μὰ Δί’, οὐ πρὶν ἄν γέ σε
στέφανον ἴδω λαβόντα γεύσωμαί τέ τι.

Κύκλωψ

[560] Οἰνοχόος ἄδικος.

Σιληνός

<Ναὶ> μὰ Δί’, ἀλλ’ οἶνος γλυκύς.
Ἀπομακτέον δέ σοὐστὶν ὡς λήψῃ πιεῖν.

Κύκλωψ

Ἰδού, καθαρὸν τὸ χεῖλος αἱ τρίχες τέ μου.

Σιληνός

Θές νυν τὸν ἀγκῶν’ εὐρύθμως κᾆτ’ ἔκπιε,
ὥσπερ μ’ ὁρᾷς πίνονταὐχὥσπερ οὐκέτι.

Κύκλωψ

[565] Ἂ ἆ, τί δράσεις;

Σιληνός

Ἡδέως ἠμύστισα.

Κύκλωψ

Λάβ’, ὦ ξέν’, αὐτὸς οἰνοχόος τέ μοι γενοῦ.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Γιγνώσκεται γοῦν ἄμπελος τἠμῇ χερί.

Κύκλωψ

Φέρ’ ἔγχεόν νυν.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἐγχέω, σίγα μόνον.

Κύκλωψ

Χαλεπὸν τόδ’ εἶπας, ὅστις ἂν πίνῃ πολύν.

Ὀδυσσεύς

[570] Ἰδού· λαβὼν ἔκπιθι καὶ μηδὲν λίπῃς·
συνεκθανεῖν δὲ σπῶντα χρὴ τῷ πώματι.

Κύκλωψ

Παπαῖ, σοφόν γε τὸ ξύλον τῆς ἀμπέλου.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Λᾶν μὲν σπάσῃς γε δαιτὶ πρὸς πολλῇ πολύν,
τέγξας ἄδιψον νηδύν, εἰς ὕπνον βαλεῖ,
[575] ἢν δ’ ἐλλίπῃς τι, ξηρανεῖ σ’ ὁ Βάκχιος.

Κύκλωψ

Ἰοὺ ἰού·
ὡς ἐξένευσα μόγις· ἄκρατος ἡ χάρις.
Ὁ δ’ οὐρανός μοι συμμεμιγμένος δοκεῖ
τῇ γῇ φέρεσθαι, τοῦ Διός τε τὸν θρόνον
[580] λεύσσω τὸ πᾶν τε δαιμόνων ἁγνὸν σέβας.
Οὐκ ἂν φιλήσαιμ’; Αἱ Χάριτες πειρῶσί με.
Ἅλις· Γανυμήδη τόνδ’ ἔχων ἀναπαύσομαι
κάλλιον ἢ τὰς Χάριτας. Ἥδομαι δέ πως
τοῖς παιδικοῖσι μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς θήλεσιν.

Σιληνός

[585] Ἐγὼ γὰρ ὁ Διός εἰμι Γανυμήδης, Κύκλωψ;

Κύκλωψ

Ναὶ μὰ Δί’, ὃν ἁρπάζω γ’ ἐγὼ ‘κ τῆς Δαρδάνου.

Σιληνός

Ἀπόλωλα, παῖδες· σχέτλια πείσομαι κακά.

Κύκλωψ

Μέμφῃ τὸν ἐραστὴν κἀντρυφᾷς πεπωκότι;

Σιληνός

Οἴμοι· πικρότατον οἶνον ὄψομαι τάχα.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἄγε δή, Διονύσου παῖδες, εὐγενῆ τέκνα,
ἔνδον μὲν ἀνήρ· τῷ δ’ ὕπνῳ παρειμένος
τάχ’ ἐξ ἀναιδοῦς φάρυγος ὠθήσει κρέα.
Δαλὸς δ’ ἔσωθεν αὐλίων πνέων καπνὸν
παρευτρέπισται, κοὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν πυροῦν
Κύκλωπος ὄψιν· ἀλλ’ ὅπως ἀνὴρ ἔσῃ.

Χορός

Πέτρας τὸ λῆμα κἀδάμαντος ἕξομεν.
Χώρει δ’ ἐς οἴκους πρίν τι τὸν πατέρα παθεῖν
ἀπάλαμνον· ὥς σοι τἀνθάδ’ ἐστὶν εὐτρεπῆ.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἥφαιστ’, ἄναξ Αἰτναῖε, γείτονος κακοῦ
λαμπρὸν πυρώσας ὄμμ’ ἀπαλλάχθηθ’ ἅπαξ,
σύ τ’, ὦ μελαίνης Νυκτὸς ἐκπαίδευμ’, Ὕπνε,
ἄκρατος ἐλθὲ θηρὶ τῷ θεοστυγεῖ,
καὶ μὴ ‘πὶ καλλίστοισι Τρωϊκοῖς πόνοις
αὐτόν τε ναύτας τ’ ἀπολέσητ’ Ὀδυσσέα
ὑπ’ ἀνδρὸς ᾧ θεῶν οὐδὲν ἢ βροτῶν μέλει.
Ἢ τὴν τύχην μὲν δαίμον’ ἡγεῖσθαι χρεών,
τὰ δαιμόνων δὲ τῆς τύχης ἐλάσσονα.

Χορός

[608] Λήψεται τὸν τράχηλον
ἐντόνως ὁ καρκίνος
[610] τοῦ ξενοδαιτυμόνος· πυρὶ γὰρ τάχα
φωσφόρους ὀλεῖ κόρας.
ἤδη δαλὸς ἠνθρακωμένος
[615] κρύπτεται ἐς σποδιάν, δρυὸς ἄσπετον
ἔρνος. ἀλλ’ ἴτω Μάρων,
πρασσέτω,
μαινομένου ‘ξελέτω βλέφαρον
Κύκλωπος, ὡς πίῃ κακῶς.
κἆτ’ ἐγὼ
[620] τὸν φιλοκισσοφόρον Βρόμιον
ποθεινὸν εἰσιδεῖν θέλω,
Κύκλωπος λιπὼν ἐρημίαν·
ἆρ’ ἐς τοσόνδ’ ἀφίξομαι;

Ὀδυσσεύς

[625] Σιγᾶτε πρὸς θεῶν, θῆρες, ἡσυχάζετε,
συνθέντες ἄρθρα στόματος· οὐδὲ πνεῖν ἐῶ,
οὐ σκαρδαμύσσειν οὐδὲ χρέμπτεσθαί τινα,
ὡς μὴ ‘ξεγερθῇ τὸ κακόν, ἔστ’ ἂν ὄμματος
ὄψις Κύκλωπος ἐξαμιλληθῇ πυρί.

Χορός

Σιγῶμεν ἐγκάψαντες αἰθέρα γνάθοις.

Ὀδυσσεύς

[630] Ἄγε νυν ὅπως ἅψεσθε τοῦ δαλοῦ χεροῖν
ἔσω μολόντες· διάπυρος δ’ ἐστὶν καλῶς.

Χορός

Οὔκουν σὺ τάξεις οὕστινας πρώτους χρεὼν
καυτὸν μοχλὸν λαβόντας ἐκκάειν τὸ φῶς
Κύκλωπος, ὡς ἂν τῆς τύχης κοινώμεθα;

Χορός α

[635] Ἡμεῖς μέν ἐσμεν μακροτέρω πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν
ἑστῶτες ὠθεῖν ἐς τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν τὸ πῦρ.

Χορός β

Ἡμεῖς δὲ χωλοί γ' ἀρτίως γεγενήμεθα.

Χορός α

Ταὐτὸν πεπόνθατ' ἆρ' ἐμοί· τοὺς γὰρ πόδας
ἑστῶτες ἐσπάσθημεν οὐκ οἶδ' ἐξ ὅτου.

Ὀδυσσεύς

[640] Ἑστῶτες ἐσπάσθητε;

Χορός α

Καὶ τά γ' ὄμματα
μέστ' ἐστὶν ἡμῖν κόνεος ἢ τέφρας ποθέν.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ἄνδρες πονηροὶ κοὐδὲν οἵδε σύμμαχοι.

Χορός

[643] Ὁτιὴ τὸ νῶτον τὴν ῥάχιν τ' οἰκτίρομεν
καὶ τοὺς ὀδόντας ἐκβαλεῖν οὐ βούλομαι
[645] τυπτόμενος, αὕτη γίγνεται πονηρία;
Ἀλλ' οἶδ' ἐπῳδὴν Ὀρφέως ἀγαθὴν πάνυ,
ὥστ' αὐτόματον τὸν δαλὸν ἐς τὸ κρανίον
στείχονθ' ὑφάπτειν τὸν μονῶπα παῖδα γῆς.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Πάλαι μὲν ἦδη σ’ ὄντα τοιοῦτον φύσει,
νῦν δ’ οἶδ’ ἄμεινον. τοῖσι δ’ οἰκείοις φίλοις
χρῆσθαί μ’ ἀνάγκη. χειρὶ δ’ εἰ μηδὲν σθένεις,
ἀλλ’ οὖν ἐπεγκέλευέ γ’, ὡς εὐψυχίαν
φίλων κελευσμοῖς τοῖσι σοῖς κτησώμεθα.

Χορός

Δράσω τάδ’. ἐν τῷ Καρὶ κινδυνεύσομεν.
κελευσμάτων δ’ ἕκατι τυφέσθω Κύκλωψ.

Χορός

Ἰὼ ἰώ·
ὠθεῖτε γενναιότατα,
σπεύδετ’, ἐκκαίετ’ ὀφρὺν
θηρὸς τοῦ ξενοδαίτα.
τυφέτ’ ὦ, καιέτ’ ὦ
τὸν Αἴτνας μηλονόμον.
τόρνευ’ ἔλκε, μὴ ‘ξοδυνη-
θεὶς δράσῃ τι μάταιον.

Κύκλωψ

Ὤμοι, κατηνθρακώμεθ’ ὀφθαλμοῦ σέλας.

Χορός

Καλός γ’ ὁ παιάν· μέλπε μοι τόνδ’ αὖ, Κύκλωψ.

Κύκλωψ

Ὤμοι μάλ’, ὡς ὑβρίσμεθ’, ὡς ὀλώλαμεν.
ἀλλ’ οὔτι μὴ φύγητε τῆσδ’ ἔξω πέτρας
χαίροντες, οὐδὲν ὄντες· ἐν πύλαισι γὰρ
σταθεὶς φάραγγος τῆσδ’ ἐναρμόσω χέρας.

Χορός

Τί χρῆμ’ ἀυτεῖς, ὦ Κύκλωψ;

Κύκλωψ

Ἀπωλόμην.

Χορός

[670] Αἰσχρός γε φαίνῃ.

Κύκλωψ

Κἀπὶ τοῖσδέ γ’ ἄθλιος.

Χορός

Μεθύων κατέπεσες ἐς μέσους τοὺς ἄνθρακας;

Κύκλωψ

Οὖτίς μ’ ἀπώλεσ’.

Χορός

Οὐκ ἄρ’ οὐδείς <σ’> ἠδίκει.

Κύκλωψ

Οὖτίς με τυφλοῖ βλέφαρον.

Χορός

Οὐκ ἄρ’ εἶ τυφλός.

Κύκλωψ

Ὡς δὴ σύ.

Χορός

Καὶ πῶς σ’ οὔτις ἂν θείη τυφλόν;

Κύκλωψ

Σκώπτεις. ὁ δ’ Οὖτις ποῦ ‘στιν;

Χορός

Οὐδαμοῦ, Κύκλωψ.

Κύκλωψ

Ὁ ξένος ἵν’ ὀρθῶς ἐκμάθῃς μ’ ἀπώλεσεν,
ὁ μιαρός, ὅς μοι δοὺς τὸ πῶμα κατέκλυσεν.

Χορός

Δεινὸς γὰρ οἶνος καὶ παλαίεσθαι βαρύς.

Κύκλωψ

Πρὸς θεῶν, πεφεύγασ’ ἢ μένουσ’ ἔσω δόμων;

Χορός

Οὗτοι σιωπῇ τὴν πέτραν ἐπήλυγα
λαβόντες ἑστήκασι.

Κύκλωψ

Ποτέρας τῆς χερός;

Χορός

Ἐν δεξιᾷ σου.

Κύκλωψ

Ποῦ;

Χορός

Πρὸς αὐτῇ τῇ πέτρᾳ.
ἔχεις;

Κύκλωψ

Κακόν γε πρὸς κακῷ· τὸ κρανίον
παίσας κατέαγα.

Χορός

Καί σε διαφεύγουσί γε.

Κύκλωψ

[685] Οὐ τῇδέ πῃ, τῇδ᾽ εἶπας;

Χορός

Οὔ· ταύτῃ λέγω.

Κύκλωψ

Πῇ γάρ;

Χορός

Περιάγου κεῖσε, πρὸς τἀριστερά.

Κύκλωψ

Οἴμοι γελῶμαι· κερτομεῖτέ μ᾽ ἐν κακοῖς.

Χορός

Ἀλλ᾽ οὐκέτ᾽, ἀλλὰ πρόσθεν οὗτός ἐστι σοῦ.

Κύκλωψ

Ὦ παγκάκιστε, ποῦ ποτ᾽ εἶ;

Ὀδυσσεύς

Τηλοῦ σέθεν
φυλακαῖσι φρουρῶ σῶμ᾽ Ὀδυσσέως τόδε.

Κύκλωψ

Πῶς εἶπας; Ὄνομα μεταβαλὼν καινὸν λέγεις.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Ὅπερ μ᾽ ὁ φύσας ὠνόμαζ᾽ Ὀδυσσέα,
δώσειν δ᾽ ἔμελλες ἀνοσίου δαιτὸς δίκας·
κακῶς γὰρ ἂν Τροίαν γε διεπυρώσαμεν
εἰ μή σ᾽ ἑταίρων φόνον ἐτιμωρησάμην.

Κύκλωψ

Αἰαῖ· παλαιὸς χρησμὸς ἐκπεραίνεται·
τυφλὴν γὰρ ὄψιν ἐκ σέθεν σχήσειν μ᾽ ἔφη
Τροίας ἀφορμηθέντος. ἀλλὰ καὶ σέ τοι
δίκας ὑφέξειν ἀντὶ τῶνδ᾽ ἐθέσπισεν,
πολὺν θαλάσσῃ χρόνον ἐναιωρούμενον.

Ὀδυσσεύς

Κλαίειν σ᾽ ἄνωγα· καὶ δέδραχ᾽ ὅπερ λέγεις.
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀκτὰς εἶμι καὶ νεὼς σκάφος
ἥσω ‘πὶ πόντον Σικελὸν ἔς τ᾽ ἐμὴν πάτραν.

Κύκλωψ

Οὐ δῆτ᾽, ἐπεί σε τῆσδ᾽ ἀπορρήξας πέτρας
αὐτοῖσι συνναύταισι συντρίψω βαλών.

ἄνω δ’ ἐπ’ ὄχθον εἶμι, καίπερ ὢν τυφλός,
δι’ ἀμφιτρῆτος τῆσδε προσβαίνων ποδί.

Χορός

Ἡμεῖς δὲ συνναῦταί γε τοῦδ’ Ὀδυσσέως
ὄντες τὸ λοιπὸν Βακχίῳ δουλεύσομεν.

The Biographies

The Cave of Euripides is the site of a ten-chamber cave in Peristeria on Salamis Island, where, according to legend, the playwright often came for sanctuary to write his tragedies.

Inside the cave

INTRODUCTION TO EURIPIDES by Arthur S. Way

The life of Euripides coincides with the most strenuous and most triumphant period of Athenian history, strenuous and triumphant not only in action, but in thought, a period of daring enterprise, alike in material conquest and development, and in art, poetry, and philosophic speculation. He was born in 480 B.C., the year of Thermopylae and Salamis. Athens was at the height of her glory and power, and was year by year becoming more and more the City Beautiful, when his genius was in its first flush of creation. He had been writing for more than forty years before the tragedy of the Sicilian Expedition was enacted: and, *felix opportunitate mortis,* he was spared the knowledge of the shameful sequel of Arginusae, the miserable disaster of Aegospotami, the last lingering agony of famished Athens. He died more than a year before these calamities befell.

His father was named Mnesarchides, his mother Kleito. They must have been wealthy, for their son possessed not only considerable property (he had at least once to discharge a “liturgy,” and was “proxenus,” or consul, for Magnesia, costly duties both), but also, what was especially rare then, a valuable library. His family must have been wellborn, for it is on record that he took part as a boy in certain festivals of Apollo, for which any one of mean birth would have been ineligible.

He appeared in the dramatic arena at a time when it was thronged with competitors, and when it must have been most difficult for a new writer to achieve a position. Aeschylus had just died, after being before the public for 45 years: Sophocles had been for ten years in the front rank, and was to write for fifty years longer, while there were others, forgotten now, but good enough to wrest the victory from these at half the annual dramatic competitions at least. Moreover, the new poet was not content to achieve excellence along the lines laid down by his predecessors and already marked with the stamp of public approval. His genius was original, and he followed it fearlessly, and so became an innovator in his handling of the religious and ethical problems presented by the old legends, in the literary setting he gave to these, and even in the technicalities of stage-presentation.

As originality makes conquest of the official judges of literature last, and as his work ran counter to a host of prejudices, honest and otherwise, it is hardly surprising that his plays gained the first prize only five times in fifty years.

But the number of these official recognitions is no index of his real popularity, of his hold on the hearts, not only of his countrymen, but of all who spoke his mother-tongue. It is told how on two occasions the bitterest enemies of Athens so far yielded to his spell, that for his sake they spared to his conquered countrymen, to captured Athens, the last horrors of war, the last humiliation of the vanquished. After death he became, and remained, so long as Greek was a living language, the most popular and the most influential of the three great masters of the drama. His nineteenth-century eclipse has been followed by a reaction in which he is recognised as presenting one of the most interesting studies in all literature.

In his seventy-third year he left Athens and his clamorous enemies, to be an honoured guest at the court of the king of Macedon. There, unharassed by the malicious vexations, the political unrest, and the now imminent perils of Athens, he wrote with a freedom, a rapidity, a depth and fervour of thought, and a splendour of diction, which even he had scarcely attained before.

He died in 406 B.C., and, in a revulsion of repentant admiration and love, all Athens, following Sophocles' example, put on mourning for him. Four plays, which were part of the fruits of his Macedonian leisure, were represented at Athens shortly after his death, and were crowned by acclamation with the first prize, in spite of the attempt of Aristophanes, in his comedy of *The Frogs,* a few months before, to belittle his genius.

His characteristics, as compared with those of his two great brother-dramatists, may be concisely stated thus: —

Aeschylus sets forth the operation of *great principles,* especially of the certainty of divine retribution, and of the persistence of sin as an ineradicable plague- taint. He believes and trembles. Sophocles depicts *great characters*: he ignores the malevolence of destiny and the persistent power of evil: to him *"*man is man, and master of his fate." He believes with unquestioning faith. Euripides propounds '*great moral problems',* he analyses human nature, its instincts, its passions, its motives; he voices the cry of the human soul against the tyranny of the supernatural, the

selfishness and cruelty of man the crushing weight of environment. He questions: “he will not make his judgment blind.”

Of more than 90 plays which Euripides wrote, the names of 81 have been preserved, of which 19 are extant — 18 tragedies, and one satyric drama, the *Cyclops.* His first play, *The Daughters of Pelias* (lost) was represented in 455 B.C. The extant plays may be arranged, according to the latest authorities, in the following chronological order of representation, the dates in brackets being conjectural: (1) *Rhesus* (probably the earliest); (2) *Cyclops*; (3) *Alcestis,* 438; (4) *Medea,* 431; (5) *Children of Hercules,* (429-12?); (6) *Hippolytus,* 428; (7) *Andromache,* (430-424); (8) *Hecuba,* (425); (9) *Suppliants,* (421); (10) M*adness of Hercules*, (423-420); (11) *Ion,* (419-416); (12) *Daughters of Troy*, 415; (13) *Electra,* (413); (14) *Iphigeneia in Taurica,* (414-412); (15) *Helen,* 412: (16) *Phoenician Maidens,* (411-409); (17) *Orestes,* 408; (18) *Bacchanals,* 405; (19) *Iphigeneia in Aulis,* 405.

EURIPIDES by T. W. Lumb

No-Man's Land was the scene of many tragedies during the Great War. There has come down to us a remarkable tragedy, called the *Rhesus*, about a similar region. It treats first of the Dolon incident of the Iliad. Hector sent out Dolon to reconnoitre, and soon afterwards some Phrygian shepherds bring news that Rhesus has arrived that very night with a Thracian army. Reviled by Hector for postponing his arrival till the tenth year of the war, Rhesus answers that continual wars with Scythia have occupied him, but now that he is come he will end the strife in a day. He is assigned his quarters and departs to take up his position.

Having learned the password from Dolon, Diomedes and Odysseus enter and reach the tents of Hector who has just left with Rhesus. Diomedes is eager to kill Aeneas or Paris or some other leader, but Odysseus warns him to be content with the spoils they have won. Athena appears, counselling them to slay Rhesus; if he survives that night, neither Achilles nor Ajax can save the Greeks. Paris approaches, having heard that spies are abroad in the night; he is beguiled by Athena who pretends to be Aphrodite. When he is safely got away, the two slay Rhesus.

The King's charioteer bursts on to the stage with news of his death. He accuses Hector of murder out of desire for the matchless steeds. Hector recognises in the story all the marks of Odysseus' handiwork. The Thracian Muse descends to mourn her son's death, declaring that she had saved him for many years, but Hector prevailed upon him and Athena caused his end.

This play is not only about No-man's land; it is a No-man's land, for its author is unknown; it is sometimes ascribed to Euripides, though it contains many words he did not use, on the ground that it reflects his art. For it shows in brief the change which came over Tragedy under Euripides' guidance. It is exciting, it seizes the tragic moment, the one important night, it has some lovely lyrics, the characters are realistic, the gods descend to untie the knot of the play or to explain the mysterious, some detail is unrelated to the main plot — Paris exercises no influence on the real action — it is pathetic.

Sophocles said that he painted men as they ought to be, Euripides as they are. This realistic tendency, added to the romanticism whence realism always springs, is the last stage of tragedy before it declines. A Euripides is inevitable in literary history.

Born at Salamis on the very day of the great victory of 480, Euripides entered into the spirit of revolution in all human activities which was stirring in contemporary Athens. He won the first prize on five occasions, was pilloried by the Conservatives though he was a favourite with the masses. Towards the end of his life he migrated to Macedonia, where he wrote not the least splendid of his plays, the *Bacchae*. On the news of his death in 406 Sophocles clothed his Chorus in mourning as a mark of his esteem.

The famous *Alcestis* won the second prize in 438. Apollo had been the guest of Admetus and had persuaded Death to spare him if a substitute could be found. Admetus' parents and friends failed him, but his wife Alcestis for his sake was content to leave the light. After a series of speeches of great beauty and pathos she dies, leaving her husband desolate. Heracles arrives at the palace on the day of her death; he notices that some sorrow is come upon his host, but being assured that only a relation has died he remains. Meanwhile Admetus' parents arrive to console him; he reviles them for their selfishness in refusing to die for him, but is sharply reminded by them that parents rejoice to see the sun as well as their children; in reality, he is his wife's murderer.

Heracles' reckless hilarity shocked the servants who were unwilling to look after an unfeeling guest. He enters the worse for liquor and advises a young menial to enjoy life while he can. After a few questions he learns the truth. Sobered, he hurries forth unknown to Admetus to wrestle with Death for Alcestis. Admetus, distracted by loss of his wife, becomes aware that evil tongues will soon begin to talk of his cowardice. Heracles returns with a veiled woman, whom he says he won in a contest, and begs Admetus keep her till he returns. After much persuasion Admetus takes her by the hand, and on being bidden to look more closely, sees that it is Alcestis. The great deliverer then bids farewell with a gentle hint to him to treat guests more frankly in future.

This play must be familiar to English readers of Browning's *Balaustion's Adventure*. It has been set to music and produced at Covent Garden this very year. The specific Euripidean marks are everywhere upon it. The

selfish male, the glorious self-denial of the woman, the deep but helpless sympathy of the gods, the tendency to laughter to relieve our tears, the wonderful lyrics indicate a new arrival in poetry. The originality of Euripides is evident in the choice of a subject not otherwise treated; he was constantly striving to pass out of the narrow cycle prescribed for Attic tragedians. A new and very formidable influence has arisen to challenge Sophocles who may have felt as Thackeray did when he read one of Dickens' early emotional triumphs.

In 431 he obtained the third prize with the *Medea*, the heroine of the world-famous story of the Argonauts related for English readers in Morris' *Life and Death of Jason*. A nurse tells the story of Jason's cooling love for Medea and of his intended wedlock with the daughter of Creon, King of Corinth, the scene of the play. Appalled at the effect the news will produce on her mistress' fiery nature, she begs the Tutor to save the two children. Medea's frantic cries are heard within the house; appearing before a Chorus of Corinthian women she plunges into a description of the curse that haunts their sex.

> "Of all things that live and have sense women are the most hapless. First we must buy a husband to lord it over our bodies; our next anxiety is whether he will be good or bad, for divorce is not easy or creditable. Entering upon a strange new life we must divine how best to treat our spouse. If after this agony we find one to live with us without chafing at the yoke, a happy life is ours — if not, better to die. But when a man is surfeited with his mate he can find comfort outside with friend or compeer; but we perforce look to one alone. They say of us that we live a life free from danger, but they fight in wars. It is false. I would rather face battle thrice than childbirth once."

Desolate, far away from her father's home, she begs the Chorus to be silent if she can devise punishment for Jason.

Creon comes forth, uneasy at some vague threats which Medea has uttered and afraid of her skill as a sorceress. He intends to cast her out of Corinth before returning to his palace, but is prevailed upon to grant one day's grace. Medea is aghast at this blow, but decides to use the brief respite. After a splendid little ode which prophesies that women shall not

always be without a Muse, Jason emerges. Pointing out that her violent temper has brought banishment he professes to sympathise, offering money to help her in exile. She bursts into a fury of indignation, recounting how she abandoned home to save and fly with him to Greece. He argues that his gratitude is due not to her, but to Love who compelled her to save him; he repeats his offer and is ready to come if she sends for him. Salvation comes unexpectedly. Aegeus, the childless King of Athens, accidentally visits Corinth. Medea wins his sympathy and promises him children if he will offer her protection. He willingly assents and she outlines her plan. Sending for Jason, she first pretends repentance for hasty speech, then begs him to get her pardon from the new bride and release from exile for the two children. She offers as a wedding gift a wondrous robe and crown which once belonged to her ancestor the Sun. In the scene which follows is depicted one of the greatest mental conflicts in literature. To punish Jason she must slay her sons; torn by love for them and thirsting for revenge she wavers. The mother triumphs for a moment, then the fiend, then the mother again — at last she decides on murder. This scene captured the imagination of the ancient world, inspiring many epigrams in the Anthology and forming one of the mural paintings of Pompeii.

A messenger rushes in. The robe and crown have burnt to death Glauce the bride and her father who vainly tried to save her: Jason is coming with all speed to punish the murderess. She listens with unholy joy, retires and slays the children. Jason runs in and madly batters at the door to save them. He is checked by the apparition of Medea seated in her car drawn by dragons. Reviled by him as a murderess, she replies that the death of the children was agony to her as well and prophesies a miserable death for him.

This marvellous character is Euripides' Clytemnestra. Yet unlike her, she remains absolutely human throughout; her weak spot was her maternal affection which made her hesitate, while Clytemnestra was past feeling, "not a drop being left". Medea is the natural Southern woman who takes the law into her own hands. In the *Trachiniae* is another, outraged as Medea was, yet forgiving. Truly Sophocles said he painted men as they ought to be, Euripides as they were.

The *Hippolytus* in 429 won the first prize. It is important as introducing a revolutionary practice into drama. Aphrodite in a prologue declares she will punish Hippolytus for slighting her and preferring to worship Artemis, the goddess of hunting. The young prince passes out to the chase; as he goes,

his attention is drawn to a statue of Aphrodite by his servants who warn him that men hate unfriendly austerity, but he treats their words with contempt. His stepmother Phaedra enters with the Nurse, the Chorus consisting of women of Troezen, the scene of the play. A secret malady under which Phaedra pines has so far baffled the Nurse who now learns that she loves her stepson. She had striven in vain against this passion, only to find like Olivia that

> Such a potent fault it is
> That it but mocks reproof.

She decided to die rather than disgrace herself and her city Athens. The Nurse advises her not to sacrifice herself for such a common passion; a remedy there must be: "Men would find it, if women had not found it already". "She needs not words, but the man." Scandalised by this cynicism the Queen bids her be silent; the woman tells her she has potent charms within the house which will rid her of the malady without danger to her good name or her life. Phaedra suspects her plan and absolutely forbids her to speak with Hippolytus. The answer is ambiguous:

> "Be of good cheer; I will order the matter well. Only Queen
> Aphrodite be my aid. For the rest, it will suffice to tell my
> plan to my friends within."

A violent commotion arises in the palace; Hippolytus is heard indistinctly uttering angry words. He and the Nurse come forth; in spite of her appeal for silence, he denounces her for tempting him. When she reminds him of his oath of secrecy, he answers "My tongue has sworn, but not my will" — a line pounced upon as immoral by the poet's many foes. Hippolytus' long denunciation of women has been similarly considered to prove that the poet was an enemy of their sex. Left alone with the Nurse Phaedra is terror-stricken lest her husband Theseus should hear of her disgrace. She casts the Nurse off, adding that she has a remedy of her own. Her last speech is ominous.

> "This day will I be ruined by a bitter love. Yet in death I will
> be a bane to another, that he may know not to be proud in my woes;

sharing with me in this weakness he will learn wisdom."

Her suicide plunges Theseus into grief. Hanging to her wrist he sees a letter which he opens and reads. There he finds evidence of her passion for his son. In mad haste he calls on Poseidon his father to fulfil one of the three boons he promised to grant him; he requires the death of his son. Hearing the tumult the latter returns. His father furiously attacks him, calling him hypocrite for veiling his lusts under a pretence of chastity. The youth answers with dignity; when confronted with the damning letter, he is unable to answer for his oath's sake. He sadly obeys the decree of banishment pronounced on him, bidding his friends farewell.

A messenger tells the sequel. He took the road from Argos along the coast in his chariot. A mighty wave washed up a monster from the deep. Plunging in terror the horses became unruly; they broke the car and dashed their master's body against the rocks. Theseus rejoices at the fate which has overtaken a villain, yet pities him as his son. He bids the servants bring him that he may refute his false claim to innocence. Artemis appears to clear her devotee. The letter was forged by the Nurse, Aphrodite causing the tragedy. "This is the law among us gods; none of us thwarts the will of another but always stands aside." Hippolytus is brought in at death's door. He is reconciled to his father and dies blessing the goddess he has served so long.

The play contains the first indication of a sceptical spirit which was soon to alter the whole character of the Drama. The running sore of polytheism is clear. In worshipping one deity a man may easily offend another, Aeschylus made this conflict of duties the cause of Agamemnon's death, but accepted it as a dogma not to be questioned. Such an attitude did not commend itself to Euripides; he clearly states the problem in a prologue, solving it in an appearance of Artemis by the device known as the *Deus ex machina*. It is sometimes said this trick is a confession of the dramatist's inability to untie the knot he has twisted. Rather it is an indication that the legend he was compelled to follow was at variance with the inevitable end of human action. The tragedies of Euripides which contain the *Deus ex machina* gain enormously if the last scene is left out; it was added to satisfy the craving for some kind of a settlement and is more in the nature of comedy perhaps than we imagine. Hippolytus is a somewhat chilly man of honour, the Nurse a brilliant study of unscrupulous intrigue. Racine's *Phèdre* is as

disagreeable as Euripides' is noble. Like *Hamlet*, the play is full of familiar quotations.

Two Euripidean features appear in the *Heracleidae*, of uncertain date. Iolaus the comrade of Heracles flees with the hero's children to Athens. They sit as suppliants at an altar from which Copreus, herald of their persecutor Eurystheus, tries to drive them.

Unable to fight in his old age Iolaus begs aid. A Chorus of Athenians rush in, followed by the King Demophon, to hear the facts. First Copreus puts his case, then Iolaus refutes him. The King decides to respect the suppliants, bidding Copreus defy Eurystheus in his name. As a struggle is inevitable Iolaus refuses to leave the altars till it is over.

Demophon returns to say that the Argive host is upon them and that Athens will prevail if a girl of noble family freely gives her life; he cannot compel his subjects to sacrifice their children for strangers, for he rules a free city. Hearing his words, Macaria comes from the shrine where she had been sheltering with her sisters and Alcmena, her father's mother. When she hears the truth, she willingly offers to save her family and Athens.

> "Shall I, daughter of a noble sire, suffer the worst indignity?
> Must I not die in any wise? We may leave Attica and wander again;
> shall I not hang my head if I hear men say, 'Why come ye here with
> suppliant boughs, cleaving to life? Depart; we will not help
> cowards.' Who will marry such a one? Better death than such
> disgrace."

A messenger announces that Hyllus, Heracles' son, has returned with succours and is with the Athenian army. Iolaus summons Alcmena and orders his arms; old though he is, he will fight his foe in spite of Alcmena's entreaties. In the battle he saw Hyllus and begged him to take him into his chariot. He prayed to Zeus and Hebe to restore his strength for one brief moment. Miraculously he was answered. Two stars lit upon the car, covering the yoke with a halo of light. Catching sight of Eurystheus Iolaus the aged took him prisoner and brought him to Alcmena. At sight of him she gloats over the coming vengeance. The Athenian herald warns her that their laws do not permit the slaughter of captives, but she declares she will kill him herself. Eurystheus answers with great dignity; his enmity to Heracles came not from envy but from the desire to save his own throne. He

does not deprecate death, rather, if he dies, his body buried in Athenian land will bring to it a blessing and to the Argive descendants of the Heracleidae a curse when they in time invade the land of their preservers.

Though slight and weakly constructed, this play is important. Its two features are first, the love of argument, a weakness of all the Athenians who frequented the Law Courts and the Assembly; this mania for discussing pros and cons spoils one or two later plays. Next, the self-sacrificing girl appears for the first time. To Euripides the worthier sex was not the male, possessed of political power and therefore tyrannous, but the female. He first drew attention to its splendid heroism. He is the champion of the scorned or neglected elements of civilisation.

The *Andromache* is a picture of the hard lot of one who is not merely a woman, but a slave. Hector's wife fell to Neoptolemus on the capture of Troy and bore him a son called Molossus. Later he married Hermione, daughter of Menelaus and Helen; the marriage was childless and Hermione, who loved her husband, persecuted Andromache. She took advantage of her husband's absence to bring matters to a head. Andromache exposed her child, herself flying to a temple of Thetis when Menelaus arrived to visit his daughter. Hermione enters richly attired, covered with jewels "not given by her husband's kin, but by her father that she may speak her mind." She reviles Andromache as a slave with no Hector near and commands her to quit sanctuary. Menelaus brings the child; after a long discussion he threatens to kill him if Andromache does not abandon the altar, but promises to save him if she obeys. In this dilemma she prefers to die if she can thus save her son; but when Menelaus secures her he passes the child to his daughter to deal with him as she will. Betrayed and helpless, Andromache breaks out into a long denunciation of Spartan perfidy.

Peleus, grandfather of Neoptolemus, hearing the tumult intervenes. After more rhetoric he takes Andromache and Molossus under his protection and cows Menelaus, who leaves for Sparta on urgent business. When her father departs, Hermione fears her husband's vengeance on her maltreatment of the slave and child whom he loves. Resolving on suicide, she is checked by the entry of Orestes who is passing through Phthia to Dodona. She begs him to take her away from the land or back to her father. Orestes reminds her of the old compact which their parents made to unite them; he has a grievance against Neoptolemus apart from his frustrated wedlock, for he had called him a murderer of his mother. He had therefore taken measures to

assassinate him at Delphi, whither he had gone to make his peace with Apollo.

Hearing of Hermione's flight Peleus returns, only to hear more serious news. Orestes' plot had succeeded and Neoptolemus had been overwhelmed. In consternation he fears the loss of his own life in old age. His goddess-wife Thetis appears and bids him marry Andromachus to Hector's brother Helenus; Molossus would found a mighty kingdom, while Peleus would become immortal after the burial of Neoptolemus.

A very old criticism calls this play "second rate". Dramatically it is worthless, for it consists of three episodes loosely connected. The motives for Menelaus' return and Hermione's flight with an assassin from a husband she loved are not clear, while the *Deus ex machina* adds nothing to the story. It is redeemed by some splendid passages, but is interesting as revealing a further development of Euripides' thought. He here makes the slave, another downtrodden class, free of the privileges of literature, for to him none is vile or reprobate. The famous painting *Captive Andromache* indicates to us the loneliness of slavery.

The same subject was treated more successfully in the *Hecuba*: she has received her immortality in the famous players' scene in *Hamlet*. The shade of Polydorus, Hecuba's son, outlines the course of the action. Hecuba enters terrified by dreams about him and her daughter Polyxena. Her forebodings are realised when she hears from a Chorus of fellow-captives that the shade of Achilles has demanded her daughter's sacrifice. Odysseus bids her face the ordeal with courage. She replies in a splendid pathetic appeal. Reminding him how she saved him from discovery when he entered Troy in disguise, she demands a requital.

> "Kill her not, we have had enough of death. She is my comfort, my nurse, the staff of my life and guide of my way. She is my joy in whom I forget my woes. Victors should not triumph in lawlessness nor think to prosper always. I was once but now am no more, for one day has taken away my all."

He sympathises but dare not dishonour the mighty dead. Polyxena intervenes to point out the blessings death will bring her.

> "First, its very unfamiliar name makes me love it. Perhaps I might

> have found a cruel-hearted lord to sell me for money, the sister of Hector; I might have had the burden of making bread, sweeping the house and weaving at the loom in a life of sorrow. A slave marriage would degrade me, once thought a fit mate for kings."

Bidding Odysseus lead her to death, she takes a touching and beautiful farewell. Her latter end is splendidly described by Talthybius.

A serving woman enters with the body of Polydorus; she is followed by Agamemnon who has come to see why Hecuba has not sent for Polyxena's corpse. In hopeless grief she shows her murdered son, begging his aid to a revenge and promising to exact it without compromising him. A message brings on the scene Polymestor, her son's Thracian host with his sons. In a dialogue full of terrible irony Hecuba inquires about Polydorus, saying she has the secret of a treasure to reveal. He enters her tent where is nobody but some Trojan women weaving. Dismissing his guards, he lets the elder women dandle his children, while the younger admire his robes. At a signal they arose, slew the children and blinded him. On hearing the tumult, Agamemnon hurries in; turning to him, the Thracian demands justice, pretending he had slain Polydorus to win his favour. Hecuba refutes him, pointing out that it was the lust for her son's gold which caused his death. Agamemnon decides for Hecuba, whereupon Polymestor turns fay, prophesying the latter end of Agamemnon, Hecuba and Cassandra.

The strongest and weakest points of Euripides' appeal are here apparent. The play is not one but two, the connection between the deaths of both brother and sister being a mere dream of their mother. The poet tends to rely rather upon single scenes than upon the whole and is so far romantic rather than classical. His power is revealed in the very stirring call he makes upon the emotions of pity and revenge; because of this Aristotle calls him the most tragic of the poets.

The *Supplices*, written about 421, carries a little further the history of the Seven against Thebes. A band of Argive women, mothers of the defeated Seven, apply to Aethra, mother of Theseus, to prevail on her son to recover the dead bodies. Adrastus, king of Argos, pleads with Theseus who at first refuses aid but finally consents at the entreaties of his mother. His ultimatum to Thebes is delayed by the arrival of a herald from that city. A strange discussion of the comparative merits of democracy and tyranny

leads to a violent scene in which Theseus promises a speedy attack in defence of the rights of the dead.

In the battle the Athenians after a severe struggle won the victory; in the moment of triumph Theseus did not enter the city, for he had come not to sack it but to save the dead. Reverently collecting them he washed away the gore and laid them on their biers, sending them to Athens. In an affecting scene Adrastus recognises and names the bodies. At this moment Evadne enters, wife of the godless Capaneus who was smitten by the thunderbolt; she is demented and wishes to find the body to die upon it. Her father Iphis comes in search of her and at first does not see her, as she is seated on a rock above him. His pleadings with her are vain; she throws herself to her death. At the sight Iphis plunges into a wild lament.

> "She is no more, who once kissed my face and fondled my head. To a father the sweetest joy is his daughter; son's soul is greater, but less winsome in its blandishments."

Theseus returns with the children of the dead champions to whom he presents the bodies. He is about to allow Adrastus to convey them home when Athena appears. She advises him to exact an oath from Adrastus that Argos will never invade Attica. To the Argives she prophecies a vengeance on Thebes by the Epigoni, sons of the Seven.

This play is very like the *Heraclidae* but adds a new feature; drama begins to be used for political purposes. The play was written at the end of the first portion of the Peloponnesian war, when Argos began to enter the world of Greek diplomacy. This illegitimate use of Art cannot fail to ruin it; Art has the best chance of making itself permanent when it is divorced from passing events. But there are other weaknesses in this piece; it has some fine and perhaps some melodramatic situations; here and there are distinct touches of comedy.

The *Ion* is a return to Euripides' best manner. Hermes in a prologue explains what must have been a strange theme to the audience. Ion is a young and nameless boy who serves the temple of Apollo in Delphi. There is a mystery in his birth which does not trouble his sunny intelligence. Creusa, daughter of Erectheus King of Athens, is married to Xuthus but has no issue. Unaware that Ion is her son by Apollo, she meets him and is attracted by his noble bearing. A splendid dialogue of tragic irony

represents both as wishing to find the one a mother, the other a son. Creusa tells how she has come to consult the oracle about a friend who bore a son to the god and exposed him. Ion is shocked at the immorality of the god he serves; he refuses to believe that an evil god can claim to deliver righteous oracles. Addressing the gods as a body, he states the problem of the play.

> "Ye are unjust in pursuing pleasure rather than wisdom; no longer must we call men evil, if we imitate your evil deeds; rather the gods are evil, who instruct men in such things."

Xuthus embraces Ion as his son in obedience to a command he has just received to greet as his child the first person he meets on leaving the shrine. Ion accepts the god's will but longs to know who is his mother. Seeing an unwonted dejection in him Xuthus learns the reason. Ion is afraid of the bar on his birth which will disqualify him from residence at Athens, where absolute legitimacy was essential; his life at Delphi was in sharp contrast, it was one of perfect content and eternal novelty. Xuthus tells him he will take him to Athens merely as a sightseer; he is afraid to anger his wife with his good fortune; in time he will win her consent to Ion's succession to the throne.

Creusa enters with an old man who had been her father's Tutor. She learns from the Chorus that she can never have a son, unlike her more lucky husband who has just found one. The Tutor counsels revenge; though a slave, he will work for her to the end.

> "Only one thing brings shame to a slave, his name. In all else he is every whit the equal of a free man, if he is honest."

The two decide to poison Ion when he offers libations. But the plot failed owing to a singular chance. The birds in the temple tasted the wine and one that touched Ion's cup died immediately. Creusa flees to the altar, pursued by Ion who reviles her for her deed. At that moment the old Prophetess appears with the vessel in which she first found Ion. Creusa recognises it and accurately describes the child's clothing which she wove with her own hands; mother and son are thus united. The play closes with an appearance of Athena, who prophesies that Ion shall be the founder of the great Ionian race, for Apollo's hand had protected him and Creusa throughout.

The central problem of this piece is whether the gods govern the world righteously or not. No more vital issue could be raised; if gods are wicked they must fall below the standard of morality which men insist on in their dealings with one another. Ion is the Greek Samuel; his naturally reverent mind is disturbed at any suggestion of evil in a deity. His boyish faith in Apollo is justified and Euripides seems to teach in another form the lesson that "except we become as children, we cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven."

The *Hercules Furens* belongs to Euripides' middle period. Amphitryon, father of Heracles, and Megara, the hero's wife, are in Theban territory waiting for news. They are in grave danger, for Lycus, a new king, threatens to kill them with Heracles' children, as he had already slain Megara's father. He has easy victims in Amphitryon, "naught but an empty noise", and Megara, who is resigned to the inevitable. Faced with this terror, Amphitryon exclaims: —

> "O Zeus, thou art a worse friend than I deemed. Though a mortal,
> I exceed thee in worth, god though thou art, for I have never
> abandoned my son's children. Thou canst not save thy friends;
> either thou art ignorant or unjust in thy nature."

As they are led out to slaughter, Amphitryon makes what he is sure is a vain appeal to Heaven to send succour. At that moment the hero himself appears. Seeing his family clad in mourning, he inquires the reason. At first his intention is to attack Lycus openly, but Amphitryon bids him wait within; he will tell Lycus that his victims are sitting as suppliants on the hearth; when the King enters Heracles may slay him without trouble.

When vengeance has been taken Iris descends from heaven, sent by Hera to stain Heracles with kindred bloodshed. She summons Madness who is unwilling to afflict any man, much less a famous hero. Reluctantly consenting she sets to work. A messenger rushes out telling the sequel. Heracles slew two of his children and was barely prevented from destroying his father by the intervention of Athena. He reappears in his right mind, followed by Amphitryon who vainly tries to console him. Theseus who accompanied Heracles to the lower world hurries in on hearing a vague rumour. To him Heracles relates his life of never-ending sorrow. Conscious of guilt and afraid of contaminating any who touch him, he at length

consents to go to Athens with Theseus for purification. He departs in sorrow, bidding his father bury the slain children.

Like the *Hecuba*, this play consists of two very loosely connected parts. The second is decidedly unconvincing. Madness has never been treated in literature with more power than in Hamlet and Lear. Besides Shakespeare's work, the description in the mouth of a messenger, though vivid enough, is less effective, for "what is set before the eyes excites us more than what is dropped into our ears" as Horace remarks. But the point of the play is the seemingly undeserved suffering which is the lot of a good character. This is the theme of many a Psalm in the Bible; its answer is just this— "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth."

In 415 Euripides told how Hecuba lost her last remaining child Cassandra. The plot of the *Trojan Women* is outlined by Poseidon and Athena who threaten the Greeks with their hatred for burning the temples of Troy. After a long and powerful lament the captive women are told their fate by the herald Talthybius. Cassandra is to be married to Agamemnon. She rushes in prophesying wildly. On recovering calm speech she bids her mother crown her with garlands of victory, for her bridal will bring Agamemnon to his death, avenging her city and its folk. Triumphantly she passes to her appointed work of ruin.

Andromache follows her, assigned to Neoptolemus. She sadly points out how her faithfulness to Hector has brought her into slavery with a proud master.

> "Is not Polyxena's fate agony less than mine? I have not that thing
> which is left to all mortals, hope, nor may I flatter my mind heart
> with any good to come, though it is sweet to even to dream of it."

This despair is rendered more hopeless when she learns that the Greeks have decided to throw her little son Astyanax from the walls.

Menelaus comes forward, gloating at the revenge he hopes to wreak on Helen. On seeing him Hecuba first prays: —

> "Thou who art earth's support and hast thy seat on earth, whoever
> thou art, past finding out, Zeus, whether thou art a natural
> Necessity or man's Intelligence, to thee I pray. Moving in a
> noiseless path thou orderest all things human in righteousness."

She continues: —

> "I praise thee, Menelaus, if thou wilt indeed slay thy wife, but

> fly her sight, lest she snare thee with desire. She catcheth men's eyes, sacketh cities, burneth homes, so potent are her charms. I know her as thou dost and all who have suffered from her."

Hecuba and Helen then argue about the responsibility for the war. The latter in shameless impudence pleads that she has saved Greece from invasion and that Love who came with Paris to Sparta was the cause of her fault. Hecuba ridicules the idea that Hera and Artemis could desire any prize of beauty. It was lust of Trojan gold that tempted Helen; never once was she known to bewail her sin in Troy, rather she always tried to attract men's eyes. Such a woman's death would be a crown of glory to Greece. Menelaus says her fate will be decided in Argos. Talthybius brings in the body of Astyanax, over which Hecuba bursts into a lament of exceptional beauty and then passes out to slavery.

In this drama Euripides draws upon all his resources of pathos. It is a succession of brilliantly conceived sorrows. Cassandra's exulting prophecy of the revenge she is to bring is one of the great things in Euripides. In this play we have a most vivid picture of the destructive effects of evil, an inevitable consequence of which it is that the woman, however innocent she may be, always pays. Hecuba drank the cup of bereavement to the very last drop.

The *Electra*, acted about 418, is characteristic. Electra has been compelled to marry a Mycenean labourer, a man of noble instincts who respects the princess and treats her as such. Both enter the scene; the man goes to labour for Electra, "for no lazy man by merely having God's name on his lips can make a livelihood without toil". Orestes and Pylades at first imagine Electra to be a servant; learning the truth they come forward and question her. She tells the story of her mother's shame and Aegisthus' insolence which Orestes promises to recount to her brother, "for in ignorant men there is no spark of pity anywhere, only in the learned." The labourer returns and by his speech moves Orestes to declare that birth is no test of nobility. Electra sends him to fetch an old Tutor of her father to make ready for her two guests; he departs remarking that there is just enough food in the house for one day.

The old Tutor arrives in tears; he has found a lock of hair on Agamemnon's tomb. Gazing intently on the two strangers, he recognises Orestes by a scar on the eyebrow. They then proceed to plot the death of

their enemies. Orestes goes to meet Aegisthus is close by sacrificing, and presently returns with the corpse, at which Electra hurls back the taunts and jeers he had heaped on her in his lifetime. She had sent to her mother saying she had given birth to a boy and asking her to come immediately.

Orestes quails before the coming murder, but Electra bids him be loyal to his father. Clytemnestra on her arrival querulously defends her past, alleging as her pretext not the death of Iphigeneia but the presence of a rival, Cassandra. Electra after refuting her invites her inside the wretched hut to offer sacrifice for her newly born child, where she is slain by Orestes. At the end of the play the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux, bid Pylades marry Electra, tell Orestes he will be purified in Athens and prophesy that Menelaus and Helen, just arrived from Egypt, will bury Agisthus real Helen never went to Troy, a wraith of her being sent there with Paris.

The startling realism of this drama is apparent. The poverty of Electra, the more certain identification of Orestes by a scar than by a lock of hair, the mention of Cassandra as the real motive for the murder of Agamemnon all indicate that Euripides was not content with the accepted legend. His Clytemnestra is a feeble creation even by the side of that of Sophocles.

Stesichorus in a famous poem tells how Helen blinded him for maligning her; she never went to Troy; it was a wraith which accompanied Paris. Such is the central idea of a very strange play, the *Helen*. The scene is in Egypt. Teucer, banished by his father, meets the real Helen; to her amazement he tells of her evil reputation and of the great war before Troy, adding that Menelaus is sailing home with another Helen. The latter enters, to learn that he is in Egypt, where the real Helen has lived for the last seventeen years. Warned by a prophetess Theonoe that her husband is not far off, Helen comes to be reunited to him. A messenger from the coast announces that the wraith has faded into nothingness.

Helen then warns Menelaus of her difficult position. She is wooed by Theoclymenus, king of the land, brother of Theonoe. Menelaus in despair thinks of killing himself and Helen to escape the tyrant. Theonoe holds their fate in her hands; Helen pleads with her; “It is shameful that thou shouldest know things divine, and not righteousness.” Menelaus declares his intention of living and dying with his wife. The prophetess leaves them to discover some means of escape which Helen devises. Pretending that Menelaus is a messenger bringing news of her husband’s death at sea, she persuades the tyrant to provide a ship and rowers that Helen may perform the last rites to

the dead on the element where he died. At the right moment the Greek sailors overpowered the rowers and sailed home with the united pair.

Very commonly real drama suffers the fate which has overtaken it in this piece; it declines into melodrama. Here are to be found all the stock melodramatic features — a bold hero, a scheming beauty, a confidante, a dupe, the murder of a ship's crew. Massinger piloted Elizabethan drama to a similar end. Given an uncritical audience melodrama is the surest means of filling the house. Reality matters little in such work; the facts of life are like Helen's wraith, when they become unmanageable they vanish into thin air.

About 412 the *Iphigeneia in Tauris* appeared. South Russia was the seat of a cult of Artemis; the goddess spirited Iphigeneia to the place when her father sacrificed her at Aulis. Orestes, bidden by Apollo to steal an image of the goddess to get his final purification, comes on the stage with Pylades; on seeing the temple they are convinced of the impossibility of burgling it. A shepherd describes to Iphigeneia their capture, for strangers were taken and offered to the goddess without exception. One of the two was seized with a vision of the avenging deities; attacked by a band of peasants both were overpowered after a stubborn resistance. Formerly Iphigeneia had pitied the Greeks who landed there; now, warned of Orestes' death by a dream, she determines to kill without mercy. One of them shall die, the other taking back to Greece a letter. Orestes insists on dying himself, reminding Pylades of his duty to Electra. When the letter is brought Pylades swears to fulfil his word, but asks what is to happen if the ship is wrecked. Iphigeneia reads the letter to him; it is addressed to Orestes and tells of his sister's weary exile. After the recognition is completed, Orestes relates the horrors of his life and begs his sister to help him to steal the all-important image.

Thoas, the King of the land, learns from her that the two Greeks are guilty of kindred murder; their presence has defiled the holy image which needs purification in the sea as well as the criminals. The priestess obtains permission to bind the captives and take the image to be cleansed with private mystic rites. The plot succeeds; Orestes' ship puts in; after a struggle the three board it, carrying the image with them. Thoas is prevented from pursuit by an intervention of Athena.

Goethe used this play for his drama of the same name; he made Thoas the lover of Iphigeneia, whom he represents as the real image whom

Orestes is to remove. Her departure is not compassed by a stratagem, but is permitted by the King, a man of singular nobility and self-denial.

The *Phaenissae* has been much admired in all ages. Jocasta tells how after the discovery of his identity Oedipus blinded himself but was shut up by his two sons whom he cursed for their impiety. Eteocles then usurped the rule while Polyneices called an Argive host to attack Thebes. A Choral description of this army is succeeded by an unexpected entry into the city of Polyneices who meets his mother and tells her of his life in exile. She sends for Eteocles in the hope of reconciling her two sons. Polyneices promises to disband his forces if he is restored to his rights, but Eteocles, enamoured of power, refuses to surrender it. Jocasta vainly points out to him the burden of rule, nor can she persuade Polyneices not to attack his own land.

When the champions have taken up their position at the gates, Teiresias tells Creon that Thebes can be saved by the sacrifice of his own son Menoeceus. Creon refuses to comply and urges his son to escape. Pretending to obey Menoeceus threw himself from the city walls. The struggle at the gates is followed by a challenge to Polyneices issued by Eteocles to settle the dispute in single combat. Jocasta and Antigone rush out to intervene, too late. They find the two lying side by side at death's door. Eteocles is past speech, but Polyneices bids farewell to his mother and sister, pitying his brother "who turned friendship into enmity, yet still was dear". In agony, Jocasta slays herself over her sons' bodies.

Led in by Antigone, Oedipus is banished by Creon, who forbids the burial of Polyneices. After touching the dead Jocasta and his two sons, he passes to exile and rest at Colonus.

The harsh story favoured by Sophocles has been greatly humanised by Euripides, who could not accept all the savagery of the received legend. Apart from the unexplained presence of Polyneices in the city, the plot is excellent. The speeches are vigorous and natural, the characters thoroughly human. The criticising and refining influence of Euripides is manifest throughout, together with a simple and noble pathos.

An ancient critic says of the *Orestes*, written in 408, "the drama is popular but of the lowest morality; except Pylades, all are villains". Electra meets Helen, unexpectedly returned from Egypt to Argos with Menelaus, who sends her daughter Hermione with offerings to the tomb of Agamemnon. Electra's opinion of her is vividly expressed.

"See how she has tricked out her hair, preserving her beauty; she

is old Helen still. Heaven abhor thee, the bane of me and my brother and Greece."

The Chorus accidentally awakens Orestes who is visited by a wild vision of haunting Furies. When he regains sanity he begs the assistance of Menelaus, his last refuge. His uncle, a broken reed, is saved from committing himself by the entry of Tyndareus, father of Clytemnestra and Helen. He righteously rebukes the bloodthirsty Orestes, though he is aware of the evil in his two daughters. Orestes breaks out into an insulting speech which alienates completely his grandfather. Menelaus, when appealed to again, hurries out to try to win him back.

Pylades suggests that he and Orestes should plead their case before the Argive Assembly, which was to try them for murder of Clytemnestra. A very brilliant and exciting account of the debate tells how the case was lost by Orestes himself, who presumed to lecture the audience on the majesty of the law he himself had broken. He and Electra are condemned to be stoned that very day. Determined to ruin Menelaus before they die, they agree to kill Helen, the cause of all their troubles, and to fire the fortified house in which they live. Electra adds that they should also seize Hermione and hold her as a check on Menelaus' fury for the death of Helen. The girl is easily trapped as she rushes into the house hearing her mother's cries for help. Soon after a Trojan menial drops from the first story. He tells how Helen and Hermione have so far escaped death, but the rest is unknown to him. In a ghastly scene Orestes hunts the wretch over the stage, but finally lets him go as he is not a fit victim for a free man's sword. Almost immediately the house is seen to be ablaze; Menelaus rushes up in a frenzy, but is checked by the sight of Orestes with Hermione in his arms. When Menelaus calls for help, Orestes bids Pylades and Electra light more fires to consume them all. A timely appearance of Apollo with Helen deified by his side saves the situation.

It is plain that Euripides has here completely rejected the old legend. He never makes Orestes even think of pleading Apollo's command to him to slay his mother. He is concerned with the defence which a contemporary matricide might make before a modern Athenian assembly and with the fitting doom of self-destruction which would overtake him. Like *Vanity Fair*, the play shows us the life of people who try to do without God.

The *Bacchae* is one of Euripides' best plays. In the absence of Pentheus the King, Cadmus and Teiresias join in the worship of the new god

Dionysus at Thebes. Pentheus returns to find that noble women, including Agave, his own mother, have joined the strange cult brought to the place by a mysterious Lydian stranger "whose hair is neatly arranged in curls, his face like wine, his eyes as full of grace as Aphrodite's".

Teiresias advises him to welcome the god, Cadmus to pretend that he is divine, even if he is only a mortal; this new religion is the natural outlet of the desire for innocent revelry born in both sexes. The Lydian is arrested and brought before Pentheus, whom he warns that the god will save him from insult, but Pentheus hurries him away into a dungeon.

The Chorus of Bacchae are alarmed on hearing a tumult. The stranger appears to tell how Pentheus was made mad by Dionysus in the act of imprisoning him. The King in amazement sees his prisoner standing free before him and becomes furiously angry on hearing that his mother has joined a new revel on Mount Cithaeron. The stranger suggests that he should go disguised as a Bacchante to see the new worship. When he appears transformed, the Lydian comments with exquisite and deadly irony on his appearance. His fate is vividly and terribly painted. Placing him in a pine, the stranger suddenly disappeared, while the voice of Dionysus summoned the rout to punish the spy. Rushing to the tree, the woman tore it up by the roots and then rent Pentheus piecemeal, Agave herself leading them on.

She comes in holding what she imagines to be a trophy. Cadmus slowly reveals to her the horror of her deed, the proof of which is her son's head in her grasp. Dionysus himself comes in to point out that this tragedy is the result of the indignity which Thebes put upon him and his mother Semele. Broken with grief, Agave passes out slowly to her banishment. The Bacchae was composed in Macedonia; it contains all the mystery of the supernatural. Dionysus' character is admirably drawn, while the infatuation of Pentheus is a fitting prelude to his ruin. The cult of Dionysus was essentially democratic, intended for those who could claim no share in aristocratic ritual: hence its popularity and prevalence. We may regard the Bacchae as the poet's declaration of faith in the worship which gave Europe the Drama; it is altogether fitting that he who has left us the greatest number of tragedies should have been chosen by destiny to bequeath us the one drama which tells of one of the adventures of its patron deity.

The *Iphigeneia in Aulis* was written in the last year of the poet's life. Agamemnon sends a private letter to his wife countermanding an official

dispatch summoning her and Iphigeneia. This letter is intercepted by Menelaus, who upbraids his brother; later, seeing his distress, he advises him to send the women home again. But public opinion forces the leader to obey Artemis and sacrifice his daughter. When he meets his wife and child, he tries to temporise but fails. Achilles meets Clytemnestra and is surprised to hear that he is to marry Iphigeneia, such being the bait which brought Clytemnestra to Aulis. Learning the real truth, she faces her husband, pleading for their daughter's life. Iphigeneia at first shrinks from death; the army demands her sacrifice, while Achilles is ready to defend her. The knot is untied by Iphigeneia herself, who willingly at last consents to die to save her country.

This excellent play shows no falling in dramatic power; it was imitated by Racine and Schiller. The figures are intensely human, the conflict of duties firmly outlined, the pathos sincere and true, there is no divine appearance to straighten out a tangled plot. Thus Euripides' career ends as it began, with a story of a woman's noble self-sacrifice.

The poet's popularity is indicated by the number of his extant dramas and fragments, both of which exceed in bulk the combined work of Aeschylus and Sophocles. All classes of writers quoted him, philosophers, orators, bishops. In his own lifetime Socrates made a point of witnessing his plays; the very violence of Aristophanes' attack proves Euripides' potent influence; his lost drama *Melanippe* turned the heads of the Athenians, the whole town singing its odes. Survivors of the Sicilian disaster won their freedom by singing his songs to their captors, returning to thank their liberator in person; the fragments of Menander discovered in 1906 contain many reminiscences of him, even slaves quoting passages of him to their masters. For it was the very width of his appeal that made him universally loved; women and slaves in his view were every whit as good as free-born men, sometimes they were far nobler. If drama is the voice of a democracy, the Athenians had found a more democratic mouthpiece than they had bargained for.

With the educated men it was different. They suspected a poet who was upsetting their tradition. Besides, they were asked to crown a person who told them in play after play that they were really like Jason, Menelaus, Polymestor, poor creatures if not quite odious. He made them see with painful clearness that the better sex was the one which they despised, yet which was sure one day to find the utterance to which it had a right in virtue

of its greater nobility. The feminism of Euripides is evident through his whole career; it is an insult to our powers of reading to imagine that he was a woman-hater. It is then not to be wondered at that he won the prize only five times, and it can hardly be an accident that he gained it once with the Hippolytus, which on a surface view condemns the female sex.

For the officials could not see that Euripides was not a man only, he was a spirit of development. Privilege and narrowness in every form he hated; he demanded unlimited freedom for the intelligence. The narrow circle of legends, the conventional unified drama, state religion, a pseudo-democracy based on slavery he fearlessly criticised. Rationalism, humanism, free speculation were his watchwords; he was always trying new experiments in his art, introducing politics, philosophy, melodrama and trying to get rid of the chorus wherever he could. He was a living and a contemporary Proteus, pleading like an advocate in a lawsuit, discussing political theory, restating unsolved problems in modern form and seasoning his work with his own peculiar and often elevating pathos. Such a man was anathema to conservative Athens.

But to us he is one of ourselves. He exactly hits off our modern taste, with its somewhat sentimental tendency, its scepticism, love of excitement, and its great complexity. We know we have many moods and passions which strangely blend and thwart each other; these we treat in our novels, and Euripides' plays are a sort of novel, but for the divine appearances in the last scenes. He shows us the inevitable end of actions of beings exactly like ourselves, acting from merely human motives, neither higher nor lower than we, though perhaps disguised under heroic names. He is in a word the first modern poet.

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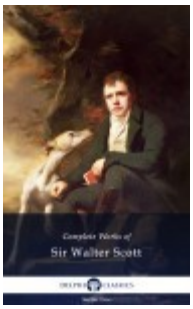

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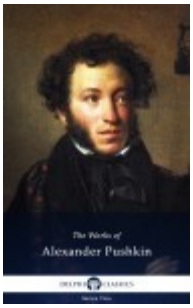

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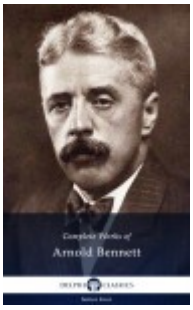

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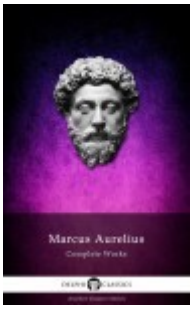

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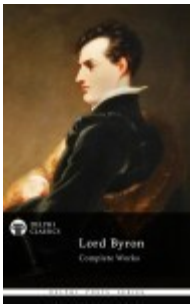

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Leonardo da Vinci
Michelangelo
Paul Cézanne
Paul Klee
Peter Paul Rubens

Pierre-Auguste Renoir
Sandro Botticelli
Raphael
Rembrandt van Rijn
Titian
Vincent van Gogh
Wassily Kandinsky

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Ancient ruins in Macedon. Euripides' contemporaries associated him, along with Socrates, as a leader of a decadent intellectualism and a threat to the established order in Athens. Therefore, following Socrates' execution, Euripides chose a voluntary exile in his old age, spending his final days at the court of King Archelaus I of Macedon.